

**Educator Advisors in Australian Higher Education:
Their Roles, Purpose and Contribution
to Learning and Teaching**

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This is to certify that the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or purpose.

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Colin Simpson

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Abstract

Australian higher education teaching and learning has undergone significant change in the last thirty years, influenced by the rapid evolution of information technologies. To help academics navigate increasingly complex practices, growing numbers of support staff have been employed in academic developer (AD), learning designer (LD) and educational technologist (ET) roles. These specialist roles are referred to collectively in this study as EdAdvisors, a portmanteau of Educator and Advisor.

This study advances understanding of EdAdvisor roles, practices, purpose, and the factors influencing their efficacy, using a practice theory and practice architectures lens in a mixed-methods study comprised of a survey and semi-structured interviews with EdAdvisors in 41 Australian higher education institutions. This study found that practitioners in EdAdvisor roles contribute to learning and teaching in alignment with their expertise, with ADs developing the pedagogical knowledge of academics, LDs designing and developing learning resources and activities, and ETs supporting and enabling appropriate education technologies. Examining the practices of all three EdAdvisor roles collectively has supported the development of practice bundles which inform rich new descriptions of these roles. Examination of factors influencing EdAdvisors' practices identified organisational structures, attitudes toward learning and teaching, tensions between centralised and faculty-based areas of the university, and the divide between academic and professional staff as areas where actions may be taken to enhance EdAdvisor efficacy. The three EdAdvisor roles have rarely been considered together in scholarly research, but this thesis has demonstrated that doing so contributes to greater understanding of these roles, their interconnectedness, contribution to learning and teaching, and the factors which shape their efficacy.

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Colin Simpson, 24/2/2025

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1. Introduction

Specialist practitioners including *learning designers*, *educational technologists*, and *academic developers* use their expertise in pedagogy and technology to work with educators to support learning and teaching in Australian higher education. Generally, these “educator advisors” (*EdAdvisors*) make a significant contribution to education in their institutions, but their efficacy can be influenced by a number of material, cultural and social factors. This study aims to contribute to understanding of the ways that EdAdvisor roles function and contribute to higher education.

1.1 Background

Two significant forces have transformed higher education in Australia since the late 1980s. Firstly, the emergence of the Internet, and the rapid pace of change in technologies in general, created opportunities to teach and learn in new ways, necessitating increasingly specialised expertise in their use in education (Marshall et al., 2024). Secondly, an ongoing shift toward neoliberal policy has led to changes in higher education funding, which have resulted in a prioritisation of productivity and accountability in Australian universities by university leaders (Tight, 2019). This has resulted in higher workloads for academics, reducing the time they have available to maintain currency with new technology enhanced approaches to learning and teaching (Lisewski, 2021). These changing circumstances are found both in Australia and internationally and have resulted in higher education institutions increasingly relying on pedagogy and technology specialists — *EdAdvisors* — to support learning and teaching practices and to implement institutional technology-enhanced learning initiatives.

EdAdvisors have been employed in Australian higher education since the 1960s, when some universities introduced academic developers in small centrally based units to undertake research into higher education and develop the teaching practice of academics (Chalmers & Fraser, 2023; Hicks, 1997). In the 1970s institutions started employing learning designers to support

correspondence-based distance learning programs (Strain & Inglis, 1990). The timing of the appearance of educational technologists is less clear, but Shurville et al. (2008) note that they initially came from small, “close knit academic communities” (p. 919) excited by the potential applications of emerging technologies for education. The common thread running through all of these EdAdvisor roles – academic developers, learning designers, educational technologists – is their collective focus on supporting learning and teaching practice.

The complex nature of the contemporary higher education ecosystem means that while EdAdvisors can contribute substantively to learning and teaching in their institutions, their efficacy can be affected by factors including poor understanding of their roles and purpose (Melling, 2019; Woo, 2015), attitudes toward learning and teaching (Daddow et al., 2023), social hierarchies between academic and professional staff (Veles et al., 2023), resistance to institutional initiatives (Deacon et al., 2022), and organisational structures (Drysdale, 2021).

1.2 Positionality

Positionality describes the world view of a researcher and offers insights into the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning their research. It is informed a researcher’s beliefs and experiences, including experiences of working in particular professions (Darwin Holmes, 2020). I started working as an EdAdvisor in 2003, when I found a position at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) which brought together my past experience and training in education, media production and information technology (IT) in a kind of role that I had never previously heard of. I worked there happily as an *eLearning Designer* and *Learning Technologist* in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, helping teachers to teach with technology, and doing some teaching of my own, for twelve years until I decided that I needed a change.

In 2015, I moved to higher education, working for the College of Business and Economics at the Australian National University, where I was immediately struck by the difference between the sectors. Where I had previously enjoyed collaborative working relationships with engaged educators

and colleagues who valued my advice, I was now just as likely to encounter any of a variety of barriers to my efforts to support and enhance learning and teaching practices. These obstacles included disagreements with EdAdvisors in the central learning and teaching team about decisions relating to changes in educational technologies and being excluded from college-level discussions about learning and teaching practices and priorities. Understanding that this was a new context, I connected with my other EdAdvisor colleagues in the institution and further afield which highlighted to me that differences between EdAdvisor roles and the relationships between them were at times more hierarchical and complex in higher education than they had been in the VET sector. Through these new connections I set out to learn what I needed to do differently and found that many of their experiences matched my own. Clearly we also had many positive experiences working with the many dedicated and curious educators among academic ranks but the frustration at not being able to do more was a constant presence.

Determined to understand these challenges and find some solutions, I took two parallel courses of action. Firstly, with some EdAdvisor colleagues in the sector, I started the TELeDvisors (Technology Enhanced Learning Educator Advisors) Network under the auspices of the Australasian Society for Computers In Learning In Tertiary Education (ASCILITE). The TELeDvisors Network is a community of practitioners for EdAdvisors seeking to build community, advocate for members, support research to build understanding and provide professional development. "TEL" (technology-enhanced learning) is part of the network name, but this inclusion was mandated by ASCILITE when this group was formed, and the focus of the group is widely understood to extend beyond the use of technology in education. This group now has more than 600 members across 13 countries contributing to these aims. Due to the ambiguous nature of EdAdvisor roles and titles, the exact composition of role types (AD, ET, and LD) in the TELeDvisors Network is not known.

Secondly, I started this doctoral research.

Becoming a researcher represents a new stage in my professional life, requiring me to move into the academic domain, develop new skills and learn to communicate in new ways. My supervisor

and I have discussed to what extent my experiences as an EdAdvisor have influenced this research. Insofar as all researchers are human, it is fair to say that they have. Ultimately, this reinforces the need for scholarly rigour on my behalf to maximise trust in this work.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

While the theory which underpins this research is explained in greater depth in Chapter 2, it is useful to understand the key aspects as part of understanding the aims of this study. The primary purpose is to better understand the characteristics and purpose of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education and to find practical strategies to enhance their work to support learning and teaching practices.

Much of the work that EdAdvisors undertake centres around enhancing learning and teaching practices. This involves both the practices that EdAdvisors undertake and the conditions or arrangements that they create to enable the practices of educators and students. Core ideas from the work of Kemmis et al. (2014) on *Practice Theory* and the theory of *Practice Architectures* provide important lenses in this study to examine these practices and arrangements. Practice theory expands understanding of practices by offering terminology to describe individual elements of them in terms of what is done and how (*doings*), why it is done (*sayings*), and who is involved in doing it (*relatings*). Practice architectures provide categorisation of *arrangements* which enable practices as *material-economic, cultural-discursive, and social-political*. Practice theory and practice architectures also aid in examining the relationships between the elements of practice.

The seminal work of Celia Whitchurch (2008) about what is referred to as the *third space* in higher education also informs this study. The third space describes the relationships that workers in both academic and professional staff positions have with the boundaries between academic and professional/administrative domains in higher education, academic domains being where teaching and research is undertaken and professional/administrative domains being where work necessary to support the operations of the university takes place. Much of the work undertaken by many

EdAdvisors occurs across and between these domains, leading their roles to be regarded by theorists such as Whitchurch as neither purely professional nor purely academic but a new third thing. Third Space theory offers new ways to consider complex relationships between EdAdvisors, academics and institutional leaders by examining the boundaries that they work within and across.

1.4 Terminology

One of the challenges faced by EdAdvisors in Australian higher education is the inconsistent use of terminology used to describe them and their roles within and between institutions. For the sake of clarity in this study, certain terms have been selected and are explained here.

EdAdvisor (or Edvisor): EdAdvisor is a portmanteau of Educator and Advisor and is used to refer collectively to higher education staff who work in their institutions to support learning and teaching practices. EdAdvisors occupy one of three roles: learning designer, educational technologist or academic developer. This term was initially coined as Edvisor in 2016 when some colleagues and I established the ASCILITE TEledvisors Network to serve the interests of people working in these roles. It is intended to reflect the fact that they are both advisors to educators and educators in our own right. I revised this term for the purposes of this study to EdAdvisors in 2022 after observing that *edvisor* was frequently misspelled or mispronounced in common usage. Edvisor was the term used during data collection, and it appears at certain points in this study where results are reported.

Role: This term is used in this study to refer to a type of EdAdvisor position. While institutions can give people in these roles a variety of other position titles, EdAdvisors in this study are categorised under three roles: academic developer, educational technologist, and learning designer.

Academic developer (AD): Academic developers are typically EdAdvisors with a pedagogical focus and often hold academic positions. ADs are also sometimes referred to as educational developers or faculty developers. ADs may also provide academics with broader career development

advice, support with research, and assistance with academic promotions (Section 5.5.1) but it is their contribution to learning and teaching practice that is the main focus of this study.

Educational technologist (ET): Educational technologists are typically EdAdvisors who support the use of technology in learning and teaching practice. ETs are also sometimes referred to as learning technologists.

Learning designer (LD): Learning designers are typically EdAdvisors who work equally across pedagogy and technology to design learning resources and activities. LDs are also sometimes referred to as educational designers or instructional designers.

Other terms used in this thesis are:

Academic: A person employed in higher education to perform a combination of teaching, research and service responsibilities which vary depending on their position.

Professional staff: A person employed in higher education to facilitate teaching, research and other institutional needs, varying by their role and position.

Academic EdAdvisor: An EdAdvisor holding an academic classified position.

Professional EdAdvisor: An EdAdvisor holding a professionally classified position.

Central: The organisational part of a university with institution-wide responsibilities. In relation to EdAdvisors, it frequently includes university teaching and learning centres which are overseen by university leaders of learning and teaching such as Deputy Vice Chancellors (Education). The term *central* is not generally used officially in institutions, but it is widely understood (Bearman et al., 2024; Flutey et al., 2018).

Faculty (also College and School): Organisational parts of the university focused on teaching and research in a disciplinary area such as Arts or Science. (The term *faculty* should not be considered to refer directly to teaching staff in this study, as is often the case in higher education in North America.)

1.5 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the roles and practices of EdAdvisors and the ways that they contribute to learning and teaching in Australian higher education in order to identify opportunities to enhance EdAdvisors' contribution. As such, the overarching research question is:

How do diverse Educator Advisor roles function and contribute to Australian higher education?

This is supported by four subsidiary research questions:

RQ1: Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?

RQ2: How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?

RQ3: What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?

RQ4: What approaches can be taken to enhance opportunities for EdAdvisors to contribute to learning and teaching?

This thesis answers these questions by drawing on the views and experiences of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education. These insider perspectives provide valuable insights into effective learning and teaching practices and how they are supported, but it must also be recognised that the views and experiences of the EdAdvisors in this study may not always reflect the entirety of how learning and teaching occurs or is supported in the sector.

1.6 Scope

The study examines EdAdvisors with experience of working to support learning and teaching practices in Australian institutions which are accredited to offer higher education qualifications. In Australia, this includes 44 Australian universities, 160 Institutes of Higher Education, and nine University Colleges (Australian Government Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2024). Participants in this study came from 32 Australian Universities, five Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), and one University College (UC).

1.7 Significance

This study is significant because it collectively examines three major third space roles contributing directly to teaching and learning (academic developer, educational technologist, and learning designer) which have previously only been researched separately (Abblitt et al., 2023; Aitchison et al., 2020; Shurville et al. 2008). In doing so, it provides insights into the complex working relationships between people in these roles which influence their ability to enhance learning and teaching in higher education.

While many aspects of higher education such as attitudes toward learning and teaching (Daddow et al., 2023), relationships between central and faculty areas of universities (Han et al., 2023), differences between academic and professional staff (Veles et al., 2023) or organisational structures (Drysdale, 2021) have been explored, less attention has been paid to the ways that these aspects impact the work of EdAdvisors and potential strategies to mitigate any negative effects. This study addresses this gap. Additionally, this research provides insights into the nature, practices and perspectives of educational technologists in Australian higher education, a role which makes a notable contribution to the implementation and appropriate use of education technologies, but which has been largely overlooked or misrepresented in research (Selwyn, 2013).

1.8 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter 2 explains the theoretical frameworks, Third Space theory (Whitchurch, 2008) and practice theory and practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014), and the ways that they have been employed in this thesis. Chapter 3 examines the current research literature relating to academic developers, educational technologists, and learning designers, their practices, experiences, contributions to learning and teaching and factors in higher education which affect their efficacy. Chapter 4 describes the methods used in this study to collect and analyse data: these included designing and conducting a pilot and final survey and semi-structured interviews, as well as the statistical analysis techniques and qualitative coding methods

employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the findings. Chapter 5 addresses RQ1, examining the nature, activities and working experiences of EdAdvisors in three roles. Chapter 6 examines the purpose and impact of EdAdvisors as it addresses RQ2: Chapter 7 outlines the factors which impact EdAdvisor efficacy and some strategies for enhancing this efficacy as it addresses RQ3.

Chapter 8 critically discusses the findings in terms of the research questions and existing research, informed by theory. Chapter 9 addresses RQ4, as it offers a set of recommended approaches for EdAdvisors, academics and institutional leaders to create better opportunities for EdAdvisors to make more effective contributions to supporting learning and teaching practices. It also provides personal reflections on the study, a discussion of limitations and suggestions for further research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the two theoretical lenses which have been used in this study. The first of these is Practice theory, which was coined by Ortner (1984) and built on a long history of scholarship relating to practice. This was advanced by subsequent work (Kemmis & Smith, 2008; Nicolini, 2013; Orlikowski, 2007; Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002; Shove et al., 2012) including the work of Kemmis et al. (2014) on Practice Architectures. The second is Third Space theory in higher education, as developed by Whitchurch (2008) and subsequently advanced by other scholars (Graham, 2013; McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Veles & Carter, 2016; Whitchurch, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2018, 2024).

The chapter begins with a brief overview of Practice theory and the theory of Practice Architectures and how they have informed this work. It then examines the core ideas of Third Space theory in higher education and their application to this research.

2.2 Practice Theory and Practice Architectures

2.2.1 *Origins of Practice Theory*

Scholars have tried to explain how the things we do are tied to our identity and values for millennia. Kemmis and Smith (2008), in their review of the history of practice theories, observe that Aristotle used the idea of *praxis* to discuss “an action that is morally committed and informed by tradition in a field” (p. 4) while Marx framed *praxis* as “action with moral, social and political consequences for those involved in it and affected by it” (p. 26). Ortner (1984) was one of the first to use the term *Practice Theory* and since then scholars including Reckwitz (2002), Schatzki (1996), Gherardi (2008), Shove et al. (2012), Nicolini (2013) and Kemmis et al. (2014) have made notable contributions to the theory.

The practical implication of this diversity of approaches to practice theory is that “there is no one practice theory, and that different theorists of practice understand practices in very different ways” (Kemmis, 2022, p. 56). Accordingly, Nicolini posits that “to study practice empirically we are better served by a strategy based on deliberately switching between theoretical sensitivities” (Nicolini, 2013, p. 213). This study primarily uses the understanding of Practice Theory, and the Theory of Practice Architectures put forward by Kemmis et al. (2014), informed by prior work by Nicolini (2013) and Schatzki (2002). In order to better discuss the practices of EdAdvisor roles, I have added the idea of a *complex* or *bundle* of practices put forward by Shove et al. (2012).

2.2.2 Practice Theory

Practice theory in this study relates to understanding the components of a practice, their interrelations, and their contribution to the whole. A practice can be described (Schatzki, 2002) as an action (or a set of actions) which is intended to satisfy a purpose aligned with the practitioner’s values (*teleoaffective structures*), and which is performed in a given space at a given time (*timespace*). The actions involved in carrying out this practice, alongside having the necessary material resources (*doings*), are informed by knowledge of how to perform the practice in an appropriate manner for the context (*sayings*). A practice often involves another person affected by the practice, meaning that the relationship between the practitioner and the other party can have a notable effect on the success or failure of the performance of the practice (*relatings*) (Kemmis et al., 2014). The emotional state, past experiences, values, and beliefs of a practitioner may also contribute to the effectiveness of the performance of a practice (Schatzki, 2002). The performance of practices can also affect the practitioner themselves, both in terms of whether they are permitted to perform a practice (such as academic research) as well as in the ways that some practices are valued more highly than others. If some practices are more highly valued, those practitioners may also be more highly valued (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Practice bundles, sometimes also referred to as complexes of practices (Shove et al., 2012), describe sets of separate but related practices which in combination serve a common goal. For example, a practice bundle of “going to bed” might be made up of turning off the lights, putting one’s clothes out for the next day and brushing one’s teeth. The set of practices in a bundle may be independent, or they may be interdependent, with one unable to be performed until another one has been completed. When this is the case, Shove et al. (2012) refer to the concept of these bundles as something which “constitutes new entities in their own right” (p. 71). The idea of practice bundles is another valuable concept for this study as it supports deeper examination of the purpose of practices by considering the relationships between separate component practices. This combination of practice theory concepts also serves as part of this study’s contribution to theory.

2.2.3 Practice Architectures

The Theory of Practice Architectures describes the types of conditions (or *arrangements*) that are needed for a performance of a practice to occur, and Kemmis et al. (2014) note that one person’s practice may relate to creating these conditions for the performance of a practice by another person. The arrangements found in the Theory of Practice Architectures mirror the doing, saying, relating elements of Practice theory, with *material-economic* arrangements relating to resources needed to undertake a practice (doings), *cultural-discursive* arrangements relating to what is known about a practice and how it should be performed (sayings), and *social-political* arrangements relating to the underlying power dynamics in a given context that influence the ability of someone to perform a practice (relatings).

Understanding the Practice Architectures present in a given context helps us to understand the practices that are enabled by them. The act of providing Practice Architectures for one group of people – for example, university academics – may form part of the practice of another group such as EdAdvisors. This interrelationship of practices is referred to as *distributed practice* (Kemmis et al., 2014).

2.3 Applying Practice Theory and Practice Architectures in This Research

Key concepts in Practice Theory and Practice Architectures provide a framework for describing EdAdvisors and their work and purpose in Australian higher education, as well as in identifying strategies to increase their efficacy. Practice Theory provides language to describe the activities, the resources and types of knowledge required, and the impact of practices on relationships between EdAdvisors, academics and institutional leaders. Schatzki's concept of timespace for practices (2002) highlights that because certain practices must occur in specific locations or at specific times, performances of other practices may not be possible in these locations or at these times, meaning that certain practices must be prioritised, and dependencies can exist between them. This informs discussion of how and why certain practices might be valued and how effectively they are resourced in a higher education context, which directly affects the EdAdvisors' abilities to perform them. The concept of teleoaffective structures informs discussion about the purpose of practices and the associated beliefs and values of the EdAdvisors involved.

In addition to describing and understanding the relationships between practices and practitioners, certain conditions or arrangements are required for practices to be performed. These can be explored using the three types of arrangements found in Kemmis et al.'s (2014) Practice Architectures: material-economic; cultural-discursive; and social-political. Practice architectures inform this study in two ways. Firstly, the presence or absence of these arrangements in their own professional context affects the practices of EdAdvisors themselves as they undertake this work. This concept has been used to categorise the factors which serve as inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisor practices in addressing RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?*

Secondly, a substantial part of the work of EdAdvisors relates to enabling the teaching and learning practices of academics and students by putting practice arrangements in place. Examining the nature of these practice arrangements has contributed to the development of practice bundles,

which are part of addressing *RQ1: Who are EdAdvisors in Australian Higher Education?* and *RQ2: How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?*

In using practice theory and practice architectures to better understand EdAdvisors and their practices, it is hoped that inhibitors and enablers of these practices in Australian higher education will become more apparent and practical actions to mitigate or maximise them will be identified. The distributed nature of practice and the complex web of interrelationships between practices and practitioners may offer further insights into opportunities to enhance EdAdvisors' efficacy.

2.4 Third Space Theory in Higher Education

2.4.1 Origins of Third Space Theory and Key Ideas

The theory of the Third Space in higher education is credited to Whitchurch (2008) but the broader concept is attributed to Bhabha (1994) in work examining postcolonial identity through a sociolinguistic lens. Bhabha's concept of third space described the hybrid area that emerges when two cultures interact. Whitchurch's application of the concept differs slightly, describing the relationships between people who work within and across conventional boundaries between academic and professional domains in universities. Third Space practitioners usually hold either academic or professionally classified positions, but their work includes activities common to both domains. The rise of the third space has coincided with changes in higher education from the 1990s that have seen activities beyond the traditional teaching, research and service categories grow in importance to institutions (Marshall et al., 2024; Tight, 2019). These activities have often been related to larger institutional initiatives requiring contributions from a wide variety of stakeholders with different skills and experience (Deacon et al., 2022), including research support, student employability, industry partnerships, and the types of teaching support and enhancement work undertaken by EdAdvisors (Whitchurch, 2008).

2.4.2 Third Space Categories

Whitchurch (2008) classified practitioners working in the third space in higher education into four categories, based primarily on the nature of their relationships with the boundaries of their academic or professional domain. She described them as:

- Bounded professionals — “who located themselves within the boundaries of a function or organizational location that they had either constructed for themselves, or which had been imposed upon them” (p. 382).
- Cross-boundary professionals — “who recognized and actively used boundaries to build strategic advantage and institutional capacity, capitalizing on their knowledge of territories on either side of the boundaries that they encountered” (pp. 382-383).
- Unbounded professionals — “Individuals who displayed a disregard for boundaries, focusing on broadly based projects across the university such as widening participation and student transitions, and on the development of their institutions for the future” (p. 383).
- Blended professionals — “who were being recruited to dedicated appointments that spanned both professional and academic domains” (p. 384).

Whitchurch’s description of boundaries existing in relation to either role function or organisational location in the description of bounded professionals is important as it highlights the different ways that boundaries can be encountered in higher education. The existence of boundaries can influence expectations among academics and leaders around who is entitled or expected to be involved in particular activities within the institution (Whitchurch, 2009), which echoes the idea of certain practices (such as academic research) being restricted to certain practitioners that is explored in work on practice theory by Kemmis et al. (2014). The need for third space practitioners to cross boundaries between academic and professional domains when undertaking these practices

can also lead to questioning of the legitimacy of these practitioners, presenting challenges to their practice (Ryttberg & Geschwind, 2019).

The next section examines the ways in which concepts from Third Space theory as related to higher education (Whitchurch, 2008) are applied to this research.

2.5 Applying Third Space Theory in This Research

Third Space theory in aids both in examining the sense of belonging that contributes to professional identity (Joubert, 2024; Obexer, 2022) and also in developing a practical understanding of the complex interrelationships in higher education (Stoltenkamp et al., 2017; Vere et al., 2024). Two of the defining characteristics of EdAdvisors are that they may hold academic or professional positions, and that their work traverses both of these domains. EdAdvisors are not the only denizens of the higher education third space, but Third Space theory offers a lens to describe EdAdvisors and their place in higher education. Professional staff working in the third space face challenges in establishing their credibility as they attempt to support and enhance the pedagogical and technological practices of academics in a complex web of institutional working relationships (Whitchurch, 2020). The exploration of relationships with the boundaries between academic and professional domains in Third Space theory creates opportunities to add depth to the ideas of relatings in Practice Theory and social-political arrangements in Practice Architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014).

The extent to which EdAdvisors in different roles associate with the idea of the third space is also expected to offer insights into their professional identities and practices. Whitchurch and Law (2010) describe some people taking on third space roles as an interim step in their higher education career as *third space tourists* while others who seek an ongoing career in these kinds of roles are “permanent residents” (p. 19). Watermeyer (2015) and Fyffe (2018) ask how strongly academics and academic developers associate with the third space and exploring this question may enrich understanding of these third space practitioners and their professional identity.

2.6 Summary

The twin lenses of Practice Theory/Practice Architectures and Third Space theory have informed the design of questions in data collection for this study, where EdAdvisors in all three roles (AD, ET, and LD) were asked about their activities, knowledge, and purpose, their third space positionality, and their understanding of the activities, knowledge, and purpose of other EdAdvisors. These lenses also informed the identification of themes in responses from interviewees and the structure of the literature review, findings, and discussion chapters by supporting the categorisation of factors affecting EdAdvisor efficacy according to practice arrangements.

In considering overlaps between these theories, such as whether practices or practice bundles can be considered to have third space positionality, where some would be bounded within the professional domain while others may involve cross-boundary activity across academic and professional domains, new approaches to analysing results are needed. This also raises the question of whether EdAdvisor roles have a fixed third space positionality or whether this positionality is more fluid, depending on the practice being performed in a given timespace by the EdAdvisor. The use of third space categories additionally adds nuance to analysis of relationships in practices by providing a framework to describe different types of relationships as they pertain to practices.

In the next chapter, current research relating to the nature of EdAdvisor roles, their purpose, and factors impacting their efficacy will be explored.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This study is about people who work in three different roles in Australian higher education to support educators by facilitating and enhancing learning and teaching practices. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, while these roles are referred to by a variety of different names (Mitchell et al., 2017), this study uses the roles of academic developer (AD), educational technologist (ET) and learning designer (LD). People working in these roles may occupy positions classified as either professional or academic, and their responsibilities frequently cross the boundaries of both of these spaces in universities.

Whitchurch (2008) uses the term *third space professionals* to describe people with these kinds of boundary-crossing roles. Her definition of third space professionals extends beyond those working to support educators in teaching, including people who manage “areas of work variously described as learning or business partnership, student life, diversity, outreach, institutional research, programme management and community development” (p. 408). In order to collectively describe only those people working in AD, ET and LD type roles, some colleagues of mine in the sector and I coined the term “advisor” (Simpson et al., 2021), a portmanteau of educator and advisor. I later refined this term to “EdAdvisor” (Simpson, 2023) for greater clarity (Section 1.4).

To understand EdAdvisors, their practices and their contributions to higher education, it is first necessary to examine the existing research in the field. Individually, academic developer, educational technologist and learning designer roles, by a variety of names, have been researched internationally for more than seventy years. The depth and focus of this research have varied, with a significant body of work pertaining to ADs (Brew & Boud, 1996; Ling, 2009; West, 2023) and LDs (Allen, 1996; Simpson, 2011; Zeivots et al., 2023) but somewhat less about the work of ETs (Shurville et al., 2008, 2009). Possible reasons for these differences are considered in this chapter.

The chapter begins by examining the empirical literature on the contribution that EdAdvisors make to contemporary Australian higher education (Section 3.3). This section examines how research in the field informs the first and second research questions — RQ1: *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* and RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching?* This includes the specialist expertise that they provide to academics in addressing the challenges of teaching in increasingly neoliberal universities, with their ever-increasing expectations of accountability, as well as the rapidly changing education technology landscape. It also addresses the ways they work within and across boundaries in the higher education third space, and their contributions to supporting learning and teaching practices.

It moves on to an exploration of the current understanding of EdAdvisors and their purpose, focusing on an overview of the three identified roles: academic developer (Section 3.4), educational technologist (Section 3.5) and learning designer (Section 3.6). This includes overlaps and key differences between these roles, as well as the paths taken to enter these professions. It draws on practice theory to describe the practices of EdAdvisors in each role (AD, ET, LD) and the practice arrangements that they construct in universities to enable the learning and teaching practices of educators and students and to serve other operational needs in the institution. It examines overlaps and key differences between these roles, the ways that EdAdvisors enter the field and the nature of their working relationships with academics, leaders and other EdAdvisors.

Research relating to factors that enable or inhibit EdAdvisor practices is then reviewed to address the third and fourth research questions – *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?* and *What approaches can be taken to enhance opportunities for EdAdvisors to contribute to learning and teaching?* (Section 3.8). These factors influence the ways that EdAdvisors and their capabilities, values, teams, and practices are understood and valued by the academics, leaders and other EdAdvisors that they work with. They include material-economic factors (Section 3.9), cultural-discursive factors (Section 3.10) and social-political factors (Section 3.11). Finally, gaps in the current research literature pertaining to EdAdvisors and their practices are identified,

including the paucity of literature relating to EdAdvisors in different roles and locations in Australian higher education, and the minimal exploration of the working relationships between these EdAdvisors (Section 3.12).

3.2 Who Are EdAdvisors and What Do They Do?

This section begins with an examination of literature relating to EdAdvisors in general and goes on to explore how each of the three roles (AD, ET, and LD) and their associated practices were understood and discussed, including overlaps and differences between roles, expertise, and entry pathways to the profession.

3.3 EdAdvisors Collectively

Most of the Australian research literature relating to EdAdvisors was focused on people working in specific roles (Eiras & Huijser, 2024; Ryall & Abblitt, 2023; Shurville et al., 2008). Only a small amount of research considered EdAdvisors collectively (Graham, 2013; Inglis, 1996; Winslett, 2016). Early work by Inglis (1996) examined the work of *teaching-learning specialists* in distance education in Australian Universities. He interviewed 21 practitioners working in Distance Education Centres, identifying eight roles serving distinct functions in developing distance education packages, “instructional editor, educational process consultant, instructional process consultant, transformer, critical reviewer (surrogate student), joint venturer, distance education development facilitator and staff developer” (p. 267). People who would be considered EdAdvisors in this thesis were described as “Flexible Learning Professionals” in a study aimed at describing “designers and developers working in Australian universities... by job title and award qualification and core activities” (Bird, 2004, p. 123). Bird drew strong definitional boundaries around their activities in this study, requiring that to be included in her sample, they were undertaking “design and development of flexible learning programs and materials” (p. 126).

Overall, however, in Australia and internationally, people holding EdAdvisor roles have largely been referred to by a variation of relatively common set of position titles — academic

developer, educational technologist, and learning designer — even if these have not been used consistently in different institutions. The problem of inconsistently used EdAdvisor titles has been explored widely in research for more than fifty years, when Geis and Klaassen (1972) explored the interchangeable use of educational technologist and instructional designer in U.S. higher education. In more recent work to categorise university employees, Stage and Aagaard (2019) asserted that “employers do not assign salaries or job titles to employees randomly” (p. 632) but did recognise recent rapid growth in the emergence of new titles in the category of degree-holding professionals, which includes people working as EdAdvisors.

In a study on the impacts of position titles on professional staff in higher education, Melling (2019) observed that titles which weren’t meaningful made many staff feel their work wasn’t “understood, recognised or valued” (p. 50). She went on to note that participants in her study who had been able to change their position title felt a greater sense of recognition and parity (p. 51) and recommends that institutions “review job titles within and between job families and benchmark with sector norms” (p. 52). Some researchers have attempted to create meaningful categories for EdAdvisor titles informed by contextual factors such as location, organisational structures and responsibilities but concluded that inconsistent use of these position titles in the sector made this difficult (Woo, 2015).

A general theme of the contribution of professional staff to learning and teaching in Australian higher education was prevalent in the 2000s and early 2010s, with work that focused on the variety of ways that academics and students were supported by professional staff (Graham, 2012, 2013; Winslett 2016). The activities of these staff included the design, maintenance and support of physical and virtual learning spaces. Research about professional staff in Australian higher education addressed the ways in which they were “invisible workers” (Szekeres, 2004), the shift in nomenclature away from terms such as *allied staff*, *non-academic* or *general staff* to *professional staff* (Sebalj et al., 2012; Wohlmuther, 2008), academic attitudes toward professional staff (Gray, 2015), and the third space (Veles & Carter, 2016). A common theme in these works was that

professional staff are undervalued by academics. Consideration of the *blended professionals* that support learners and learning was found in Beckmann (2018), who described “learner support staff... such as librarians, academic skills advisers, learning advisers, educational designers, educational technologists, and staff working in student access, equity, and inclusion” (p. 277). This work did not, however, address the contributions of academics in EdAdvisor roles, particularly academic developers. Winslett (2016) did address this when he discussed the usefulness of Australian university learning and teaching policies and strategies in providing a clear vision of institutional priorities for what he described as

a loose collection of teaching support staff known as academic developers, educational designers, learning designers and similar. These roles differ in focus from institution to institution but share a broad responsibility to provide pedagogical and/or technological support to academic staff. (p. 534)

International research was similar to Australian research in focusing either on individual EdAdvisor roles or the larger set of third space staff which includes research, student, and institutional support staff (Whitchurch, 2008, 2012, 2018; see also Avenali et al., 2023; Hall, 2022; McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Smith et al., 2021). Very little research was found which focused collectively on academic developers, learning designers and educational technologists and their interrelationships. Nworie (2022) and Weber et al. (2024), both from the USA, addressed growing employer demand for learning designers and educational technologists but did not discuss their interrelationships.

One possible reason for this dearth of literature addressing the collective work of EdAdvisors was that practitioners in these three roles were not regarded as having enough of a shared purpose or common practices. Literature focusing on the extent to which EdAdvisors in any of the three roles - academic developer, educational technologist, or learning designer – engage in building the capability of academics through training and workshops illustrate these differing views about shared

purpose. Academic development is widely and consistently discussed in terms of building the pedagogical and research capabilities of academics (Gosling, 1996; Hanafin, 2001; Holt et al., 2011; Wright & Zou, 2023). While some authors reported that developing the capabilities of academics through delivering training was part of the work of ETs (Geis & Klaassen, 1972; Han et al., 2023; Sugar, 2005) and LDs (Altena et al., 2019; Bird, 2006; Shurville et al., 2009; Streater, 2023), other authors excluded this practice from their examination of the activities and competencies of these workers (Allen, 1996; Cox & Osguthorpe, 2003; Ritzhaupt & Kumar, 2015; Stefaniak & Gilstrap, 2024). If there is not general consensus that learning designers and educational technologists contribute to building the capabilities of academics in the same ways that academic developers do, researchers examining the outcomes of the work that EdAdvisors do to build capabilities may not understand that there is value in concurrently researching practitioners in all three roles. This is one potential reason for the lack of research about EdAdvisors collectively. The next sections will focus separately on academic developers, educational technologists and learning designers.

3.4 Academic Developers

Of the three EdAdvisor roles, academic developers were the most frequently represented in research literature both in Australia and internationally. This may be related to the high numbers of academics in AD roles permitted to research their own field (Brogt, 2021; Eiras & Huijser, 2024; Kinchin & Pugh, 2024; Mori et al., 2024), or the rapid growth of pedagogy-focused research in higher education (Aitchison et al., 2020; Fawns, 2022), which is regarded as a focus of the AD role (Gibbs, 2013; Hadley-Hulet, 2024; Rowland et al., 1998). The field of academic development in Australian higher education emerged in the late 1960s when some universities started establishing units with a focus on educational research. This accelerated in the 1970s as more universities switched the focus of these units to developing the skills of academics (Hicks, 1997; Lee et al., 2010).

3.4.1 Terminology

The terms *academic developer* and *academic development* have been used widely and consistently in research in Australia and internationally for several decades (Bath & Smith, 2004; Brew & Boud, 1996; Healey & Jenkins, 2018; Little & Green, 2012; Taleo & Vallis, 2023). *Faculty developer/development* is less frequently used (Blevins et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2017; Kiesow et al., 2024) and found primarily in North America, reflecting the American preference for the term *faculty* to describe educators. *Education(al) developer/development* also appears in some research (Gosling, 1996; Green & Little, 2017) but *academic developer* is more commonly used in Australia. All of these terms are used in Australian and international literature to describe someone who, for the purpose of this study, chiefly develops the pedagogical capabilities of academics (Blevins et al., 2022; Green & Little, 2017; Healey & Jenkins, 2018). Sutherland (2018) notes that the AD role frequently takes a more holistic approach to the development of academics, extending to research development and career development, but it is the ADs' contribution to learning and teaching which is the focus of this research.

This should not be confused with another term used widely in Australian higher education, *academic language and learning developer*, which refers to third space professionals working with students to develop their study skills (Murphy et al., 2022; Schmidt & Schneider, 2023).

3.4.2 Who are Academic Developers?

While there has not been a large body of empirical research into the demographics of academic developers in higher education, the results in two studies provide some insights. The only large-scale study of ADs in Australasian higher education to date was from Fraser (1999) 25 years ago, when she surveyed 71 ADs. While the sector has changed in that time, several of her findings are echoed in the current academic developer landscape. Another previously mentioned (Section 3.3) large study was undertaken in 2016 by Green and Little, who surveyed 958 educational

developers in 38 countries. These two studies found that 63% and 70% respectively of ADs in their samples were female. While Fraser did not collect data about the academic or professional classification of their participants, qualitative results in that study discussing academic career paths clearly indicated that the majority held academic positions. Green and Little did not divide respondents into academic or professional classifications, rather they asked whether their role was primarily academic, administrative or both. Of the respondents in that study, 37.2% described themselves as academic, 29.3% as administrative and 29% as both. Overall, 82.3% of respondents reported being research-active, either in their role or alongside it. While Fraser found that 35% of AD respondents in their study held a PhD, 58.6% of respondents in the Green and Little study held a doctorate, though it is noteworthy that two-thirds of those doctorates were not in the field of education.

Outside of empirical research, a notable proportion of work offered personal perspectives of the field from ADs (Fraser, 2001; Fyffe, 2018; Kensington-Miller et al., 2015; Taleo & Vallis, 2023; Young, 2022). Another important theme in work pertaining to the identity of academic developers was whether they held academic or professional roles (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Godbold et al., 2022; Kensington-Miller et al., 2015). The perceived growth of *non-academic* academic developers was considered a source of concern as professional staff were reported by some to not sufficiently understand the practices and needs of academics (Macfarlane, 2011; Sturm, 2022).

3.4.3 Entry to the Field and Qualifications

A recurring theme in work which centred academic developers' personal experiences was that their entry to the field was unplanned, and often happened because an opportunity arose (Fraser, 1999; Fyffe, 2018; Mori et al., 2022). Entering academic development roles was reported as being more likely to require an academic background (generally with a PhD) than entering learning designer or educational technologist roles (Eiras & Huijser, 2024; Godbold et al., 2022; McComb & Eather, 2023). Abbot and Gravett (2018) expressed concerns about this requirement as they

believed that this could encourage people to enter the field who are not interested in being academic developers but *settle* for it while they wait for *real* academic faculty positions to become available. Manathunga (2007) described these people as “refugees from the high unemployment levels in other disciplines” (p. 27). This echoes the idea of *third space tourists* put forward by Whitchurch and Law (2010). ADs with an academic background were reported to come from all disciplinary areas (Green & Little, 2016). Some authors noted that some ADs coming from disciplinary teaching would “mourn a ‘loss of identity’ at stepping away from their primary discipline and losing what they felt they were ‘known for’ “(Grayson & Syska, 2023, p. 48). Overall, however, the disciplinary backgrounds of ADs who started in other academic roles were considered valuable in building relationships and trust with the academics that they work with (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Mori, 2024; Sturm, 2022).

There was almost no discussion of qualifications specifically for the discipline of academic development, however Skead (2018) discussed the introduction of a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education for academic developers at South Africa’s Rhodes University. This was the only reference found to AD-specific qualifications. Several authors noted that many ADs undertake post-graduate study in education or higher education upon taking up these roles (Fraser, 1999; Fyffe, 2018; Manathunga, 2007; Mori et al., 2022). Fraser (1999) noted that the wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds that ADs hold would create challenges in any attempts to accredit ADs.

3.4.4 Purpose

A primary purpose of academic developers commonly described in research was enabling academics to be better educators by fostering learning and teaching practices in higher education (Groen et al., 2023; Mori, 2024; Puhr, 2024). This was considered to lead to better learning experiences for students (Ling et al., 2013), better use of the academics’ time (Godbold et al., 2022) and aiding the university to meet its educational goals (Sturm, 2022). Many authors noted that the academic developer role extends beyond simply providing professional development, with Leibowitz

(2014) stating that it “is about the creation of conditions supportive of teaching and learning, in the broadest sense.” (p. 359).

The purpose of the academic developer role was not discussed in relation to those of ETs or LDs, but compared to those two roles, there was only minimal examination of the way that ADs understand or support the use of education technologies or technology-enhanced learning and teaching (TELT) practices (Aitchison et al., 2019; Shephard, 2004; Strydom, 2023). This suggests that the purpose of academic developers is still commonly understood to be largely pedagogically oriented, despite their increased involvement in the adoption of TELT practices and tools in Australian higher education since the COVID-19 pandemic (D’Souza et al., 2022; Reyna, 2022).

3.4.5 Practices

Several works provided an overview of key AD practices (Aitchison et al., 2020; Fraser, 2001; McComb & Eather, 2023; Meyer & Murrell, 2014) which included 1) building academic capabilities, 2) quality management and evaluation of teaching, 3) curriculum design and development, 4) nurturing institutional teaching and learning culture, 5) undertaking research, and 6) driving innovation and change.

Building Academic Capability

There are several types of professional development that ADs provide in higher education. The most formal of these is the design, delivery, and assessment of higher education focused teaching qualifications, commonly at a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma level, which are often aimed at new educators (Brennan et al., 2022; Wardak et al., 2023). While formal teaching qualifications are legally required to teach in higher education in some countries including Norway, Ethiopia, and Sri Lanka (O’Connor & Wisdom, 2014), no such requirements are placed on Australian academics. A 2019 Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching (CAULLT)

report indicated that 17 of 36 responding institutions offer (but do not mandate) a Graduate Certificate or Diploma in Higher Education to academics (CAULLT, 2019).

Formal or accredited capability development was described as focusing on face-to-face classroom teaching practices, assessment and understanding of pedagogy (Deaker et al., 2016; Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009). There was comparatively little mention of building capability in TELT practices, suggesting that this was not widely regarded as part of the ADs' purview.

ADs also lead work around the development and delivery of less formal, self-paced professional development for academics, in the form of teacher inductions and other professional learning programs, working in conjunction with LDs and ETs in central learning and teaching units (Aitchison et al., 2019; CAULLT, 2019). Compared to accredited programs, these can serve as more accessible ways for academics to develop their skills and knowledge in topics including "learning management systems, engaging learners online, curriculum design, effective communication and research supervision" (CAULLT, 2019, p. 4).

Another way that ADs build the capabilities of academics was found in their work to support or lead programs which encourage academic reflexivity about their teaching practices (Beckmann, 2018; van der Sluis, 2023). The Advance HE (also known as HEA) fellowships program is widely used in Australian higher education, with 28 institutions currently participating in the scheme (Advance HE, 2024). This provides peer evaluated accreditation of educational experience and expertise against a set of professional standards, and this scheme is commonly managed by ADs in Australian universities (Beckmann, 2018). ADs have also been reported as leading other programs including peer review of teaching (Harvey & Solomonides, 2014) in their work to foster learning and teaching practices collectively.

ADs sometimes also work individually with academics to build pedagogical capabilities and offer more personalised guidance. Aitchison et al. (2020) noted that this personal contact had been supplanted to some extent recently by a shift in focus in Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs)

towards having ADs create more self-paced online resources, which they noted has caused concern among some ADs about losing their role as the “academic content expert” (p. 180).

Quality Management and Evaluation of Teaching

Academic developers were reported to play a key role in evaluating and ensuring the quality of learning and teaching in some institutions (Deaker et al., 2016; Fraser & Ling, 2014). This included contributing to the development of institutional standards and policies, as well as analysing and responding to data about learning and teaching performance (Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development, 2011).

Davis and Bailey (2022) surveyed 90 UK based ADs and noted several responses expressing concern about perceptions that “centrally located academic developers were the teaching police” (p. 19). The extent to which the evaluation of teaching quality by ADs was considered by academics to reflect a genuine desire within the university to provide better learning experiences to students versus ensuring compliance with university policy was identified by Deaker et al. (2016) as something which undermined relationships between academics and ADs.

Curriculum Design and Development

One area of activity for academic developers which was not as widely reported involved supporting the design and development of curriculum (Dempster et al., 2012; Strydom, 2023). Academic developers expressed mixed feelings about this aspect of their work, with Aitchison et al. (2020) reporting responses from ADs who felt that this type of work (in tandem with learning resource development) was overprioritised in their institution at the expense of building pedagogical capability. Other ADs though considered this kind of work to be part of their overall purpose of improving student learning (Hains-Wesson & Tytler, 2015).

Nurturing Institutional Learning and Teaching Culture

Another important element of the work of ADs that was found regularly in literature was their contribution to developing institutional culture and attitudes towards learning and teaching (Groen et al., 2023). These activities were more strategic, aiming for gradual improvements including increases in the numbers and status of teaching-focused academics (Godbold et al., 2022), greater use of quality frameworks (Mayper, 2022; Patfield et al., 2022), and widening engagement with recognition schemes like the Advance HE (also known as HEA) Fellowships (Advance HE, 2024). It was noted that these aims can be challenging in some institutions, where career advancement for academics was still heavily reliant on research success (Shaw et al., 2023).

One of the key tools available to ADs in raising the status of learning and teaching included their work with institutional and national teaching awards (West, 2023). Academic developers were often involved in institutional innovation grant programs, allocating funding for academics to buy out teaching obligations to dedicate time to developing new approaches or tools to support their teaching practices (Wright, 2023). ADs also were noted to play a central role in the organisation of institutional learning and teaching conferences, which often focused on highlighting the educational achievements of academics in the institution and exposing academics to ideas from their colleagues and further afield. The 2019 CAULLT environmental scan of professional learning in Australian higher education reported that 37 of 38 responding institutions recognised academic achievements in learning and teaching through these awards, grants, or internal conferences (CAULLT, 2019).

Research

Literature indicated that ADs most commonly undertook scholarly research in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) (Bath & Smith, 2004; Godbold et al., 2022; Stensaker, 2018) and that it was important for ADs to be research-active to be able to foster scholarship of learning and teaching in the academics that they worked with (Stitt-Bergh et al., 2023). There was a broad general consensus that academic developers being research-active was also an important part

of understanding the work and needs of academics (Bath & Smith, 2004; Dean & Geertseema, 2023; Fraser & Ling, 2014).

Driving Innovation and Change

The overall focus in the work of ADs on improving learning and teaching practices and quality means that they are frequently involved in initiatives to drive innovation and change. The contribution of ADs to innovation and change in higher education was reported extensively in research (Burdick & Hallman, 2021; Candy, 1996; Davis & Bailey, 2022; Debowski, 2014; Hicks, 2005; Holt et al., 2011; Land, 2001; Ling, 2009; Stensaker, 2018; Stevens et al., 2024).

Involvement in change initiatives was also reported as sometimes being related to long-term institutional strategic aims (Hamilton et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2016) but taking a more reactive form at other times (Hadley-Hulet, 2024; Murcay, 2023). These initiatives included supporting adaption to significant disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the transition to a new Learning Management System (LMS) (Trede et al., 2024). The level of agency that ADs had in change was noted to be somewhat variable (Groen et al., 2023; O'Toole et al., 2022). Fossland and Sadvoll (2021), in a Norwegian study, observed that the extent to which ADs are empowered is heavily dependent on the sentiments of institutional leaders, and particularly those leaders' perspectives on the capacity of the ADs.

3.4.6 Status in Universities

The majority of discussion of the academic developer role in Australian higher education was positive in tone. This role has long been regarded as an important support for preparing academics to teach (Brew & Boud, 1996; Gregory & Salmon, 2013; Myllykoski-Laine et al., 2024; Ryan et al., 2003) and enhancing learning and teaching practices and scholarship (Barrow & Grant, 2012; Dean et al., 2019; Gosling, 1996; Land, 2001; Wardak et al., 2023). Some authors expressed concerns about whether it is appropriate for professional staff, regardless of their pedagogical expertise, to

work as ADs, and claimed that these roles were increasingly being occupied by professional staff (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Harland & Staniforth, 2003; Sturm, 2022). They argued that only ADs with academic experience were equipped to understand the needs of academics and that employing former academics in professionally classified positions restricted their ability to contribute to research.

3.4.7 Gaps in the Literature

Outside of acknowledging that ADs sometimes work in Centres for Learning and Teaching with EdAdvisors in LD or ET roles (Lotti et al., 2022; Wright, 2023), there is almost no discussion about the interactions or collaborations that academic developers have with them in higher education. Similarly, the working relationships between ADs and institutional leaders are rarely addressed and the small body of work relating to directors of academic development units (Carbone, 2016; Magno et al., 2024) do not address these relationships either.

3.5 Educational Technologists

Internationally, the educational technologist role has been researched extensively for more than fifty years (Mager, 1967) by researchers in the UK (Watermeyer et al., 2022; White et al., 2020) and North America (Lowenthal & Lomellini, 2022; Ritzhaupt et al., 2018). Publications about ETs were also found from researchers in Thailand (Inkaew & Nasongkhla, 2020) and Indonesia (Haryono et al., 2019) addressing ET competencies; from Estonia (Bardone et al., 2020), South Africa (Makina, 2019), and Azerbaijan (Nasibov, 2023) on work supporting education technology initiatives; from Turkey (Simsek, 2005) about their attitudes towards technologies; and from Hong Kong (Woo, 2015) about professional identity.

In Australian higher education research though, educational technologists have not been widely examined. The role has mainly appeared in a series of papers from Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010), briefly in work by Neil Selwyn (2007, 2013), and also in my own work (Mitchell et al.,

2017; Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2023; Simpson et al., 2021). ETs more commonly appeared in passing in Australian research about technology-enhanced learning and teaching initiatives, generally as a reference that the researcher studying a new education technology intervention worked with the support of an educational technologist (Pechenkina & Branigan, 2018; Pingo et al., 2024). The specific contribution of the ET was seldom, if ever, reported, and these ETs were not listed as a contributor or co-author, or named in acknowledgement sections.

3.5.1 Terminology

The term *education(al) technologist* has been used fairly consistently in the small amount of research literature addressing the topic in Australia (Selwyn, 2007; Simpson et al., 2021; Strain & Inglis, 1990; Shurville et al., 2008, 2009, 2010). The choice of *education* or *educational* has been somewhat more arbitrary, Selwyn (2007) used the former six times in his article and the latter five times. Educational technologist also appeared reasonably consistently in international research over several decades (Bratton, 1988; Garbosky, 1994; Gately, 2024; Geis & Klaassen, 1972; Ritzhaupt et al., 2018) although Mager (1967)[USA] argued for a role, which he admitted did not currently exist, called Instructional technologist, with more of an instructional design and training focus. The term *learning technologist* has also been found in international literature (Han et al., 2023; Kala & Ladha, 2023) but it was most widely used in the United Kingdom from the early 2000s (Dickerson, 2024; Ellaway et al., 2006; Luke & Evans, 2021; McAvinia, 2006; Oliver, 2002; Watermeyer et al., 2022). While the definition of educational or learning technologist is generally reasonably consistent across literature in Australia and internationally, referring to someone who chiefly works to implement and support education technologies, some UK researchers also use the term to refer to learning designers or to people with learning design skills (Dickerson, 2024; McAvinia, 2006; Watermeyer et al., 2022). Other UK researchers, however, do not include learning design as part of the practices or skill sets of people in this role (Ellaway et al., 2006; Luke & Evans, 2021; Oliver, 2002; Vere et al., 2024). Learning design skills and practices are also associated with the educational technologist role

in a small number of other articles from outside of the UK (Han et al., 2023; Inkaew & Nasongkhla, 2020; Kang & Ritzhaupt, 2015). There is no indication that there are uniformly different definitions of educational technologists used in specific countries or related to specific position titles but the fact that there are differing views about whether learning design is part of this role in some areas of the literature indicates that views of the educational technologist role are more varied than for the academic developer or learning designer roles.

3.5.2 Who are Educational Technologists?

One large study undertaken in the UK sought to audit the number of staff associated with “the embedding, development and support of learning technologies in HE” (Beetham et al., 2001, p. 3). It found that there were approximately 7,500 people doing this work in UK higher education institutions. These staff fell into categories which included educational technologists, but these categories also included librarians, project managers and academic innovators and data were not provided about the numbers of people in these specific categories. Compared to ADs, little work was found providing qualitative practitioner perspectives of working as educational technologists other than that of Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010). While ETs are consistently described as holding professional positions in recent research (Ritzhaupt et al., 2018; Tay et al., 2022), Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010) provided a different perspective in their descriptions of ETs, largely in the UK, in the 1990s and early 2000s. They described a shift from ETs working predominately in “close knit academic communities” (Shurville et al., 2008, p. 919) as academic developers with an interest in education technologies into more professionalised specialisations. These authors described the ET role as one largely held by academics and posited that an important component of the ET’s work should involve collaborating with academics on TEL research.

3.5.3 Entry to the Field and Qualifications

In terms of the ways that ETs enter the field, the most attention was paid to competencies needed by ETs. These included knowledge of a wide range of technologies, understanding of pedagogy, problem solving and project management skills, customer service and administration (Inkaew & Nasongkhla; 2020; Kang & Ritzhaupt, 2015; Ritzhaupt & Martin, 2014; Tennyson, 2001). A single reference was found to a specific qualification for educational technologists (Strain & Inglis, 1990), although this related to the fact that a Graduate Diploma in Education technology offered by Victoria College (Australia) was being changed to a Graduate Diploma in Instructional Design and Technology. Shurville et al. (2008) noted the existence of an accreditation scheme for educational technologists, the Certified Member of the Association for Learning Technology (CMALT) but also indicated that this is yet to achieve critical mass and is not a formal qualification.

3.5.4 Purpose

As the name suggests, educational technologists are strongly associated with technology-enhanced learning and teaching in higher education institutions. This includes work to enable the appropriate use of education technologies, from their evaluation (Shurville et al., 2009; Watermeyer et al., 2022) to the provision of training and support in their use (Han et al., 2023; Shurville et al., 2009). Some authors describe ETs contributing to the development of these technologies (Oliver, 2002; Ritzhaupt et al., 2018), however, this is not common. Educational technologists also play significant roles in the procurement, implementation, and governance of these technologies, as well as advising educators on sound pedagogical use of technologies, however this is largely not addressed in research (Chugh et al., 2023; Selwyn, 2007).

3.5.5 Practices

The main practices and associated competencies of educational technologists were examined in some depth in the 2010s (Fox & Sumner, 2014; Hartley et al., 2010; Haryono et al.,

2019; Iqdami & Branch; 2016; Kang & Ritzhaupt, 2015; Ritzhaupt & Martin, 2014; Ritzhaupt et al., 2010). These practices and competencies were reasonably consistently associated with ETs, although several international authors also describe ETs as undertaking learning design (Hopkins, 2018; Iqdami & Branch; 2016; Ritzhaupt et al., 2010), which differs to the understanding of the role used in this study. Common practices include 1) overseeing education technologies, 2) capability building of academics, 3) providing technical support, and 4) contributing to innovation and change in the university.

Facilitating Education Technologies

Ensuring that appropriate education technologies are available to educators and students was reported to be a key aspect of the work of an educational technologist (Han et al., 2023; Mitchell et al., 2017). ETs use their expertise of technology and pedagogy (Ritzhaupt et al., 2018) to identify appropriate tools (software and hardware) for learning and teaching needs (Scanlon, 2021) and frequently lead complex institutional processes to add it to the existing university technology environment (Dickerson, 2024; Shurville et al., 2010). This work is invariably a collaborative effort involving working with many stakeholders in the institution including academics (Smith, 2019), heads of departments, and units (Han et al., 2023), IT departments (Shurville et al., 2009), student services units, scheduling, and communications staff (Vandover, 2013), as well as the product vendor (Scott, 2022). Literature about collaboration with EdAdvisors in other roles on these implementations was not found.

Not all research relating to the implementation of education technologies acknowledged the contribution of ETs in the process. Pingo et al. (2024) attributed responsibility for education technology governance in Australia to learning designers. Yerik-Zwickl (2022) provided a comprehensive description of a typical education technology procurement process in an American higher education institution, with all facets of that work attributed to the university IT department. Deacon et al. (2022) undertook a review of literature about education technology implementation in

higher education from the previous decade which did not refer to educational technologists, only “skilled IT professionals” (p. 12).

Building Capability

Other practices that were regularly attributed to ETs included building staff capability in the appropriate use of education technologies. This involved designing and delivering training in their appropriate use and developing support resources such as how-to guides and self-paced online modules (Ritzhaupt et al., 2018; Ruggiero & Boehm, 2015; Shurville et al., 2009). Authors tended to describe ETs as providing practical instruction in how to operate technologies and not regard them as offering pedagogical advice in technology-enhanced learning and teaching practices with these tools (Selwyn, 2013; Tay et al., 2022).

Technical Support

Educational technologists were commonly described as providing technical support and troubleshooting for education technologies (Han et al., 2023; Hopkins, 2018; Inkaew & Nasongkhla, 2020; Kala & Ladha, 2023; Kang & Ritzhaupt, 2015; Oliver, 2002; Shurville et al., 2008, 2009). Kang and Ritzhaupt (2015) analysed 400 job announcements for educational technologists and found that 22.75% of them asked for the ability to “troubleshoot technical problems” (p. 245) and 24.5% required “trouble-shooting skills” (p. 244).

While educational technologists generally regarded technical support work as part of their role (Hopkins, 2018), Shurville et al. (2009) raised the notion that this facet of their work can lead to them primarily being seen as technical support agents, ignoring their expertise in technology-enhanced learning and teaching pedagogy.

Driving Innovation and Change

The contribution of educational technologists to institutional innovation and change initiatives was another aspect that was widely discussed in the literature about ETs. These initiatives

are frequently put into place to change learning and teaching practices and are frequently centred around changes to existing education technologies or the introduction of new ones (Graham et al., 2023). The rapid expansion of the use of education technologies in support of new approaches to learning and teaching has been attributed to the rise in status of educational technologists (Shurville et al., 2009), however some authors express concern that educational goals often go unrealised in these change initiatives at the expense of the technological change (Stoddart, 2015).

3.5.6 Status in Universities

The relative invisibility of educational technologists in Australian higher education research, particularly that about the practical aspects of education technologies (Marshall et al., 2024; Turnbull et al., 2021), suggests that the purpose and practices of ETs are not well known. Where ETs are acknowledged, it is expressed in terms of the researchers having used their support, but the nature of their contributions are not described (Laufa et al., 2023; Pechenkina & Branigan, 2018). Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010) offer some of the only indications as to the value and nature of the contributions of educational technologists and how these contribute to their status in Australian higher education.

Educational technologists were openly criticised by some authors, regarded as naive technology evangelists with an uncritical understanding of wider issues around the use of technology in education (Selwyn, 2007) and technocrats (Watters, 2021). In his article, Selwyn claimed that their work (and the general orientation of universities towards education technologies) had led them to “lose sight of the guiding principles and underlying purposes of university education” (p. 90). Other authors questioned how informed those kinds of assertions were, noting that such scholars rarely had “any serious engagement with technology” (Goodyear, 2023, p. 9).

3.5.7 Gaps in the Current Literature

Despite the educational technologist role being long established in higher education in many countries (Geis & Klaassen, 1972; Haryono et al., 2019; Mager, 1967; Nasibov, 2023), several aspects of the practices of educational technologists are rarely found in scholarly literature. This includes their work in building academic capability (Shurville et al., 2008, 2009) as well as in implementing and supporting education technologies (Kala & Ladha, 2023; Simpson et al., 2021). Information about the practical nature of the collaborative relationships between ETs, ADs and LDs is absent and there is little to no discussion about differences in practice between ETs working in central and faculty-based areas.

3.6 Learning Designers

The learning designer role has been widely examined in research both in Australia and internationally over the last 35 years (Abblitt et al., 2023; Allen, 1996; Graham, 2013; Henderson et al., 2022; Ng Hong Kok et al., 2007; Strain & Inglis, 1990). While favoured position titles changed over time, understanding of the purpose of the role and its practices have remained relatively consistent between countries in this period.

3.6.1 Terminology

The concept of instructional design dates back to the Second World War and the application of new, largely behaviourist pedagogical and systems approaches to rapidly train large numbers of military recruits (Reiser, 2001). Seeto and Herrington (2006) suggested that, over time, approaches shifted from this systems-based and behaviourist approach to more constructivist approaches, and the term education or learning designer now being more commonly used in Australian higher education. The use of learning, education(al) and instructional in the names of these roles was inconsistent between institutions and countries and over time (Bird, 2004; Torrisi-Steele & Davis, 2000; White & White, 2016). Instructional designer was the preferred term in the USA (Kumar &

Ritzhaupt, 2017; Rowland, 2008; Stefaniak & Gilstrap, 2024) and it also appeared in older Australian work (Allen, 1996; Keppell, 2007).

3.6.2 Who are Learning Designers?

As in the previous discussions of AD and ETs roles, there was little empirical data about the demographic composition of the learning designer field in Australia in current research. In an older study, Allen (1996) surveyed 99 people in Australia who “were either working as instructional designers or had stated an interest in instructional design” (p. 14) but no demographic information was captured. More recently, Slade et al. (2019) surveyed 103 learning designers in Australian institutions, 72% were female, 39% of respondents were aged 35-44 and 31% were aged 45-54. 94% of respondents held professionally classified positions.

In terms of personal and professional identity, a modest body of work was found examining the lived experiences and personal perspectives of learning designers (Boulder et al., 2021; Gachago et al., 2023; Ren, 2021; Tracey, 2016). This work largely focused on the experiences of LDs in higher education outside of Australia and was primarily about the nature of the LDs’ work rather than who they are. With the exception of the work by Slade et al. (2019) in Australia, the question of whether LDs hold academic or professional positions was not often addressed in research.

3.6.3 Entry to the Field and Qualifications

A substantial amount of work was found that examined more general entry and career pathways for LDs, the nature of qualifications to accredit learning designers, and the key competencies and knowledge that they need to be effective practitioners. Learning design has been the only EdAdvisor role to have relevant qualifications preparing third space practitioners to enter the field. These qualifications have been examined in Australian research over several decades (Abblitt et al., 2023; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021; Strain & Inglis, 1990) and also internationally (Gardner et al., 2021; Hobson, 2021; MacCallum & Brown, 2022; Stefaniak & Reese, 2022).

Wagner (2021) and March et al. (2022) offered useful overviews of the field and suggested approaches to becoming an LD but most literature started after the point where LDs had been employed. Several authors examined the careers that LDs had before entering the field and found that it was common for learning designers to have worked in other areas of education, such as K-12 schools or industry training (Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Pretero et al., 2023; Schwier et al., 2004; Slade et al., 2019; Song & Huang, 2023; Strain & Inglis, 1990). Slade et al. (2019) found that 68% of the 103 LDs that they surveyed had previously worked in education (primary, secondary, adult, or tertiary).

3.6.4 Purpose

There was a broad consensus in research that learning designers existed to aid universities and academics in providing students with a high-quality learning experience by applying relevant and evidence-based pedagogical approaches to the design, development and delivery of learning resources and activities (Allen, 1996; Altena et al., 2019; Graham, 2013; Zeivots et al., 2023). They were described as further supporting these aims in work related to building the capability of academics through professional development and ad hoc advice (Keppell, 2007; Tay et al., 2022).

3.6.5 Practices

The main activities of LDs and associated competencies for them have been examined extensively (Allen, 1996; Bisset, 2018; Cox & Osguthorpe, 2003; Kenny et al., 2005; Koszalka et al., 2013; Kumar & Ritzhaupt, 2017; Phommanee et al., 2004; Ritzhaupt & Kumar, 2015; Ritzhaupt et al., 2021; Rowland, 2008; Sugar & Moore, 2015). The common practices include the 1) design of learning resources, activities, and courses; 2) capability building of academics; 3) contributing to innovation and change; and 4) curriculum design and development.

Design of Learning Resources, Activities, and Courses

Learning designers were described as straddling the pedagogical and technological domains in Australian higher education, working primarily on the design and development of learning resources, activities, and environments for academics, and supporting academics to do this work themselves (Altena et al., 2019; Bennett et al., 2016; Bird, 2006; Zeivots et al., 2023). This work varied significantly in scope, from one LD undertaking ad hoc work on individual online learning resources/activities (Bisset, 2018) to large scale, whole-of-unit redesign projects conducted by a team of learning designers working with academics at an institution-wide level (Macfarlan & Hook, 2022).

Building Academic Capability

The involvement of learning designers in the professional development of academics was notably less widely examined in research, possibly due to the extent to which the role is associated with designing courses, resources, and activities. Nonetheless, it was found in work exploring the full breadth of their practices and their professional identity (Allen, 1996; Altena et al., 2019; Bisset, 2018; D'Souza et al., 2022). Learning designers' involvement in undertaking professional development was described as taking a range of forms, from informal ad hoc consultations (D'Souza et al., 2022) to the design and delivery of training and workshops (Altena et al., 2019) and the development of online support resources and how-to guides (Bisset, 2018).

Interestingly, three recent works which described the skills and practices that were covered in the design of training or a qualification for learning designers did not include this aspect of LDs' work (Abblitt et al., 2023; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021; MacCallum & Brown, 2022). Assuming that qualifications for learning designers should equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for all aspects of the role, this highlights that perceptions of the purpose of this role can vary in the sector.

Driving Innovation and Change

Contributions to innovation and change by learning designers in Australian higher education were discussed in research (Henderson et al., 2022; Kirsch & Luo, 2023), but not as often as those of ADs and ETs. LDs chiefly appeared in case studies of change initiatives, including one about moving from print-based distance learning to online learning (McDonald & Mayes, 2007) and a number of vignettes describing small LD led faculty-based projects that were part of a wider exploration of creative risk taking (Henderson et al., 2022). Some authors examining transformative projects noted the involvement of LDs in the larger teams working on these efforts (Altena & Theobald, 2022; Zeivots et al., 2023) but did not focus on the contributions of learning designers specifically. Other authors considered innovation and technology governance to form a core part of LD activity which needed to be informed by education technology capabilities (Pingo et al., 2024).

Curriculum Design and Development

The involvement of LDs in activities more commonly associated with ADs such as curriculum design/development was a point of contention in the literature, where authors from an EdAdvisor background described this as a part of LD practice (Allen, 1996; Altena et al., 2019; Bugden & Mok, 2023; Gunn & Cavallari, 2007; Henderson et al., 2022) while authors employed as academics regarded this as the responsibility of academics (Bennett, Agostinho, & Lockyer 2015, 2016; Bennett, Agostinho, Lockyer et al., 2008). The rationale offered by Bennett et al. (2016) was largely that in a time of significant change, focusing on equipping academics with these skills was “critical to making this shift sustainable” (p. 126).

3.6.6 Status in Universities

The abundance of research literature about learning design and learning designers suggested that this role was well understood and regarded in higher education. Learning designers have been employed in these roles in Australian higher education since 1976 (Strain & Inglis, 1990)

and there was a strong focus in literature on the nature of their practices (Allen, 1996; Altena et al., 2019; Bisset, 2018; Kumar & Ritzhaupt, 2017; Pretero et al., 2023; Wagner, 2021) and finding ways to expand the field and help them to grow professionally (Abblitt et al., 2023; Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021; Hinze et al., 2022).

3.6.7 Gaps in the Current Literature

As with the literature on ETs, the working conditions and contexts of learning designers are infrequently considered in research literature. This includes whether they are employed in central or faculty-based units, in ongoing or fixed-term/casual positions and also whether their work is project oriented (such as large-scale course design *uplifts*) or more operational work directly with academics. The working relationships with EdAdvisors in ET and AD roles were also rarely considered in current research literature, despite the interconnected nature of these roles.

3.7 Distribution of EdAdvisor Practices

The EdAdvisor practices identified in the literature were sometimes associated with specific roles and sometimes with multiple roles. These associations offer insights into shared purposes among EdAdvisors and overlaps between roles are presented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Associations Between EdAdvisor Roles and Practices in Research Literature

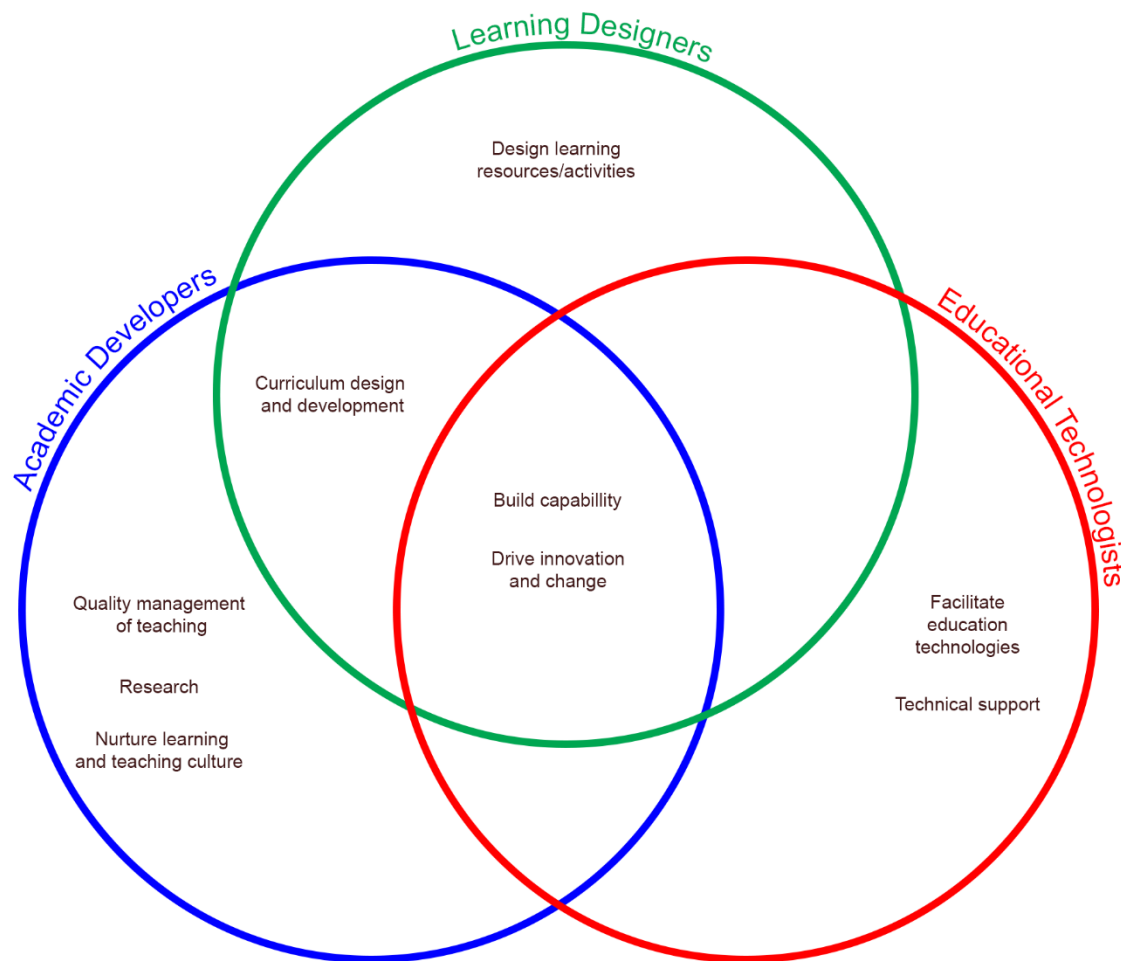


Figure 3.1 indicates that learning designers were largely reported to be the EdAdvisor role which designs learning resources and activities, educational technologists are the role which oversees education technologies and provides technical support and academic developers are the role which performs quality management of teaching, research, and nurturing learning and teaching culture. Academic developers and learning designers were both reported to perform curriculum design and development, and all roles were reported to contribute to building the capability of academics and driving innovation and change.

3.8 Inhibitors and Enablers of EdAdvisor Work

The third research question in this study asks *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisor work?* In order to better describe these inhibitors and enablers, I am using core concepts from the work of Kemmis et al. (2014) on practice architectures to describe the supporting elements of the practices of EdAdvisors.

As explained in Chapter 2 of this study, Kemmis posits that practices are comprised of three elements: doings, sayings and relatings. These elements align with practice arrangements which create contexts which allow practices to occur. These arrangements are material-economic (doings), cultural-discursive (sayings), and social-political (relatings). The following sections examine current understanding of these factors in research.

3.9 Material-Economic Factors

The resources which enable or inhibit practices in an institution can take a variety of forms which are not always immediately apparent. These resources can influence how many EdAdvisors are available to undertake specific practices, and which practices are prioritised (Kemmis et al., 2014). These practices can be further affected by changes in resourcing, and the prioritisation of practices can be affected external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.

3.9.1 Organisational Structures

The ways that EdAdvisor teams were located in the university organisational structures was identified by some authors as influencing their impact on learning and teaching in several different ways. Despite being located in different countries and different higher education systems, the nature of these structures and their purpose tended to be notably consistent, across literature from Italy (Lotti et al., 2022), the USA (Hoessler et al., 2023; Mihai et al., 2025; Wright, 2023), New Zealand (Mori et al., 2024), Ireland (Hobson, 2024), the European Union (Scott et al., 2025) and

Australia (Connell, 2019; Fraser & Ryan, 2012; Ellis & Goodyear, 2019; Graham, 2013; Woelert & Stensaker, 2024). Dee and Heineman (2016) observed that “institutional decision making can be improved when administrators, staff and faculty have an understanding of the organizational context in which they operate” (p. 13). This understanding could contribute to clarifying the overall purpose of EdAdvisors in the institution, influencing the extent to which EdAdvisors in different roles interact with each other and are visible to academics, and affecting how well they are resourced to undertake their tasks. The stability of these organisational structures also shapes the efficacy of EdAdvisors to effect long-term changes to learning and teaching in the institution (Connell, 2019; Hoessler et al., 2023; Mori et al., 2024; Wright, 2023).

Overview of EdAdvisor Units

Several different models for EdAdvisor units in tertiary education institutions were described. EdAdvisor units could be centrally located, as part of a university level division ultimately reporting to a senior leader of learning and teaching such as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education (Wright, 2023) or they could be located in faculties, working more closely with faculty leaders and academics (Challis et al., 2009; Mori et al., 2024). Faculty-based EdAdvisors may also be physically (or organisationally) located in faculties but ultimately report to central leadership in an “embedded” model (Drysdale, 2018; Morgan et al., 2007) or be employed directly by the faculty (Graham, 2013). The arrangement of EdAdvisor units where some are centrally located and managed and some are located and managed in faculties is referred to as a *hub* or *hub and spoke* model (Ellis et al., 2018; Fraser & Ryan, 2012; Wright et al., 2018).

EdAdvisor units may serve a specific purpose, such as supporting and managing education technologies (Wright, 2023), designing online courses (Graham, 2013; Webster & Mertova, 2007) or developing the pedagogical capabilities of academics (Lotti et al., 2022). In these instances, it is usual for them to mainly employ EdAdvisors in roles related to this purpose (Wright, 2023). Given the ways in which EdAdvisor practices and responsibilities overlap, these units may also have a wider

purpose and be comprised of EdAdvisors in several different roles (Morgan et al., 2007). Lotti et al. (2022) identified four categories of staff commonly found in teaching and learning centres as 1) management of the centre, 2) academic staff (generally faculty/academic developers), 3) technical-administrative staff (generally instructional designers and IT technical experts) and 4) collaborating students.

Central Units

The most commonly reported types of centrally located EdAdvisor units are Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs) (Lotti et al., 2022; Palmer et al., 2010; Wright, 2023). TLCs are chiefly tasked with providing academic development and learning design services aligned with institutional strategic priorities (Uslu, 2017) but many also undertake and collaborate with academics on research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (Holt et al., 2012). Educational technologists and their units may be integrated into these TLCs (Palmer et al., 2010). In some instances, these TLCs may be made up of different teams led by different managers focussing on specific aspects on learning design or technology (Lotti et al., 2022; Wright, 2023), however given the fluidity of many of these roles, the boundaries between these units and their areas of responsibility can be blurry, sometimes leading to tensions (Bird et al. 2007; Drysdale, 2021). Several authors note that an important aim of TLCs is the promotion of a culture of learning and teaching in the institution (Lotti et al., 2022; Wright, 2023). Higher education institutions may also have a centralised learning technology team that acts as the business owner and manager of enterprise level education technology systems, taking responsibility for operational decision making while the IT department provides technical support (Shurville et al., 2010).

A report from the Council of Australian University Leaders of Learning and Teaching (CAULLT, 2019) indicated that 36 of 38 (95%) of universities that responded to their survey provided professional development in learning and teaching to academics through a TLC.

Academic Development Units

Several authors wrote specifically about Academic Development Units (ADUs) (Fraser & Ryan, 2012; Gosling, 1996, 2001). This work was mostly undertaken from the 1990s to the early 2010s and since then TLCs have largely superseded ADUs. ADUs were primarily focused on the professional development of academics as educators and on SoTL research. Academic developers in central units often still work in academic development focused teams within TLCs but this was largely not reported in research, other than in an “organizational typology of a TLC” in Lotti et al. (2022, p. 81), which notes a faculty development training program.

Education Technology Units

The growing importance of providing and managing appropriate education technologies and the need to ensure that educators had the capabilities to use them effectively was recognised in Australian research pertaining to EdAdvisor units (Graham, 2013; Holt et al., 2013; Wilmore, 2014). References to educational technologist units specifically were notably less common. Directors of half of Australian TLCs in the work of Palmer et al. (2010) identified “Ensuring reliable operation of e-learning technology systems and applications” as a function of their centre and 87% of them identified “Implementing and supporting education technologies” (p. 165).

The work of Shurville et al. (2008, 2009) provided rich practitioner-based insights into the employment of ETs in Australian higher education. They noted that there was not a consistent approach being taken to the use of education technologists in higher education in Australia at that time and described several challenges emerging when dedicated education technology units were created. These challenges included empire building and resultant organisational conflict, interdisciplinarity tensions when a TEL focus was added to an existing IT service, and central versus faculty tensions which arose when embedding educational technologists across the institution. Overall, Shurville et al. advocated for a single central education technology unit.

More recent international work (Lotti et al., 2022; White, 2020) noted the increasing importance of ETs in institutions (and institutional learning and teaching strategies) since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020. The emergency switch to remote teaching was reported to have led TLCs to engage more with ET units, even merging with them.

Learning Design Units

Most research pertaining to Teaching and Learning Centres acknowledged the presence of learning designers in TLCs but rarely explored their contributions or practices in detail (Beckley, 2022; Bird, 2004; Lotti et al. 2022; Wright et al., 2018). Bird et al. (2007) suggested that the centralisation of LDs was linked to the historical organisation of Distance Education Centres, where “designers, desktop publishers and proofreaders worked centrally on the design and production of print-based distance education materials” (p. 31).

Three different organisational structures and reporting frameworks for LDs in US universities were examined by Drysdale (2021). This study found that a centralised model, with academic reporting lines led to “better advocacy and empowerment, better alignment with the pedagogical work of both designers and faculty, and less role misperception for instructional designers” (p. 73). Drysdale also found that staffing levels of LD units should reflect the size of the university and that they should include dedicated educational technologists “to reduce the responsibilities of technology support from the instructional designer” (p. 73).

Faculty Units

Some faculties employed their own teams of academic developers, learning designers and learning technologists to work directly with their academics (Han et al., 2023; Henderson et al., 2022; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Work by Drysdale (2021) found that faculty-based LDs tended to be under-resourced and undervalued. Some EdAdvisors were employed in departmental units within faculties, reporting only to departmental heads and working independently from faculty-based units (Keppell, 2007), however this was less common.

3.9.2 Impact of Structure and Restructures

One material-economic aspect of the place of EdAdvisors and EdAdvisor units in the institutional organisation that has been more widely covered in the research is the impact of institutional restructures (Fraser & Ryan, 2012; Gray & Radloff, 2006; Gosling et al., 2009; Palmer et al., 2010; White, 2020; Woelert & Stensaker, 2024). This was rarely seen as beneficial, with major impacts seen as including a diminution in influence and in the ability to ensure ongoing resourcing. Fraser and Ryan (2012) found that there was a turnover rate of 82% of directors of central academic development units in the space of five years, largely due to the stress and instability of the roles, as well as the ongoing difficulty of “convincing senior managers of the legitimacy and benefits of AD (Academic Development)” (p. 140).

Some authors viewed organisational change through a different lens, with Hoessler et al. (2023) considering the impact from the perspective of HR. They noted the importance of an agile management structure which found the right balance of “reporting design (flat versus hierarchy) and role design (functional versus cross-functional)” (p. 63). This involved considering the impact of all staff reporting to one manager or a number of managers and the extent to which EdAdvisors should focus on specific activities or work more as generalists. They found that these decisions were heavily context-dependent, for example an institution focused on IT security had different operational needs to one implementing student-centred initiatives.

3.9.3 COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 forced a rapid and unplanned emergency transition to online learning and teaching in higher education institutions due to the need for social distancing (Bellaby et al., 2020). Institutional responses to the pandemic in Australian higher education led to increased demand for, and understanding of, the services of EdAdvisors (Bellaby et al., 2020; D’Souza et al., 2022; Reyna, 2022) and a high proportion of EdAdvisors reported significant

changes to their roles and workloads (Bellaby et al., 2020). These included an increased focus on the provision of professional development (Zeivots et al., 2022), development of support resources (D'Souza et al., 2022), redesign of assessments (Kinley, 2023; Reyna, 2022) as well as the emotional support given to academics frustrated with the changes (Trede et al., 2024).

Educational technologists also made a significant contribution in their work to rapidly evaluate and implement new technologies (such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams) for teaching and find technological solutions to accommodate international students unable to access university systems due to Internet connectivity issues (Margenat et al., 2022; Watermeyer et al., 2022).

Positive impacts on the work of EdAdvisors that came from the pandemic response included new approaches to delivering academic professional development at scale (Zeivots et al., 2022), the expansion of EdAdvisors' own knowledge of education technologies and associated pedagogies (Bellaby et al., 2020), and the implementation of new technologies to support learning and teaching such as Zoom (Watermeyer et al., 2022). Other authors reported a reduction in resistance to TEL among academics (Trede et al., 2024) and a broadening of understanding of the roles and purpose of EdAdvisors which led to them being regarded as able to provide more than technical support (Bellaby et al., 2020). Ng et al. (2023) reported that learning designers from the ASCILITE TEledvisors Network community widely embraced the use of Twitter during the pandemic to supplement their professional learning networks, expanding their connections with LDs around the world.

Less positively, the need for systems to manage the higher workload created by the pandemic response led to less collegial and more formal ways of working with academics (Bellaby et al., 2020). Concerns were raised about the extent to which technologies for remote assessment created a surveillance culture (Kinley, 2023) as well as the often comparatively poor quality of online teaching practice that resulted from the rushed shift to this approach (Watermeyer et al., 2022).

The scope and speed of this transition was unlike that associated with any previous disruptions to learning and teaching in higher education, such as the emergence of Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (White et al., 2020) or the Open University movement (Wymer, 1972)

because those changes were more gradual, and universities had time to evaluate their importance and relevance. With COVID-19, key university learning and teaching operations were affected almost immediately for all students.

3.9.4 Generative Artificial Intelligence

Impactful Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools emerged after data collection for this study was completed but it is important to note them as material-economic factors which are now affecting EdAdvisors and their work. Some literature about the approaches needed in education in the age of AI was undertaken in the time before ChatGPT was released (Bearman & Luckin, 2020; Carvalho et al., 2022; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019) but the public release of ChatGPT is widely recognised as the point at which universities realised that they needed to take serious action (Lodge et al. 2023; MacCallum et al., 2023). While historically the emergence of other education technologies such as the Open University (Wymer, 1972), home video (Kearney & Shuck, 2006), the Internet (Garrison et al., 1999), virtual reality (Blanchard et al., 2006), social media (Conole, 2013), and MOOCs (White & White, 2016) have also transformed opportunities for learning and teaching, (or their proponents have promised that they would), none have impacted higher education with the urgency that GenAI has.

As higher education has grappled with the implications of tools which can be used by students to create passable assessment submissions with minimal effort or learning (Lodge et al., 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023), several areas of work have arisen which directly relate to EdAdvisors. These include the detection of GenAI materials in assessment (Cotton et al., 2024; Tayan et al., 2023) and the use of Generative AI tools in learning design (Ryall & Abblitt, 2023; Vallis et al., 2023). EdAdvisors will also most likely be responsible for building the capabilities of academics in the use of these tools and will contribute to institutional policy making about their use (Doherty et al., 2024; Lodge et al., 2023). If GenAI is adopted widely to support the design and creation of courses, learning resources, and activities, it is also possible that these may no longer be considered as

important aspects of the work of EdAdvisors and the practices and purpose of EdAdvisors will change.

3.10 Cultural-Discursive Factors

The specialist discourse surrounding practices contributes substantially to the ways that the practice is described, interpreted and justified (Kemmis et al., 2014). In terms of the work of EdAdvisors in higher education, this discourse includes attitudes towards learning and teaching, the perceived purpose of higher education itself, acceptance of change and institutional policies and procedures.

3.10.1 Attitudes Toward Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

The literature recognised that university academics are a diverse set of individuals with varying areas of expertise, beliefs and attitudes towards learning and teaching (Daddow et al., 2023). Their approaches to teaching ranged in complexity from “emphasising teachers’ roles in information transmission” to a “focus on students’ role in learning through conceptual change” (Myllykoski-Laine et al., 2024, p. 2) and their interest in and desire to teach were similarly variable (Macfarlane, 2024). Many examples were found in the literature of positive collaborations between academics and EdAdvisors that were designed to enhance teaching practices and student learning (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2018; Bugden & Mok, 2023; Han et al., 2023; Thornley & Schwenger, 2023). These provided valuable models for EdAdvisors to draw on in their practice when working with academics.

While academics were expected by their universities to be effective in both their teaching and their research (Deaker et al., 2016), there was a body of opinion that teaching was valued less than research in higher education in terms of prestige and career progression (Brew et al., 2017; Chalmers, 2011; Khan et al., 2018; Meadows et al., 2024; Wardak et al., 2024). Teaching-focused academics interviewed in Flecknoe et al. (2017) reported that research-focused colleagues regarded them as failures who “did not contribute much value to the university” (p. 10). Shephard et al.

(2020) reported that academics faced barriers to undertaking education-focused research, with one explicitly being told that they had not received a promotion as a result of doing too much of it. Some authors observed that the fact that the purpose of EdAdvisors was strongly aligned with education may influence how well they and their work are valued in university culture and their ability to have impact in their roles (McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Whitchurch, 2023).

3.10.2 Institutional Strategies, Policy and Standards for Learning and Teaching

While the attitudes of individual academics about the relative importance of education impacted the extent of their engagement with EdAdvisors (Deaker et al., 2016), cultural-discursive arrangements of learning and teaching expressed in institutional policies, strategies and standards were described as playing an even more significant role (Meadows et al., 2024; Winslett, 2016).

Positive actions being taken by institutions and institutional leaders to bolster the standing of learning and teaching practices included introducing teaching focused academic positions, establishing teaching innovators groups, supporting creative risk taking, and rethinking the criteria considered in academic promotions (Bridge et al., 2023; Henderson et al., 2022; Wardak et al., 2024). Models for effective institutional learning and teaching strategies have been developed, such as the Institutional Teaching Culture framework developed by Meadows et al. (2024) which recommends using the following “six levers for understanding and enhancing teaching culture:

- (1) Institutional Strategic Initiatives and Practices Prioritize Effective Teaching
- (2) Assessment of Teaching is Constructive and Flexible
- (3) Effective Teaching is Implemented
- (4) Infrastructure Exists to Support Teaching
- (5) Broad Engagement Occurs Around Teaching
- (6) Effective Teaching is Recognized and Rewarded” (Meadows et al., 2024, p. 3)

Some institutional learning and teaching strategies were criticised for lacking detail about the specific details of quality standards of practice that universities expected of their educators (Gratz & Looney, 2020; Shaw et al., 2023; Winslett, 2016). Winslett examined strategic plans from 39 Australian universities and bluntly stated that “Australian university strategic plans do not resolve but instead contribute to the challenges and complexities for teaching support staff” and that “there is no substantive pedagogic strategy evident in any of the plans” (p. 546). The use of student feedback surveys, generally delivered at the end of a subject to quantify the quality of teaching practice, was reported to be commonplace in higher education (Shephard et al., 2020; Winter et al., 2017) however their value was criticised by some (Borch et al. 2024; Darwin, 2016), with one paper stating that that “our measure of teacher effectiveness is negatively correlated with the students’ evaluations of professors” (Braga et al., 2014, p. 71).

While strategising and policy making relating to enhancing teaching and learning is commonly shaped by committees and working groups in universities (Rosenberg, 2023), several researchers noted that EdAdvisors are rarely included in the process (Winslett, 2016). King and Boyatt (2015) highlighted that excluding such staff from this decision making “can create tension in the workplace” (p. 1273) and undermine successful adoption of e-learning. Work by Mihai et al. (2025) which interviewed 25 directors of CTLs in the USA indicated that EdAdvisor or CTL contributions to these kinds of strategies were more common. The authors noted however that contributing to institutional teaching and learning strategies carried the risk of positioning the centre as an “arm of the administration” and not a “safe space for faculty” (p. 8). Another frequent source of tension influencing attitudes to learning and teaching that was reported was the idea that institutions try to implement the same “one size fits all” approach to teaching and learning across all disciplines despite each discipline considering that it is distinct and possessing unique education technology and teaching support needs (Holt et al., 2014; King & Boyatt, 2015; Winslett, 2016). Other concerns identified in the literature about institutional strategies for learning and teaching

pertained to whether they are intended to provide enhanced educational experiences to students or if they are more driven by financial aims. These are discussed further in section 3.10.4.

3.10.3 The Divide Between Central and Faculties

In addition to the question about the extent to which learning and teaching should be prioritised in the university, EdAdvisors and their work were observed to be significantly affected by differences between priorities in centralised areas of the university and faculties (Gray, 2015; Han et al., 2023; Veles et al., 2023). These tensions were commonly shaped by ongoing debate on whether it is more important to address the priorities and culture of the institution (Hall, 2022) or academic and disciplinary priorities and culture (Chen et al., 2023; Macfarlane, 2024). This issue was also considered to affect the working relationships between centrally and faculty-based EdAdvisors as they try to achieve sometimes competing goals in their work in an environment where institutional goals tend to be prioritised in decision making (Henderson et al., 2022; Wise et al., 2022).

Institutional Priorities and Culture

Several authors found centralised implementation and governance of education technologies to be vital in ensuring full integration with other university systems and a consistent user experience for staff and students (Chugh et al., 2023; Huda et al., 2017, Yerk-Zwickl, 2022). The involvement of central education technology units, working in conjunction with university information technology (IT) departments, was not widely discussed but was noted by Shurville et al. (2008, 2009) to be responsible not only for ensuring that suitable technologies were implemented for learning and teaching, but that they satisfied other legal or policy requirements pertaining to accessibility, privacy, and security.

In contrast, the implementation of education technologies at a faculty level was largely considered to be problematic, often failing to factor in these larger concerns of accessibility, privacy, and security as well as change-management, ongoing support, and the provision of staff

development in the use of these tools (Deacon et al., 2022; Stiles & York, 2006). Bates (2000) colourfully referred to individual academics in faculties undertaking these kinds of technology projects as “Fred in the shed” (p. 59) and Riedel (2023) indicated that these kinds of unofficial academic-led projects are still commonplace. Deacon et al. (2022) did however observe that bottom-up change initiated by faculty teaching staff was important in fostering adoption of new education technologies by academics.

Attempts to change pedagogical approaches at a whole-of-institution level were also widely examined. These are commonly driven by senior educational leaders in the university through learning and teaching strategies (Winslett, 2016) and are enacted using a combination of policy and the provision of EdAdvisor support to assist with the redesign of online units and professional development (Beckley, 2022; McKay & Robson, 2023; Stefaniak & Gilstrap, 2024). White (2020) and Wise et al. (2022) also discussed the contribution of centrally based EdAdvisors in disseminating local, faculty-based educational innovations across the entire university. Some authors noted that the broad aim of these change initiatives is to foster new institutional cultures with a focus on teaching quality (Cox et al., 2011; Shaw et al., 2023; Simunich et al., 2021) and innovation (Bridge et al., 2023; Henderson et al., 2022). Some authors questioned whether institutional culture in higher education exists at all (Silver, 2003) while others noted that there may be an institutional ethos (Southwell et al., 2010) but that academics more commonly engage with an academic culture which relates to academic autonomy and disciplinarity than with belonging to any particular institution (Liu et al. 2020; Schneckenberg, 2010).

Disciplinary Culture and Identity

A recurring theme in the literature around academics was the strong intertwining of their discipline with their professional identity (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Bridge et al., 2023; Deaker et al., 2016; Movahhed, 2021). This meant that their priorities were more likely to align with their discipline than with the institution overall (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Silver, 2003). Trowler (2014)

later reflected that this position had lacked nuance and that academics' values, and behaviour were influenced to a greater extent by institutional factors such as "technologies and managerialist ideology and practices" (p. 24) than initially believed. Nonetheless, the idea that academics associate more strongly with their disciplines (and by extension their faculties) than with their universities was widely examined in research. This issue of disciplinary identity suggests that where there is a conflict between the perceived interests of the university as a whole and those of the faculty, the academic is more likely to side with the latter. The disciplinary understanding of EdAdvisors was rarely examined, however Huang et al. (2021) noted that the faculty-based learning designers in their study were considered to have stronger disciplinary understanding than those who were centrally based.

A parallel idea to this which was also widely explored in the literature was that there are significant differences in pedagogical approaches between disciplines, and that centralised initiatives relating to learning and teaching may be too generalised to contribute meaningfully to disciplinary learning and teaching (Deacon et al., 2022; Healey, 2000; Huang et al., 2021; Kinchin & Pugh, 2024; Macfarlane, 2024; Movahhed, 2021; Neumann, 2001). These differences were widely reported as used by academics to justify resisting university level educational initiatives (Bridge et al., 2023; Gratz & Looney, 2020; Southard et al., 2021). While the growing field of discipline-based educational research (DBER) (Mestre et al., 2018; Musgrove et al., 2022; Talanquer, 2014; Wright et al., 2018) has demonstrated that there are important disciplinary differences to consider in pedagogy, these attitudes were described by centrally based EdAdvisors as inhibiting their ability to provide valuable general educational advice and support (Groen et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2021; Watermeyer et al., 2022). Faculty-based EdAdvisors however reported far fewer of these kinds of issues (Chen et al., 2023; Henderson et al., 2022).

3.10.4 Attitudes Towards Change

With their focus on supporting learning and teaching practices and the putting into place the practice arrangements that enable these practices, EdAdvisors were widely reported to be closely involved in institutional change initiatives. These initiatives were undertaken both by centrally-based and faculty-based EdAdvisors and frequently involved updates or changes to enterprise level education technologies (Palmer & Holt, 2014; Pechenkina & Branigan, 2018), capability building for new approaches to learning and teaching practices (Graham et al., 2023; Marques et al., 2024; Milne et al., 2022) or unit redesign *uplift* projects (Altena & Theobald, 2022; Macfarlan & Hook, 2022). The success of these initiatives was often described as being reliant upon the extent to which academics engaged with them (Furutomo, 2022; Makwambeni et al., 2023; Matthews, 2019).

Academic resistance to centrally-led change initiatives was widely explored in the literature, and several key themes were reported. These primarily involved a feeling of diminution of academic autonomy and control over their teaching (Ginsberg, 2011; Macfarlane, 2024), disagreements with the approaches being taken and questions about their value in the disciplinary context (Huang et al., 2021; King & Boyatt, 2015), and concerns about whether the initiatives are part of a managerialist agenda with more of a focus on cost-cutting and a view of students as consumers with little regard for academic workloads (Daddow et al., 2023; Hayes & Jandrić, 2021; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2022; Raffoul et al., 2021).

Academic Freedom and Trust

Few topics provoked stronger reactions in the literature than the idea that academic freedom in relation to learning and teaching approaches was being eroded by the central leadership or administrative side of the university. This was argued at length in Ginsberg's *The Fall of the Faculty* (Ginsberg, 2011) which included chapters entitled "Managerial Pathologies" and "There is No Such Thing as Academic Freedom (For Professors)". The idea that decisions made in the leadership or administrative areas resulted in academics feeling mistrusted by the university was also

commonly expressed (Hoppes & Holley, 2014; Huang et al., 2021; Macfarlane, 2024; Madikizela-Madiya, 2018) and this feeling appeared to diminish the enthusiasm that many authors had for engaging with these initiatives.

Disagreements With Approaches

Another associated idea was that institutionally driven change initiatives were not appropriate for the kind of teaching that the academic needs to do. In some instances, this involved a lack of confidence in the people who formulated the institutional strategy (Huang et al., 2021; King & Boyatt, 2015; Pechenkina & Liu, 2018; Winslett, 2016), that the initiatives were not appropriate in their discipline (Deaker, 2016; Gratz & Looney, 2020) or more broadly in the value of TEL or online learning overall (Kane & Dahlvig, 2022; Westberry et al., 2015). Samara et al. (2024) noted that resistance to change is also likely to arise when academics don't feel that the rationale for the change has been made clear. These perceptions were also noted as impacting the ability of EdAdvisors to affect meaningful change (Winslett, 2014). The values of EdAdvisors themselves were also explored in terms of ways that their own priorities, such as a belief in the importance of universal design for learning principles, contribute to their own attitudes to the initiatives that they support (Dennen & Jones, 2022; Stefaniak et al., 2024; Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024).

Managerialism and Resourcing

Broader concerns about whether educational change initiatives were intended to improve learning and teaching or to meet financial targets for the university were discussed by many authors. There was a widespread belief that higher education leadership is dominated by neoliberalism and a managerialist culture which overly focused on financial priorities and academic accountability at the expense of education and research (Anderson, 2008; Daddow et al., 2023; Ginsberg, 2011; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2022; Raffoul et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Whitchurch and Gordon (2009) noted that people working in the third space to enact initiatives from central leadership were correspondingly sometimes regarded by academics as "agents of managerialism" (p. 172). This

tendency to question of the motives of EdAdvisors was viewed as acting as an inhibitor to building trust in their working relationships with academics. Raffoul et al. (2021) examined the ways that ADs navigate *audit culture* in higher education and recommended clarifying the purpose of data collection activities around teaching practices and performance with academics and doing what they can to stay true to educational development goals and values.

Parallel to questions around the motivations behind institutional teaching and learning change initiatives was concerns from academics about the additional workload required to make changes to unit design and engage in new learning and teaching practices (Huang et al., 2021; Kane & Dahlvig, 2022; Wilson, 2023). Some authors reported that while academics were told that new TEL practices would ultimately reduce their workload, this was rarely the outcome (Gregory & Lodge, 2015; Phillips et al., 2016). The lack of time for academics to engage with the kind of work that EdAdvisors perform was a frequently reported barrier to EdAdvisor efficacy (Daddow et al., 2023; Raffoul et al. 2021; Wilson, 2023).

Faculty-Led Change Initiatives

Literature about faculty-driven and based change initiatives tended to be discussed in more positive terms, avoiding some of the issues observed in centrally led projects (Chen et al., 2023; Henderson et al., 2022; Macfarlan & Hook, 2022; Webster & Mertova, 2007). This positivity was reported to relate to the closer organisational relationships between the participating academics and EdAdvisors (Webster & Mertova, 2007), greater willingness to accept failure (Henderson et al., 2022), and a strong focus on collaborative co-design (Chen et al., 2023).

Other Inhibitors

Not all academic resistance to institutional teaching and learning initiatives related to central-faculty or philosophical tensions. Brew et al. (2017) mapped four *modes of reflexivity* amongst mid-career academics facing institution level educational initiatives in higher education. Drawing on Archer's (2009) work, the four modes described the different ways that people reflect

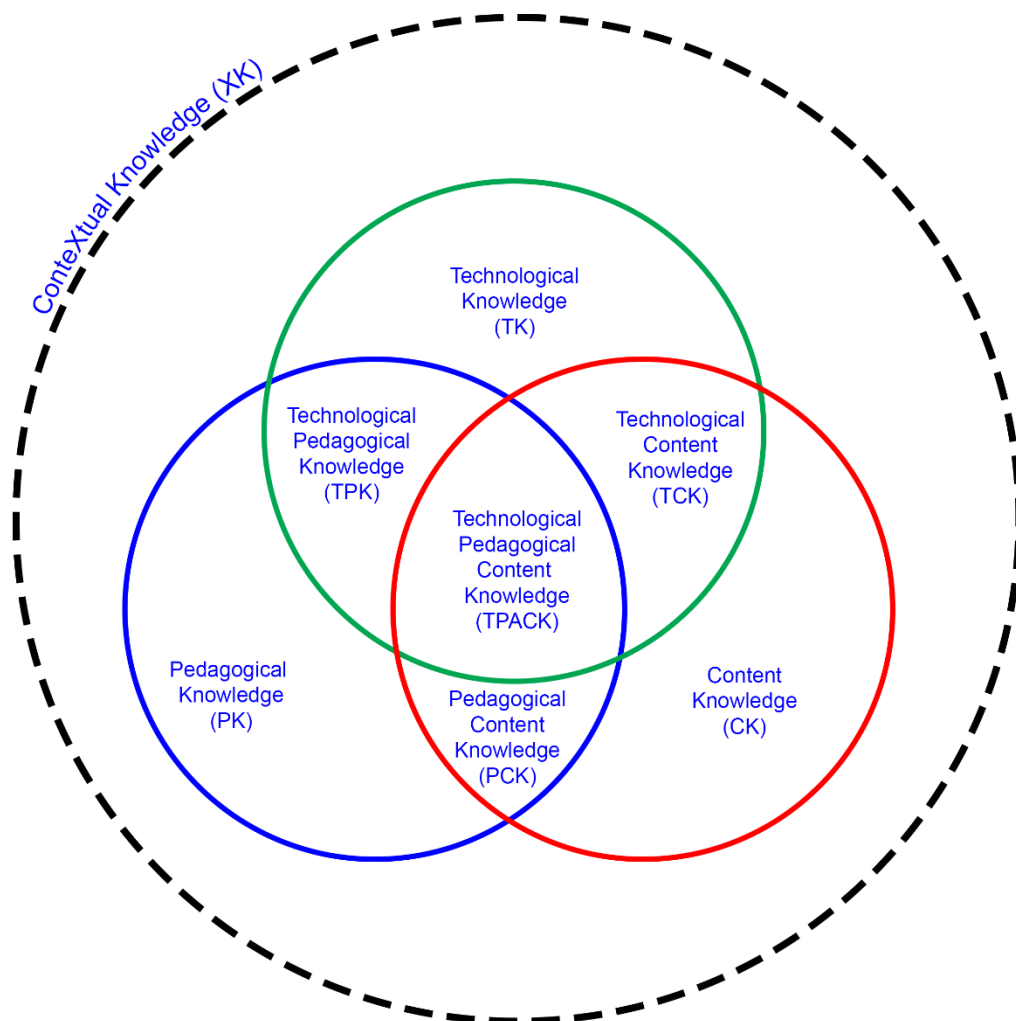
on and respond to scenarios. Brew et al. found a spectrum of responses to institutional initiatives ranging from those lacking the skills to participate to those who see no personal benefit and choose to ignore them. Others engaged with change primarily for the benefits that they saw them bringing to their students or their colleagues, while others needed reassurance that the change was right. Wilson (2023) noted that changes to teaching practice such as moving away from lectures removed the performative aspect of teaching that some academics enjoyed. Matthews (2019) suggested that resistance to change was a natural part of sense making and that it should not be seen as a great concern.

3.10.5 Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

A final cultural-discursive arrangement which influences the experiences and professional identity is the way that different areas of practice and knowledge are valued in higher education. The idea of TPACK came to prominence in the early 2000s in parallel work by Pierson (2001), Angeli and Valanides (2005), Niess (2005) and Koehler and Mishra (2005). It expanded on Shulman's (1986) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge and described the key areas of an educator's knowledge needed for learning and teaching. Mishra (2019) later added surrounding ConteXtual Knowledge (XK) to the model (Figure 3.2)

Figure 3.2

Updated TPACK Venn Diagram Based on Mishra (2019)



TPACK concepts have been used widely to explore the knowledge and skills needed to build the capabilities that academics need to teach effectively with technologies (Conde et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2017; Saubern et al., 2023). The prevailing assumption in this work was that each component was of equal importance in developing academic capabilities in technology-enhanced learning and teaching. As previously discussed however, disciplinary/content knowledge contributes significantly to academic identity and is valued highly in many parts of higher education (Bridge et al., 2023; Brogt, 2025; Movahhed, 2021). Discussion of the relative importance of pedagogy and technology in higher education was described by some as having veered towards a “technology first”

mindset (Dron, 2012; Fawns, 2022; MacKenzie et al., 2022; Phan et al., 2021; Selwyn, 2013) with concerns expressed that technology had become overvalued by institutions at the expense of sound teaching and learning practice. Conde et al. (2017) suggest a strategy to address this imbalance by proposing a “professional development approach designed to make explicit educators’ pedagogical beliefs in regard to educational technology” (p. 1). Dron (2012) suggests that in some circumstances, pedagogical knowledge aspects of TPACK are valued more highly than technological knowledge aspects.

While there is debate in some circles about the value of SoTL research (Pechenkina, 2020; Tierney, 2020; Tight, 2018), this area of scholarship is widely undertaken in higher education and commonly focuses on the pedagogical aspects of learning and teaching practice (Chick, 2024; Schönwetter, 2025; Simmons et al., 2021). While research is also undertaken in more technologically oriented fields, such as the Scholarship of Technology Enhanced Learning (SoTEL) (Cochrane & Farley, 2017; Wickens, 2006) or the field of Critical Studies of Educational Technology (Macgilchrist, 2021; Selwyn, 2013), these fields are not as prevalent as SoTL. This scholarly focus on the pedagogical aspects of learning and teaching may contribute to a cultural hierarchy of technological and pedagogical knowledge in higher education, leading to the work of EdAdvisors focusing on pedagogy being considered more important than that of EdAdvisors focusing on technology.

3.11 Social-Political Factors

The people participating in practices play an important role in determining the success of these practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). Their relationships are shaped by the factors which contribute to them, such as the academic-professional divide and views on the professional credibility of EdAdvisors.

3.11.1 Academic-Professional Divide

Professional Staff in General

Differences between academic and professional staff in higher education have been explored widely in research, and several aspects of these were reported to impact the efficacy of EdAdvisors. Many authors noted a divide between university staff in these two classifications which related to the nature of their work (Caldwell, 2024; Mueller et al., 2022), perceptions of their purpose and contribution to the aims of higher education (Briody et al., 2021; Little & Green, 2022) and, as a result, their status in the institutional hierarchy (Caldwell, 2022; Whitchurch, 2018).

Terminology for Professional Staff in General

The purpose and practices of academic staff in higher education have remained relatively consistent for a substantial amount of time. Academics teach, undertake (primarily) discipline-related research, and have a service component to their work (McKay & Monk, 2017). More recently, the introduction of teaching-focused academics (Godbold et al., 2022) has varied the ratio of these activities but overall, the idea of an academic is well established (Flecknoe et al., 2017; McKay & Monk, 2017; Sever et al., 2021). University employees who are now generally referred to as professional staff in Australian higher education (Graham, 2012) have been less well understood and valued (Bossu et al., 2020; Veles et al., 2023). This lack of understanding (or possibly interest) changed in the last two decades as “professionals had carved out a more critical space in the sector” (Szekeres, 2011, p. 679).

The language used to describe professional staff has been discussed widely in terms of the ways that it shapes perceptions about them. Terms such as “administrative” or “general” staff (Dobson & Conway, 2003; Graham, 2010; Veles et al., 2023) were used widely in Australia in the early 2000s, with Dobson (2000) playfully inverting this in his paper entitled “Them and Us - General and Non-General staff in Higher Education”. Graham (2012) reported that the term “professional staff” had been adopted across Australian higher education following its formal adoption by the

Association for Tertiary Education Management. The term *non-academic*, which has been criticised for its deficit-oriented connotations (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Caldwell, 2024), was reported to have largely faded from operational use in higher education (Melling, 2019). *Non-academic staff* is however still used in Australian government reporting of employment in the higher education sector to describe professional staff, and this data commonly represents all professional staff while data about academics is presented in terms of the five bands of academic roles (Australian Government Department of Education, 2024). This means that scholarly research into higher education in Australia drawing on these data also uses the term *non-academic staff* (Avenali et al., 2023; Croucher & Woelert, 2022; Moran & Misra, 2018). Sebalj et al. (2012) surveyed 194 research support staff in Australian higher education and 40% nominated *non-academic* as their least preferred option.

Terminology for Professional EdAdvisors

A few attempts were found in the literature to develop terminology for people working in the wider higher education third space, such as McIntosh and Nutt's (2022) use of "integrated practitioner" and "blended professional". Ody (2022) advocated for these terms on the basis that third space "could be misinterpreted or perceived as deficit or lower status" (p. 201). It is worth noting that these kinds of concerns about the term *third space* offering lower status were only expressed by authors in academic roles: no author working in a professional role expressed this opinion. This may indicate that if there is a hierarchy where academics are located *above* professional staff, being considered third space might be regarded as a half-step up in status for professionals but a half-step down for academics.

How the Academic-Professional Divide Affects EdAdvisors

Differences between professional and academic staff which were reported to affect the efficacy of professional EdAdvisors centred around three key themes of trust (McDonald et al., 2022; Mueller et al., 2022), power (Chen & Carliner, 2021; Kane & Dahlvig, 2022) and the composition of

the university workforce (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Sturm, 2022). In addition to the impact on their work, the divide between academic and professional staff in Australian higher education was reported to mean that professional EdAdvisors faced significant inhibitors to engaging in research (Gravett & Winstone, 2019; Veles et al., 2023).

Views on the extent of the academic-professional divide were reported to differ depending on where university staff, both academic and professional, were employed. Wohlmuther (2008) undertook an in-depth study into the divide in her New Zealand institution, considering factors including staff numbers, qualifications, contract types, perceived importance of roles and understanding of roles. She captured the views of leaders, academics, and *allied* (professional) staff in central and faculty units and found that “in terms of immediate working relationships the academic leaders and academic department allied staff perceived that staff worked well together, whereas the central academic support and central service saw the greatest divide” (p. 331). While she did not compare the views of academic staff and professional (allied) staff in the same areas, this work indicates that wider factors than only academic or professional classification contribute to perceptions of an academic-professional divide.

Trust and Understanding

Possibly the largest factor to shape EdAdvisor efficacy expressed in the literature was perceptions of the inability of professional EdAdvisors to understand academics. This included understanding of academic/scholarly culture and practice (f), as well as general and disciplinary pedagogy (Mueller et al., 2022).

Understanding of academic or scholarly culture and practices was reported as the most significant barrier to relationships between academics and professional EdAdvisors. Keppell (2007) stated that “Instructional designers need to hold academic staff appointments in order to have sufficient credibility to influence practice” (p. 73). Leece and Jacquet (2017) wrote about the importance of “building confidence in the use of scholarly language” (p. 103) in professional

EdAdvisors to demonstrate understanding of academics and scholarly practices. Chen and Carliner (2021) pointed out the parallel problem of academics and EdAdvisors not communicating clearly when technical learning design terminology was used. In contrast, few concerns were raised about understanding in writing about academic EdAdvisors, usually in academic developer roles, and several AD authors noted that their academic status quickly helped establish credibility in their work. Whitchurch (2012) described the possession of a doctorate, even unrelated to education, as “‘magic dust’ that could provide a turnkey in offering credibility, gaining entry to academic networks and developing their career” (p. 88).

Other authors highlighted tensions with academics about the pedagogical knowledge of professional EdAdvisors (Halupa, 2019; Mueller et al., 2019), with some academics resenting being given advice by people who hadn’t taught in higher education. Halupa (2019) stated that this sometimes occurred “when instructional designers cross the line and try to influence content instead of providing guidance on content delivery” (p. 55).

McDonald et al. (2022) found that when academics trust EdAdvisors, collaborations are highly effective. They identified positive working relationships built on trust between academics and learning designers as possessing three sets of qualities: collaborative and inclusive, rational and efficient, and expert and engaged.

Power

Another factor which was reported in relationships between academics and professional EdAdvisors echoed previously discussed issues around the perceived power imbalance between academics, faculties, and institutional management. This was sometimes expressed as concern among academics over losing control to learning designers over what and how they could teach (Chen & Carliner, 2021; McDonald et al., 2022), as well as scenarios where EdAdvisors are tasked with enforcing compliance to institutional learning and teaching policies or initiatives by reviewing academics’ courses and requesting changes (Brew et al., 2017; Deaker et al., 2016; Kane & Dahlvig,

2022; Wilson, 2023). Irwin (2024) observed that professional staff (such as EdAdvisors) and administrative staff in general in higher education sometimes encounter resistance from academics who mistakenly believe that these staff hold “tacit power” coming from their place in the managerialised university (p. 40).

The University Workforce

The rising number of professional staff as a proportion of university employees was widely explored in research and frequently used as evidence to support wider assertions about the growing culture of managerialism in the modern university (Macfarlane, 2011, Croucher & Woelert, 2022). Increasing numbers of professional EdAdvisors occupying academic developer roles was explicitly called out as a problem for the sector (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Rowland et al., 1998; Sheffield et al., 2018; Sturm, 2022) however not all authors considered this to be a challenge. Abbot and Gravett (2018) explored practical pathways for professionals to enter the academic development field without an advanced degree, including having institutions focus more on recognising other forms of relevant work experience in their recruitment process.

Exclusion From Research

A final issue affecting professional EdAdvisors in Australian higher education was the lack of support for them to contribute to research in their work. Shurville et al. (2009) noted the importance of research “in order to maximise innovation and deployment” (p. 211) of education technologies as a part of “the holistic remit of an educational technologist” (p. 208). Several authors highlighted the potential for research collaborations between academics and professionals in the third space (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2018; Gravett & Winstone, 2019; Regan & Graham, 2018; Veles et al., 2023) to harness the practical knowledge of the EdAdvisor and build greater understanding of academic scholarly practices.

Strategies

Not everybody agreed that there is a simple divide between academic and professional staff in higher education. Macfarlane (2015) included this divide in his discussion of dualisms found in higher education (alongside research/teaching and collegiality/managerialism) which oversimplify complex issues. He drew on the work of Whitchurch (2012) to point out that the third space highlights increasing overlaps between these classifications.

Some authors proposed entirely new role classification systems for EdAdvisors in the third space to work around existing boundaries and barriers to career progression. Baré et al. (2021) proposed a new third space-oriented employment category consisting of 3 levels, with higher degree research as part of each one. Veles et al. (2023) questioned the organisational practicality of the Baré et al. (2021) model and suggested a flexible “matrix structure” drawing on earlier work from Graham (2014).

3.11.2 Credibility and Professionalisation

Introduction

The questioning of the knowledge, skills, and values of EdAdvisors by academics discussed in the last section highlights the importance of factors which influence perceptions of EdAdvisors’ credibility. This section examines the literature about qualifications in education (Beckmann, 2018; Sage & Sankey, 2021), the professionalisation of EdAdvisor roles (Mori et al., 2022; Wagner, 2021), and the contribution that professional associations might play (Veles et al., 2023) in assuring academics and institutional leaders of EdAdvisors’ capabilities.

Qualifications and Experience in Education

Holding a qualification related to teaching in higher education in Australia is generally optional for academics (Beckmann, 2018), and empirical data about the prevalence of these qualifications are scarce. Bexley et al. (2011) reported that 23.7% of academics hold some kind of

teaching-focused qualification, generally at a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma level. Higher proportions of Australian academics (51.5%) were reported to have undertaken “a short course covering a number of aspects of teaching” (Bexley et al., 2011, p. 26). While there has been no research into the proportions of all EdAdvisors with qualifications in education, studies about individual roles indicated that they were held by around one-third of ADs (Green & Little, 2016) and that 48% of LDs surveyed had a Master of Education while 28% had a K-12 teaching degree (Sage & Sankey, 2021). No figures were found for ETs.

Several authors noted however that an EdAdvisor’s qualifications in education were not valued as highly by academics (Andrews & Lemons, 2015; Myllykoski-Laine et al., 2024; Quinn, 2012) or by institutional leaders (Kensington-Miller et al., 2012) as experience in higher education teaching or research was. Andrews and Lemons (2015) wrote about the tendency for academics teaching biology to favour personal experience over empirical evidence in educational research to inform their teaching decisions. This suggested that some academics may be more receptive to receiving advice about learning and teaching from their academic peers than from EdAdvisors. Other researchers noted however that academics’ decision-making about their teaching practices were influenced by many more nuanced factors including their teaching context and personal experiences (Kali et al., 2011; Markauskaite & Goodyear, 2014).

Professionalisation

Issues surrounding the perceived credibility of EdAdvisors led some authors to discuss the benefits of greater professionalisation of the field, whereby roles would be more clearly and consistently defined and the expertise and values behind them would be better articulated. The fact that EdAdvisors enter this field from a variety of prior careers, bringing different skillsets and experience can mean that there is not a clear professional identity (Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Mori et al., 2022; Wagner, 2021). Some authors felt that this breadth of perspectives enriched the field by

exposing institutions and academics to influences from beyond existing disciplinary silos (Bird, 2004; Pretero et al., 2023).

A common path towards professionalisation is the formation of a professional association. Veles et al. (2023) described this as offering “credentialling, continuous professional development, networking, conferencing and other types of connectedness among members, generally serving as entry to, gatekeeping and preserving the profession’s integrity” (p. 15). Professional associations were also described as contributing to sense-making in a profession through their focus on interaction and networking (Ryttberg & Geschwind, 2019) and enabling common codes of practice to be developed (Ellaway et al., 2006).

3.12 Summary

This review of research pertaining to EdAdvisors highlights that there is great variability in understanding of the different roles, their purpose and the factors which contribute to their efficacy in higher education. While a broad picture emerges of academic and professional staff using their expertise and experience in pedagogy and education technologies to support academics and institutions in enhancing learning and teaching, the extent to which this support is understood and valued and effectively employed is dependent on a number of factors. These include Material-Economic factors such as the organisational structures which influence where EdAdvisors are located in the institution, as well as how they work with EdAdvisors in other roles; Cultural-Discursive factors which include attitudes towards learning and teaching, pedagogical versus technological knowledge, academic autonomy, and perceptions of managerialism in higher education; and Social-Political factors including relationships between academic and professional staff and perceptions held by academics and leaders of the credibility of EdAdvisors.

Several aspects of the nature, purpose, work, and relationships of EdAdvisors are not well examined in existing research. A richer understanding of these may contribute to answering RQ1:

Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education? and RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?*

There is no current empirical data about the demography of EdAdvisors as a whole in Australian higher education. While some authors have examined populations of EdAdvisors in specific roles, such as academic developers (Fraser, 1999; Ling et al., 2013) or learning designers (Allen, 1996; Slade et al., 2019), the constitution of the field as a whole is relatively unknown. Having richer data about EdAdvisors in Australian higher education institutions could advance understanding of the extent of their contribution and may inform scoping of strategies to improve their status.

A significant proportion of research about EdAdvisors in Australia has been undertaken by academics who were generally not EdAdvisor practitioners (Boud & Brew, 2013; Gray, 2023; Gregory & Lodge, 2015; Ling et al., 2013). A recurring theme in this work was a concern about the capability of professional EdAdvisors to understand the culture and practices of academics sufficiently to meet their needs. Research by practising EdAdvisors in the 2000s and early 2010s (Bird et al., 2007; Fraser, 2004; Graham, 2012; Shurville et al., 2008; Winslett, 2014) added experience based nuance to research about EdAdvisors and professional staff, and there has been a notable increase in work in this field by professional EdAdvisors in recent years (Altena, 2022; Hinze, 2022; Mitchell, 2017; Simpson, 2021; Veles, 2024), although much of this work has appeared as conference publications rather than journal articles, possibly due to institutional inhibitors to undertaking research for professional staff (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2018; Veles et al., 2023).

EdAdvisors Overall

Research about EdAdvisors in Australia has almost exclusively focused on specific roles, rather than how the three roles work together in support of larger goals of learning and teaching practice. Nor have the contexts in which they work, such as differences between centrally-based and

faculty-based units, the conditions under which they are employed or whether they are engaged in operational or project-based work been examined.

There has also been little examination of the nomenclature of EdAdvisor roles in Australian higher education. Fraser (2001) noted that some in the sector questioned the value of attempting to find standardised position titles, as “the best we are going to find are broad terms that are sufficiently ambiguous to incorporate almost everyone and everything... and it is a matter of merely aesthetic preference as to which one is best” (p. 63).

Academic Developers

As mentioned, ADs have generally been the most thoroughly examined in research literature, however, there has been little work about their contribution to designing physical and virtual learning spaces.

Educational Technologists

Other than work by Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010) educational technologists have been significantly under researched outside of examinations of their key competences (Inkaew & Nasongkhla, 2020; Iqdami & Branch, 2016; Ritzhaupt et al. 2010). No ET practitioner perspectives were found in the literature other than those of Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010), and their omission from a large body of work about the implementation and support of education technologies represents a major gap in understanding of this role.

Learning Designers

The work of learning designers in building capability in academics is rarely reported in research about Australian higher education, and their contribution to curriculum design and development is another notable gap.

The final part of this section considers the ways that literature relating to material-economic, cultural-discursive, and social-political factors impacting EdAdvisors in higher education contribute to answering the final two research questions in this study.

RQ3: What are the enablers and inhibitors of EdAdvisor work?

RQ4: What approaches can be taken to enhance opportunities for EdAdvisors to contribute to learning and teaching?

Inhibitors and Enablers of EdAdvisor work

Alongside the lack of empirical data about the number and demography of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education, there is minimal recent research literature about Teaching and Learning Centres or their structures, operations, and purpose, as well as EdAdvisor career paths. Expanding understanding of the environments in which EdAdvisors work could offer insights into the structures which are more favourable to enabling effective collaborations between EdAdvisors and academics. This includes cultural issues relating to EdAdvisors working in faculty-based and central units, and further exploration of these may inform more effective institutional learning and teaching initiatives which involve EdAdvisors in both areas. The nature of working relationships between EdAdvisors and institutional leaders or with other EdAdvisors is also rarely examined in Australian higher education research and additional work in these topics could also bolster collaborative working relationships.

3.13 Next Steps

While some aspects of professional identity and practice of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education are well understood, this chapter has highlighted that many others have not been widely examined in current research. Understanding EdAdvisors and their practices better may suggest actions that could be taken in higher education to maximise the benefits to educators, students and the institution of their skills and knowledge. The next chapter will focus on the design of the research and the methods used to seek answers to the research questions in this study.

4. Methods

4.1 Introduction

This study used a mixed methods approach involving a survey and interviews to examine the nature of EdAdvisor roles in Australian higher education, and the inhibitors and enablers of their work to contribute to support learning and teaching practices. This chapter describes the ontological and epistemological frameworks underpinning this research, and provides information about the research design, participants, data collection, data analysis, research positionality, ethics, and limitations of the approaches taken.

4.1.1 *Aim of This Research*

My aims in this research were to explore and describe how diverse Educator Advisor roles function and contribute to Australian higher education, and the factors which enable and inhibit their work in order to identify opportunities to enhance their contribution to learning and teaching. The following research questions were developed to meet these aims.

RQ1: Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?

RQ2: How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?

RQ3: What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?

RQ4: What approaches can be taken to enhance the contribution of EdAdvisors to learning and teaching?

4.1.2 *Research Philosophy*

This study is about developing a deeper understanding of the nature of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education, exploring the factors which influence their efficacy, and identifying actionable and practical steps to make positive change.

I have extensive experience both working in EdAdvisor roles and in the professional relationships that I have built as I have worked to develop the TEledvisors Network community of practitioners. I believed that it was important to draw on this experience and connection to the sector in this research, particularly given the gaps in current research literature that I identified in the literature review. For this reason, I used an abductive approach to analysis because this offered a middle ground between the inductive process associated with grounded theory and the deductive process that is commonly aligned with specific theories. An abductive approach is intended to combine an overall theory informed framework for research with space for “producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 167). Timmermans and Tavory note that this approach can be valuable for acknowledging “the fact that the researcher is part of the world of the people studied” (p. 172). They go on to observe that

Abduction thus depends on the researcher's cultivated position. The disposition to perceive the world and its surprises - including the very reflection on one's positions in the world - is predicated on the researcher's biography as well as on an affinity and familiarity with broader theoretical fields (p. 173).

4.2 Study Design

A mixed methods approach was employed in this study to address the fact that responses informing some of the research questions were best captured with quantitative data from a survey, such as the demography, regular practices, and commonly used knowledge areas of EdAdvisors; while aspects relating to personal experiences, including inhibitors and enablers of efficacy and relationships, were better suited to the qualitative approach of interviews (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The sequence of data collection and data analysis activities undertaken is presented in Table 4.1. This research was undertaken part-time while I worked full-time as an

EdAdvisor at an Australian university. Initial data collection was disrupted by the increased workload resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.1

Data Collection and Analysis Activities in This Study

Activity	Time	Participants
Pilot survey	Feb 2021 – Mar 2021	72
Interviews	Aug 2022 – Oct 2022	16
Survey	Sep 2022 – Oct 2022	161

A pilot survey was initially undertaken to test approaches to data collection and analysis. Results from this pilot survey informed refinement of the survey and questions for semi-structured interviews. Due to changes in the survey questions resulting from this refinement, only results from the survey (and not the pilot survey) are used in this study. The interviews and the survey were conducted concurrently.

4.2.1 Ethics

Prior to undertaking any data collection or analysis, the research plan, data management plan, and proposed instruments for this study were evaluated by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to ensure that it aligned with all relevant standards and ethical research best practice. Following clarifications about the ways that participant privacy would be guaranteed, and data managed, this project was approved on 27 February 2020 and assigned the project number 2019/895. Following the pilot survey, a modification request was made to University of Sydney HREC to amend interview and survey questions. This was approved on 19 July 2022. These approvals can be found in Appendix A.

4.3 Study Participants

Participants for the three phases of this study (pilot survey, interviews, survey) were recruited primarily from the ASCILITE TELevisors Network Special Interest Group (Section 1.2). This group was selected as a convenience sample because of its stated purpose to serve as a community of practitioners working in all three EdAdvisor roles: no other group had this diversity of membership. Recruitment of participants for the pilot survey was undertaken using a discussion forum on the TELevisors Network online community site, housed in a private Moodle Learning Management System instance. This discussion forum was well used by the community and most members also received email notifications of posts from the forum. This provided information about the overall purpose of the survey, approximate time to complete and a link to the full participant information statement and the online survey itself. Recruitment of participants for the main survey was also conducted through the TELevisors Network online community, including posts from TELevisors Network social media accounts on Twitter and LinkedIn, and a direct invitation from the TELevisors Network mailing list which had approximately 350 members. The addition of invitations from TELevisors Network social media accounts for recruitment was intended to extend the pool of potential participants to ADs, ETs, and LDs in Australian higher education who were not part of the TELevisors Network, such as members of parallel organisations like the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).

For the pilot survey, between February 2021 and March 2021, 72 participants responded from 21 institutions in Australia offering higher education qualifications. For the final survey, responses were received from 161 participants in 43 institutions between September 2022 and October 2022. After data cleansing, which is discussed further in Section 4.6.2, 111 responses from 41 institutions remained in the final survey. Purposive sampling (Saldaña & Omasta, 2022) was used to select sixteen respondents from the pilot and final survey to be interviewed to ensure that a relatively equal number of ADs ($n = 6$), ETs ($n = 6$), and LDs ($n = 4$) were included, as well as EdAdvisors in both academic and professional positions, and some working in both central and

faculty-based units. Most of the interviewees also had experience working in other EdAdvisor roles.

An overview of the interviewees is provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Interviewees in This Study

Pseudonym	Gender	Academic-Professional	Central-Faculty
AD Grace	F	Academic	Central
AD Nicolas	M	Academic	Central
AD Georgie	F	Academic	Central
AD Rosella	F	Academic	Central
AD Evelyn	F	Academic	Central
AD Acia	F	Professional	Faculty
ET Kerry	F	Professional	Faculty
ET George	M	Professional	Central
ET Barbara	F	Professional	Faculty
ET Don	M	Professional	Central
ET Paul	M	Professional	Central
ET Peta	F	Professional	Central
LD Fiona	F	Professional	Central
LD Oscar	M	Professional	Faculty
LD Henrietta	F	Professional	Central
LD Daria	F	Other	Central

4.4 Survey

This section discusses the aims of the pilot and final surveys, and their design, development and delivery. The pilot survey was used to test questions and the usability of the instrument. This informed the design of the final survey, which provided the results used in this study.

4.4.1 Aims of the Pilot and Main Surveys

This survey aimed to address the study's research questions by gathering data, mostly quantitative, pertaining to EdAdvisor demographics, participants' understanding of and identification with EdAdvisor roles, their workplace organisation, information about the most common activities and knowledge areas for different EdAdvisor roles, their views of how their work is understood and valued and their views of their impact and the inhibitors and enablers of their impact.

4.4.2 Design of the Pilot Survey Questions

Creation of questions for the pilot survey drew on conventional approaches to survey design (Fowler, 2008), where keywords and concepts in the literature that relate to the overall aims and research questions of the study are used to identify topics for relevant questions. As this study was informed by an abductive approach, broader personal insights into the field from personal experience and engagement with the wider community of practitioners in the TELedvisors Network were also used to identify potential factors that were not widely examined in the literature. These factors included tensions between EdAdvisors in central versus faculty teams and relationships between EdAdvisors in different roles (Section 1.2). The pilot survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

Two sets of questions focused on different facets of EdAdvisors' working life and experiences. The first set of questions related to demographic information about EdAdvisors including age, gender identification, income level, and qualifications as well as professional identity

characteristics including academic-professional classification, position titles, institutions, employment status, organisational structures and membership of professional associations. The responses to these questions were intended to address RQ1: *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* and provided information about the material-economic and social-political arrangements which influence their practices. The findings were also intended to add to the relatively scant information about the demographics of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education in current research literature.

The second set of questions focused on EdAdvisors' perceptions of their most commonly performed activities and knowledge areas used, which informed understanding of the *doings* and *sayings* of their practices. These were intended to address RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?* Responses would also contribute to analysis aimed at identifying core practices that could be associated with specific EdAdvisor roles, as a way of adding clarity to their definitions. Further questions examined the extent to which they agreed that their work was understood and valued by their direct managers, EdAdvisors in other roles, academics and managers in other areas. Responses to these questions, in combination with previously noted questions about academic-professional status (social-political arrangements) and central-faculty location (cultural-discursive arrangements), were intended to contribute to RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?* All questions about the perceptions of survey respondents used a 7-point Likert scale to measure their agreement with provided statements across (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat disagree, (4) Neither agree nor disagree, (5) Somewhat agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly agree. A 7-point scale was used to provide more nuanced results than a 5-point scale. Where appropriate, results from these questions have been categorised as broadly disagree (1-3), neutral (4), and broadly agree (5-7) to clarify discussion.

4.4.3 Construction of the Survey

The Qualtrics online survey platform was used to build this survey as it offered a number of useful survey creation functions and was approved by the University of Sydney for data security. The survey was designed to minimise cognitive load wherever possible. One of the central questions in the survey related to EdAdvisors' perceptions of the most common activities EdAdvisors in all three roles (AD, ET and LD) engage in and the associated knowledge they need to do this. This was a necessarily complicated question with approximately 25 responses (x3) for each of activity and knowledge and I was concerned about the cognitive load it would cause and potential survey abandonment after or during it. For this reason, it was placed later in the survey.

4.4.4 Pilot Survey Testing and Changes Made to Create Final Survey

Informal testing of the pilot survey was undertaken using convenience sampling of several colleagues in the TELedvisors Network to check for clarity and user experience before releasing it. I also test-completed the pilot survey to be able to offer respondents an accurate estimate of the time it would take them to do it in communications about it.

Results from the pilot survey were analysed and used to inform the design of the final survey. After noting where some respondents had abandoned the pilot survey, key questions about EdAdvisor role identity were moved earlier in the survey as it was noted that engagement with the survey diminished after the lengthy questions about activities and knowledge areas. Written feedback about confusion about role definitions in the survey led me to add questions about the extent to which respondents agreed that they understood the three roles (AD, ET and LD) as well as a question about the strength of their identification with the role they had nominated on a scale of 0-100. This scale was selected to provide more nuanced data than a smaller scale would. A question to provide more detail about the nature of EdAdvisor organisational structures was also added. These additions were intended to expand the responses used to inform RQ1: *Who are EdAdvisors in*

Australian higher education? and offer insights into the material-economic arrangements which influence their practices. Additional activities and knowledge areas were added to their respective questions based on feedback from the pilot survey to better reflect the diversity of EdAdvisor practices, and a question about EdAdvisors' views on their own purpose were added to generate more accurate responses for RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?* Questions intended to provide greater detail about perceptions of being able to contribute to decision making about educational practice and technology, and factors serving as inhibitors and enablers were added to better support RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?* Changes were also made to the questions about EdAdvisors' views about their work being understood and valued by different institutional stakeholders. The pilot survey question about EdAdvisors in other roles understanding or valuing their work was split into four questions to explore whether there were differences between EdAdvisors in other roles in their own team and in other teams. The pilot survey question about whether respondents' direct managers understood or valued their work was cut as it did not contribute greatly to answering any research questions. The terminology used in the pilot survey question about whether *Managers outside your unit* understand or value the respondents' work was changed to *Senior leaders with decision making power about learning and teaching in your institution* for greater clarity. Final survey questions can be found in Appendix C. Once the updated questions for the final survey had been approved by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee, the survey was promoted through the ASCILITE TEledvisors Network and responses were collected in September and October 2022.

4.5 Interviews

In parallel with the main survey, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 16 people working as ADs, ETs and LDs to collect deeper qualitative data about the lived experience of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education. This section discusses the aims of the semi-structured interviews, the design of the interview questions and how they were conducted.

4.5.1 Interview Aims and Design of the Research Questions

Saunders et al. (2019) described the value of the flexibility of semi-structured interviews for this kind of explanatory research, highlighting the flexibility they offer in exploring and expanding on key themes as they emerge in the conversation. All questions used in these interviews can be found in Appendix D. In the first question, interviewees were asked to describe themselves and their practice as EdAdvisors. This was intended to contribute to answering RQ1: *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* and RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?*

The literature made it clear that relationships are a vital part of EdAdvisor identity and professional practice, and developing a better understanding of these relationships was a key focus of these interviews. This included exploring the extent to which interviewees believed they understood the stakeholders that they work with, and how they and their work is understood and valued by them. Galletta (2013) recommended formulating interview questions to draw on the specific experiences of the interviewee, rather than focusing on their more general observations. To achieve this, I asked interviewees to describe specific experiences, both positive and challenging, that they had had working with other EdAdvisors, academics and institutional leaders of learning and teaching. Responses to these questions were expected to inform understanding of the *relationships* involved in EdAdvisor practices as well as the *social-political arrangements* influencing their practices. I also believed that by discussing these experiences, both positive and challenging, interviewees would reveal the factors in higher education which shaped these relationships and affected their efficacy, contributing to RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?* This was further supported by two questions about the interviewees' views on inhibitors and enablers in their work and any potential approaches to addressing them. Finally, I asked about their understanding of the theory of third space in higher education and how they identified with any of the four categories of third space workers (Whitchurch, 2009).

4.5.2 Conducting Interviews

Sixteen interviews were conducted between August and October in 2022. Interviews were all conducted using Zoom video conferencing software due to the wide distribution of interviewees around Australia, and to provide them with a familiar and easy to use platform. Interviews were recorded to my personal computer as .mp4 format video files to maximise privacy and support transcription of the interviews. A PowerPoint slide deck with the questions was screenshared during the interview to reduce the cognitive load on the interviewees and to help to keep them on topic. Additional prompts for each question were revealed in the slides when their responses reached natural lulls in conversation, and interviewees were encouraged to speak further on any of the prompts that were of interest to them. This approach to interviewing has not been discussed in the literature that I have reviewed but interviewees in this study commented that it had helped them to make connections with ideas related to the questions that they had not articulated in their response, and they appreciated being able to choose what was important to them.

The flexibility of the semi-structured interview format meant that I was able to add follow-up questions to encourage interviewees to expand on or clarify points of interest in their responses. If their responses drifted into what might be addressed in a subsequent question, I encouraged them to continue and added a brief mention about the time of the overlaps to my interview notes. When we came to the relevant question, I restated what they had previously said and asked if they had anything to add. The interviews were scheduled to take place over a period of one hour to respect the interviewees' time. Where interviewees were unable to extend if time ran out, question 6 about their third space positionality was generally omitted. This was not considered problematic as several interviewees had previously discussed aspects of their third space positionality in response to other questions. Many interviewees willingly extended their time as they were enjoying the interview. Immediately following the interviews, I made detailed reflective notes about key topics raised by the

interviewees as well as my own personal responses in order to identify and mitigate any personal biases in my conduct of the research.

The interviews were initially transcribed using the speech-to-text recognition tool in Descript video editing software. This was reviewed and updated by the researcher and additional notes were taken during this process. Once the interviews were transcribed, interviewees were sent a copy to review, and any corrections or clarifications requested were added to the transcript.

4.6 Data Analysis

This section examines the approach taken to analysing the data collected in the final survey and interviews. It includes data cleansing, statistical analysis, defining practice bundles, categorising activities and knowledge on a spectrum between pedagogical and technological, categorising other areas of EdAdvisors' knowledge and interview analysis and coding.

4.6.1 Survey Data Cleansing

Raw survey data was imported into SPSS statistical software from the .csv files generated by the Qualtrics survey software. It was reviewed to check for completeness and missing data. There were 161 responses initially received from 36 ADs, 28 ETs and 67 LDs. The survey questions which required complete responses were identified, and these included role (Q21 which 30 participants did not complete), regularly performed activities (Q30 which 34 participants did not complete) and commonly used knowledge (Q31 which 34 participants did not complete), academic-professional classification (Q8 which 11 participants did not complete), and questions about agreement that their work is understood and valued by stakeholders (Q.34-Q.41 which 34 participants did not complete). Responses which did not completely provide these data were removed before analysis. This left 111 respondents: 33 ADs, 24 ETs and 54 LDs.

4.6.2 Survey Statistical Analysis

In using the survey data to create trustworthy findings which informed answers to the research questions, several different statistical tests were employed in SPSS to identify statistical significance. The tests used were dependent on the nature of the variables examined (categorical, ordinal or continuous) and the number of different values in a group (for example, academic-professional or AD/ET/LD) (Pallant, 2020). Non-parametric tests were used on the data as it did not have a reliably consistent distribution of variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). These tests are described in Table 4.3, along with illustrative examples of how they were used.

Table 4.3

Statistical Tests Used in This Study

Test used	Illustrative purpose
Chi-square test for goodness of fit	Tested whether the differences between the proportions of participants working in a central unit, a faculty-based unit or other were significant (5.6.2)
Chi-square test of independence	Tested whether the differences between male and female gender for participants in AD, ET, and LD roles were significant (5.2.2)
Mann-Whitney U test	Tested whether the differences between academic participants and professional participants holding a PhD were significant (5.5.2)
Kruskal-Wallis H test	Tested whether differences between academic and professional classification for AD, ET, and LDs roles were significant (5.2.3)
Pairwise Z-tests	Tested whether differences in the proportion of participants in role pairs (AD/ET, AD/LD, ET/LD) reporting undertaking activities were significant (5.3.1)
Bonferroni correction	Adjustment made to significance tests to mitigate the higher risk of statistical errors caused by repeatedly testing the same results. This provided more trustworthy significance results when the proportion of ADs, ETs and LDs holding different types of educational qualifications were compared (5.2.1)

The value of $p \leq .05$ was employed as evidence of statistical significance.

4.6.3 Defining EdAdvisor Practice Bundles

Results pertaining to regularly performed activities and the main knowledge areas used by EdAdvisors were categorised into practice bundles (Shove et al., 2012) which reflect the different purposes — *the teleoaffective structures* — underpinning EdAdvisor practices. This represents a novel combination of different elements of practice theory in this research. The bundles reflect key areas of practice identified in the literature for academic developers (Section 3.4.5), educational technologists (Section 3.5.5) and learning designers (Section 3.6.5). Survey respondents were asked which activities in a set of 36 they believed EdAdvisors in each role undertook regularly (Section 5.3.1). The categorisation of activities into practice bundles in this study involved identifying key common elements of these activities, such as the *timespace* in which they are commonly performed, the stakeholders involved in the practices (*relatings*), whether practices were dependent on each other, whether practices had shared aims, and whether they were usually performed proactively or reactively. A reactive practice might be undertaken in response to an immediate request for assistance from an academic while a proactive practice might be associated with long-term planning, such as evaluating different education technologies for a new LMS implementation. Knowledge areas were not categorised to practice bundles in the same way that activities were due to their wide applicability across all of these bundles. These practice bundles, their component activities, and characteristics are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4*Practice Bundles and Their Component Activities*

Practice Bundle	Component activities	Distinguishing characteristics of the practice bundle
Build Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training to academics • Deliver workshops to academics • Design academic staff training • Design academic staff workshops • Support resource development 	<p>These activities centre around helping academics to develop the skills necessary to undertake or enhance their own practices, either through formal learning sessions at fixed times or by providing how to guides and similar resources. The Build capability bundle covers skills and knowledge across pedagogical and technological areas and is aimed at groups of academics. These activities can be reactive or proactive.</p>
Build Learning Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use LMS - add content • Use LMS - build activities • Audio/video production • Multimedia/web development 	<p>These activities tend to be more technological in nature and are focused on creating learning resources/activities to be provided in the learning management system or in teaching spaces. The activities mostly do not require high levels of pedagogical knowledge, and this is generally work undertaken for individual academics. These activities may be guided by academics or more senior EdAdvisors.</p>
Design Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment design • Curriculum design • Learning activity design • Learning resource design 	<p>These activities are also commonly undertaken by EdAdvisors for individual academics but generally require more pedagogical knowledge. They are more likely to be part of longer-term projects involving ongoing collaboration with an academic (or group of academics in the case of</p>

curriculum design). These activities are often proactive. This bundle replaces two separate practice categories identified from the literature - *Design of learning activities, resources, and courses* and *Curriculum design and development* (Section 3.6.5) because enough similarities were found between the constituent activities to merge them.

Facilitate Education Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design digital learning environments (e.g. LMS template) • Design physical learning environments (e.g. teaching spaces) • Advising on education technology • Education technology procurement • Evaluate education technology • Implement education technology • Non-academic research (e.g. market scan of ed tech tools) • Work with vendors 	<p>These activities are generally intended to provide material-economic arrangements necessary to support the learning and teaching practices of all academics and students. They are technologically oriented and while academics may be consulted, they are more likely to involve working with stakeholders from other areas of the university including IT, finance, and building/facilities. These activities are often proactive. This bundle has been renamed from the practice initially identified in the literature - <i>Implement education technologies</i> (Section 3.5.5) - to better reflect the wider scope and purpose of the constituent activities.</p>
Quality Management of Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on pedagogy • Develop teaching strategies • Ensuring compliance with policy • Evaluate learning resources 	<p>These activities tend to be more pedagogical in nature and generally involve EdAdvisors working with individual academics. They are often linked to meeting established institutional standards or improving performance, may be corrective in nature and non-voluntary, and usually</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support use of learning analytics data • Evaluate teaching practice 	<p>occur in shorter time periods than designing teaching and learning activities. These activities are often reactive in nature.</p>
Relationship and Care Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide emotional support • Relationship building 	<p>These activities are neither pedagogical nor technological and tend to be underreported in research about EdAdvisors. They highlight the way that EdAdvisors work with many stakeholders in higher education institutions including academics, leadership, IT, and student administration but rarely have the authority to drive the actions of these people. They reflect both long-term, ongoing activity and short-term activity.</p>
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic research 	<p>Academic research is distinct enough from other activities to require its own practice bundle. It may have either a pedagogical or technological focus – though is usually a combination of the two – and requires some knowledge of scholarly practice. It may be undertaken individually or in collaboration with academics or other EdAdvisors over a prolonged period.</p>
Technical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support • Use LMS - course administration 	<p>Activities in this practice bundle are technological in nature and tend to be undertaken for academics, IT/Education Technology departments, or faculty administrators. This work is generally undertaken in short time periods and is often reactive.</p>

Organisational

- Problem solving
- Project management
- Driving change
- Troubleshooting

These more generic workplace activities may have either a pedagogical or technological focus and involve long, or short-term activity undertaken for anyone in the institution. *Troubleshooting* is placed in this bundle and not the *Technical support* bundle because it can be applied to pedagogical problems as well as technological ones.

Two practices identified in the literature have not been defined here as practice bundles. *Nurturing learning and teaching culture* (Section 3.4.5) was associated with ADs and relates to strategic activities undertaken to raise the profile and esteem of learning and teaching in institutions. The activities include supporting learning and teaching awards, running teaching innovation grant schemes and promoting the use of quality frameworks. These kinds of activities were not reported in findings from the pilot survey, and they were largely not discussed by interviewees. While *Driving innovation and change* (Section 3.4.5) was noted in research as part of the practice of EdAdvisors in all three roles, the key characteristics of this practice were determined to be more closely aligned to activities in the “organisational” bundle such as problem solving and project management.

4.6.4 Defining EdAdvisor Activity and Knowledge Categories on the Pedagogy-Technology Spectrum

Examining EdAdvisor practices and the activities and knowledge associated with them in the literature review suggested that many of these occupy a spectrum from pedagogical to technological. Categorising activities from the survey into practice bundles enables richer discussion of EdAdvisor roles which is not hindered by differences in specific practices: in the same way, activities and knowledge areas were categorised as pedagogical, pedagogical-technological, and technological. This was informed by EdAdvisor activities and practices described in the literature and my personal experience of working in various EdAdvisor roles for twenty years. The alignment of activities to these categories primarily involved consideration of the extent to which they primarily involved pedagogy independent of technology (and vice versa) or a combination of both (pedagogical-technological). These categories and the explanations for the allocation of activities and knowledge areas to them are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5*Pedagogical-Technological Spectrum Categories for EdAdvisor Activities and Knowledge Areas*

Category	Activity or Knowledge Area	Distinguishing characteristics of the category
Pedagogical	<p><i>Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on pedagogy • Develop teaching strategies • Evaluate teaching practice • Assessment design • Curriculum design • Learning activity design • Evaluate learning resources • Learning resource design • Deliver training to academic staff • Deliver workshops to academic staff • Design academic staff training • Design academic staff workshops <p><i>Knowledge Areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment design principles • Discipline specific L&T practices • Good practice in face to face L&T 	These activities and knowledge areas can be applied to learning and teaching practice independent of technology.

-
- Learning design models
 - Pedagogical theory
 - Curriculum structures

Pedagogical-Technological

Activities:

- Support resource development (e.g. how-to guides)
- Design physical learning environments (e.g. teaching space)
- Support use of learning analytics data
- Evaluate education technology
- Advising on education technology
- Use LMS - add content
- Use LMS - build activities
- Design digital learning environments (e.g. LMS template)
- Use LMS - course administration
- Education technology procurement
- Non-academic research (e.g. market scan of ed tech tools)

Knowledge Areas:

- Good practice in blended L&T
- Good practice in online L&T

These activities and knowledge areas relate to the use of technology for pedagogical purposes.

- Current and emerging education technologies
- Good use of education technologies in L&T

Technological

Activities:

- Audio/video production
- Multimedia/web development
- Work with vendors
- Implement education technology
- Technical support

Knowledge Areas:

- Multimedia/web design principles
 - Use of multimedia/web tools
 - User Experience and accessibility principles
 - Video production and editing
 - General IT systems and processes
-

These activities and knowledge areas can be applied to technology independent of pedagogy.

4.6.5 Categorising Other Areas of EdAdvisor Knowledge

Knowledge areas used in the survey which were not included in the pedagogical, pedagogical-technological, or technological categories were categorised as institutional, scholarly and organisational to facilitate richer discussion of differences between EdAdvisor roles. These are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6*Institutional, Scholarly, and Organisational Knowledge Categories*

Category	Knowledge area	Distinguishing characteristics of the category
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic integrity issues • Equity and accessibility principles for education • Institutional policies (Teaching/Assessment) • Institutional policies (IP/Copyright) • Institutional structures, systems and processes • Institutional policies (Privacy/Security) 	These knowledge areas relate to the use of pedagogy and/or technology but of greater importance is their relevance to institutional operational needs.
Scholarly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic research methodology • Academics' work practices and needs 	These knowledge areas pertain specifically to understanding of academics and scholarly practice.
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Quality management processes • Relationship building • Collaboration • Negotiation and conflict resolution 	These knowledge areas involve the use of pedagogy and/or technology but of greater importance is their relevance to institutional operational needs.

4.6.6 Interview Analysis and Coding

Analysis of the interview responses involved the following steps drawn from Saldaña (2016):

(1) Familiarising the Data

I familiarised myself with interview transcripts and wrote memos during the transcription process. After reviewing and taking memos from raw interview transcripts, they were imported into NVivo software for coding.

(2) Generating Initial Codes

The first cycle of coding used a combination of Descriptive, In Vivo, Emotion, Versus, Values and Initial (also referred to as Open coding) coding methods.

This approach is described overall by Saldaña (2016) as Eclectic coding - it is exploratory and often involves a combination of coding approaches (Table 4.7). I selected these coding methods for the following reasons:

Table 4.7

Coding Methods Employed in This Study

Method	Rationale
Descriptive	Identification of the topics being discussed
In Vivo	Use of the interviewee's own language
Emotion	Points at which respondents expressed strong emotions about their experiences working in EdAdvisor roles in higher education.
Versus	Several clear dichotomies emerged, some reflecting those in the literature (Academic-Professional, Central-Faculty)

Values	Similar to emotion, expressions of participants values relating to their work
Initial - (also known as open coding)	A general approach focused on remaining open to all possible concepts that might be found in the responses

Responses were coded to a set of general categories that was created to organise the first cycle codes which was partially informed by the interview and survey questions (Activities, Knowledge, People), known issues from the literature and personal experience (Table 4.8). These top-level categories were:

Table 4.8

Key Categories From Interviews

Category	Themes
Activity	Related to things EdAdvisors do
Emotion	Indicating an emotional response
Factors	Relating to things influencing EdAdvisor efficacy
Impact	Whether a factor positively or negatively affected EdAdvisor work
Knowledge	Relating to things that EdAdvisors know
Materials	Relating to tangible resources that affect EdAdvisor work
Meanings and culture	Relating to attitudes
Organisation	Relating to how the institution and its parts work
People	Relating to the various stakeholders in the ecosystem
Problems	Relating to barriers to EdAdvisor effectiveness
Processing	For codes that didn't easily suit existing categories
Strategies	Relating to successful approaches to enhancing EdAdvisor effectiveness

Values	Relating to values and beliefs expressed by interviewees
Versus	Relating to areas of conflict
Theory	Ideas tied to Practice theory or Third Space theory

Detailed analytical memos were written in parallel with the first cycle of the coding process (Saldaña, 2016) which documented:

- How I related to the participant/scenarios
- Code choices and operational definitions
- Routines, rituals, rules, roles and relationships observed
- Emergent categories, themes and concepts

A summary of the decision-making process employed which was reflected in code choices memos used during coding can be found in Appendix G.

(3) Searching for Themes and (4) Reviewing Themes

Nowell et al. (2017) note that a good theme “captures something important in relation to the overall research question”. This cycle of the analysis process, axial coding, involved reviewing the codes created in the first cycle, merging them with similar codes (where necessary), reorganising them into existing or more meaningful categories and finding themes in the most prevalent codes and code categories.

Detailed analytical memos were taken in parallel with this coding cycle, documenting:

- Code choices and operational definitions
- Changes to categories and codes
- Emergent categories, themes and concepts

Several key revised themes and subthemes emerged from this second cycle of coding. These are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Themes and Sub-themes Emerging in the Second Coding Cycle

Themes	Sub-themes
Activities	Aims of activities, Nature of activity
Knowledge	Quals and accreditation, Tech AND OR Ped knowledge
Identity	Entry paths, Academic-Professional classification, Role clarity
Relationships	Relationships with academics, Relationships with leaders, Relationships with EdAdvisors, Understanding and Valuing
Meaning/Culture	Faculty vs Central, Academic vs Professional, Research vs Education
People	Leaders, Academics, Students, Other Professionals
Material	Organisation – Central-Faculty, EdAdvisor units, Restructure, COVID-19
Theory	Third space theory

(5) Defining and Naming Themes

Codes and themes were further refined, and tables were created to provide numerical information about the number of references to codes, as well as how many ADs, ETs and LDs made comments associated with codes. This process was iterative in nature, informed by emergence, amalgamation and removal of codes as key themes in the interviewees' comments emerged and understanding of significant concepts grew. New themes were added to support analysis of discussion of problems and strategies faced by interviewees, as well as the impact of organisational factors such as restructures. The validity and value of these themes and codes were also discussed during regular meetings with research supervisors and refinements made based on this feedback.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

Effective research should leave the reader with confidence of its reliability and validity and “provides assurance that you have properly collected and interpreted the data, so that the findings

accurately reflect and represent that world that was studied” (Yin, 2017, p. 85). As such, ensuring that this research was ethical, credible, replicable, and transferable to other contexts has been a high priority in this study. Detailed information about the study and participants’ rights and protections were provided to all participants before any data were collected from them (Saunders et al., 2019). This participant information statement can be found in Appendix E. This was an important part of being an ethical researcher and respecting the study participants. I kept detailed notes at every stage of the data collection and analysis process to describe the processes employed, and also to capture personal reflections about the data being collected. These notes have informed the description in this chapter of the methods employed, supporting replicability, and the reflections fostered mindfulness of ethical research practices in relation to the decision making process, supporting credibility. By using different sources of information, namely the survey data and interview responses, and multiple theoretical lenses, I have sought to build credibility by establishing identifiable patterns in the evidence (Stahl & King, 2020). Information about my positionality has been provided (Section 1.2) in the interests of transparency and accountability and to offer confidence that this has been addressed in discussion of study findings. While I have extensive experience working in EdAdvisor roles, while undertaking this study, I embraced the practices and identity of the scholarly researcher. Finally, during regular contact with my supervisory team, where I have discussed in detail the methods undertaken and data collected, I have adjusted this work in response to feedback provided, offering additional assurance of the validity of the approaches taken in this study. These ongoing discussions about research approaches and analysis of findings have included mitigating any potential impacts of my EdAdvisor positionality, for which I am grateful.

4.8 Limitations

While as much care as possible was taken to ensure the credibility and validity of this research, it is important to note several limitations in the research design which became apparent as data were collected and analysed. The most notable limitation of this study relates directly to one of

its key assumptions - that EdAdvisor roles are poorly understood and inconsistently defined. Survey participants and interviewees were asked to self-identify with one of three roles in this study (AD, ET and LD) but were not provided with definitions in order to avoid influencing their responses to other questions. Several participants in the pilot survey reported uncertainty about which role to choose as they did not have a clear understanding of them. Additional questions were added to the main survey in an attempt to mitigate this lack of clarity, asking them to rate the strength of their identification with the role selected on a scale of 0-100 and also to describe whether they understood each role using 7-point Likert scales from 1 Strongly disagree to 7 Strongly agree. The findings from these questions added nuance but the fact that 14 of the 111 respondents identified with roles but had position titles more closely aligned with a different role (for example, identified as academic developer but position title was learning designer) means that some of the findings specific to roles must be considered as indicative more than definitive. Given the widespread discussion of the ambiguity of EdAdvisor position titles in the literature (Geis & Klaassen, 1972; Melling, 2019; Mitchell et al., 2017), it was decided that this should be regarded more as a limitation of the inconsistent nomenclature of EdAdvisor roles in institutions than of this study specifically.

A second limitation in this study is found in the unequal distribution of roles participating in this study. This was initially observed in responses to the pilot survey, which included 36 LDs, 13 ADs and 8 ETs. Responses to the main survey included 54 LDs, 33 ADs and 24 ETs. This may reflect the composition of the TEledvisors Network SIG, which was a primary source for participants, but as the specific numbers of EdAdvisors in the three roles in the TEledvisors Network are unknown, it is not possible to discuss which roles may be underrepresented or overrepresented in the sample. Most analysis of the findings centred around comparisons between roles, rather than attempting to draw conclusions about EdAdvisors overall, so the impact of this was diminished but it is noteworthy. In the interviews, 6 ADs, 6 ETs and 4 LDs participated. Many of these participants had held other EdAdvisor roles and touched on their experiences in those roles as well as their current roles,

meaning that the differences in the representation of roles among interviewees were not substantial.

4.9 Summary

The overarching aim of this study is to understand the ways that diverse EdAdvisor roles function and contribute to Australian higher education. In addressing this aim, I am using a mixed-methods approach to collect a broad set of general findings from a large group of EdAdvisors ($N = 111$) using a survey, as well as deeper, more personal responses about professional identity, practices and relationships from a smaller group ($N = 16$) of EdAdvisors in semi-structured interviews. As I have worked in the EdAdvisor field for more than 20 years and have engaged widely with many EdAdvisors through my involvement in the TEledvisors Network community, I believe that I have some insights into the lived experiences of EdAdvisors in all roles. However, I know less about the characteristics and practices which make these roles distinct, and the factors which serve as enablers and inhibitors of their work. Given the practice focused nature of EdAdvisors and the importance of relationships in it, the theoretical work of Kemmis et al. (2014) into practice and practice architectures, alongside the work of Whitchurch (2008) on the higher education third space, offer valuable lenses for examining these issues. This study takes an abductive approach to use these theoretical lenses and my own experience in the field to inform the design of the data collection and analysis, while leaving space to generate new theories unexpected results. Given that my positionality is as an EdAdvisor entering the field of research and given that the primary focus of this research is on the views of EdAdvisors, this creates risk of perceptions that the findings and conclusions of this study may be influenced by my experiences as an EdAdvisor, affecting its trustworthiness. I have taken all possible steps to mitigate this concern, including detailed note taking, transparency around data collection and analysis, reflexive writing throughout the research, appropriate statistical analysis, triangulating evidence, and ongoing review of methods and findings with my supervisory team.

The next chapters present findings generated from the data collection and analysis approaches described in this chapter. Chapter 5 addresses RQ1: *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* by examining demographic and other characteristics of EdAdvisors, their activities and knowledge areas, qualifications and entry paths to the field, and working conditions. Chapter 6 addresses RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?* through an exploration of their professional purpose, impact on learning and teaching, relationships with stakeholders, and the ways they perceive their work to be understood and valued in their institutions. Finally, Chapter 7 addresses RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?* with an exploration of factors shaping their efficacy including the academic-professional divide in higher education, the valuing of pedagogical and technological activities, relationships between central and faculty-based parts of the university, and the impact of organisational structures.

5. Who Are EdAdvisors in Australian Higher Education?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents quantitative and qualitative findings from a survey and semi-structured interviews pertaining primarily to the first research question - *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* All findings relate only to EdAdvisors included in the sample and are not extrapolated to the wider EdAdvisor population. The chapter is divided into five sections, reporting results relating to the following key topics:

Who Are EdAdvisors? (Section 5.2)

This section examines findings pertaining to distinguishing characteristics of people working in EdAdvisor roles which inform our understanding of who EdAdvisors are. This includes an overview of roles and position titles and the extent to which EdAdvisors in different roles identify with that role. The findings in this study rely on the self-identification of participants with one of the three EdAdvisor roles (AD, ET, or LD). The ambiguous nature of EdAdvisor roles in Australian higher education may mean that some participants hold hybrid positions which span one or more of these roles, however no data were collected about possible hybrid roles, and no indications were given by participants that their roles were hybrid in nature. It moves on to demographic characteristics of survey respondents including gender identity, age groupings, employer grouping and academic-professional classification.

What Do EdAdvisors Do? (Section 5.3)

A large part of this research focuses on the factors affecting the work that EdAdvisors do in Australian higher education. We can begin to understand this work by examining the practices that

are associated with it, and the activities which form key bundles of practices. This section explores the activities and practices that EdAdvisors undertake in their daily work.

What Do EdAdvisors Know? (Section 5.4)

EdAdvisors need a wide range of knowledge pertaining specifically to performance of their activities, as well as supporting understanding of why these should be undertaken in a given context. This section explores the main knowledge that EdAdvisors use in their daily work.

Becoming an EdAdvisor (Section 5.5)

Understanding the career pathway that EdAdvisors have taken to their current role offers insights into their skills, knowledge and values. These attributes contribute both to their practice and to their collaborative relationships with academics, institutional leaders and other EdAdvisors. This section reports findings relating to career paths from semi-structured interviews with 16 EdAdvisors. It also offers findings from the survey about their educational qualifications, professional accreditations and their engagement with professional communities as part of their ongoing development as practitioners.

EdAdvisors in the Workplace (Section 5.6)

This section reports results pertaining to the context of EdAdvisors' experiences in the workplace. The time that responding EdAdvisors have spent working in their current roles, as EdAdvisors overall and in higher education may contribute to their understanding of this work and their relationships with academics, leaders and EdAdvisors in other roles. Similarly, understanding the organisational and leadership structures in which they work offers insights into the nature of relationships between and opportunities for understanding and collaboration among EdAdvisors.

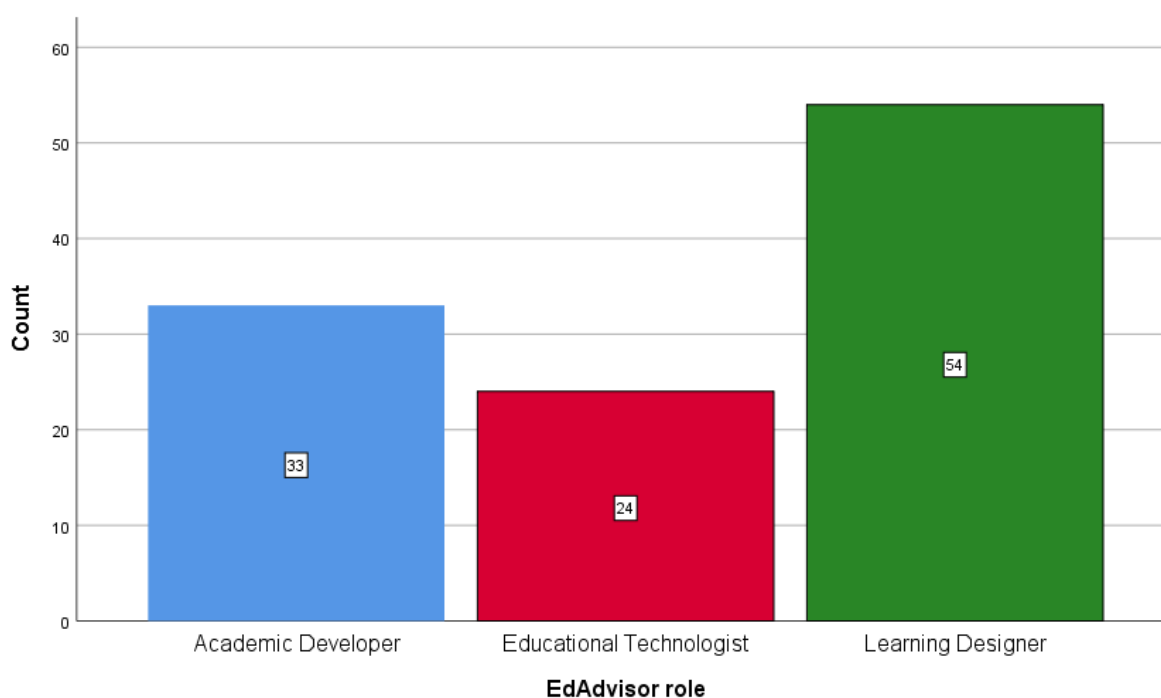
5.2 Who Are EdAdvisors?

5.2.1 EdAdvisors' Roles and Position Titles

Survey respondents were asked which one of three roles (academic developer, educational technologist, learning designer) they most strongly identify as - disregarding any differences between their actual position title (for example, educational designer) and the role (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

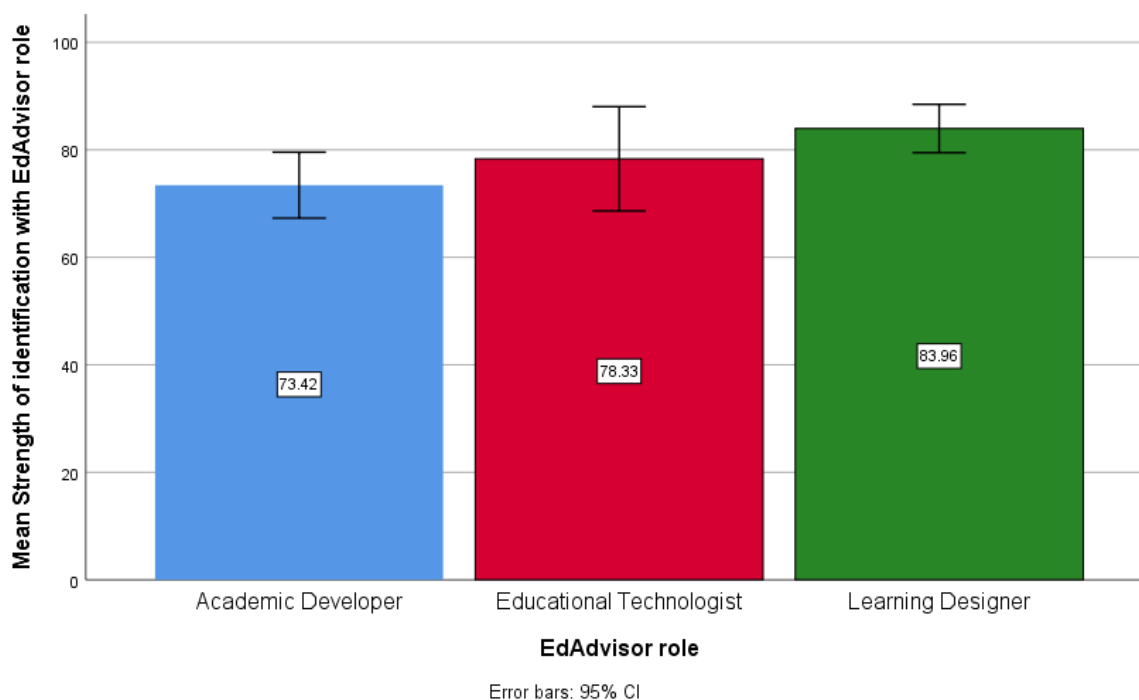
Number of EdAdvisors by Role



Most EdAdvisors responding to the survey self-identified as learning designers ($n = 54$, 49%); this was followed by academic developers ($n = 33$, 30%) and educational technologists ($n = 24$, 21%). EdAdvisor position titles vary substantially beyond the three roles used in this study. Respondents provided their current position titles in a free text question, and 60 distinct position titles were identified. After selecting the role that they most strongly identify with, respondents were asked to provide a value on a scale of 1-100 of the strength of their identification with this role (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2

Mean Strength of Identification With EdAdvisor Roles



Learning designers ($n = 54$) reported the highest mean identification with their role, at $M = 83.96$, $SD = 16.50$. They were followed by educational technologists ($n = 24$) at $M = 78.33$, $SD = 23.00$ and academic developers ($n = 33$) at $M = 73.42$, $SD = 17.31$.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of strength of identification scores across the different roles, $p = .012$. The mean rank for academic developers was 42.89 ($n = 33$), for educational technologists was 56.08 ($n = 24$), and for learning designers was 63.97 ($n = 54$). Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between academic developers and learning designers, $p = .009$. This suggests that learning designers reported a stronger identification with their role compared to academic developers. Comparisons between ADs and ETs ($p = .373$) and between ETs and LDs ($p = .945$) were not statistically significant.

Respondents were asked to provide their current position titles in a free text question (Table 5.1). Thematic analysis was undertaken based on the position title's alignment with the respondent's

self-identification with a role to code the position titles as either aligned, ambiguous or not aligned. An example of an **aligned** position title might be “educational designer” when the self-identified role is learning designer. A **not aligned** position title might be “learning designer” when the self-identified role is academic developer. An **ambiguous** position title might be “academic consultant” when the self-identified role is learning designer. The full table of roles, position titles and alignments can be found in Appendix F.

Table 5.1

Alignment Between EdAdvisor Role and Position Title by Role

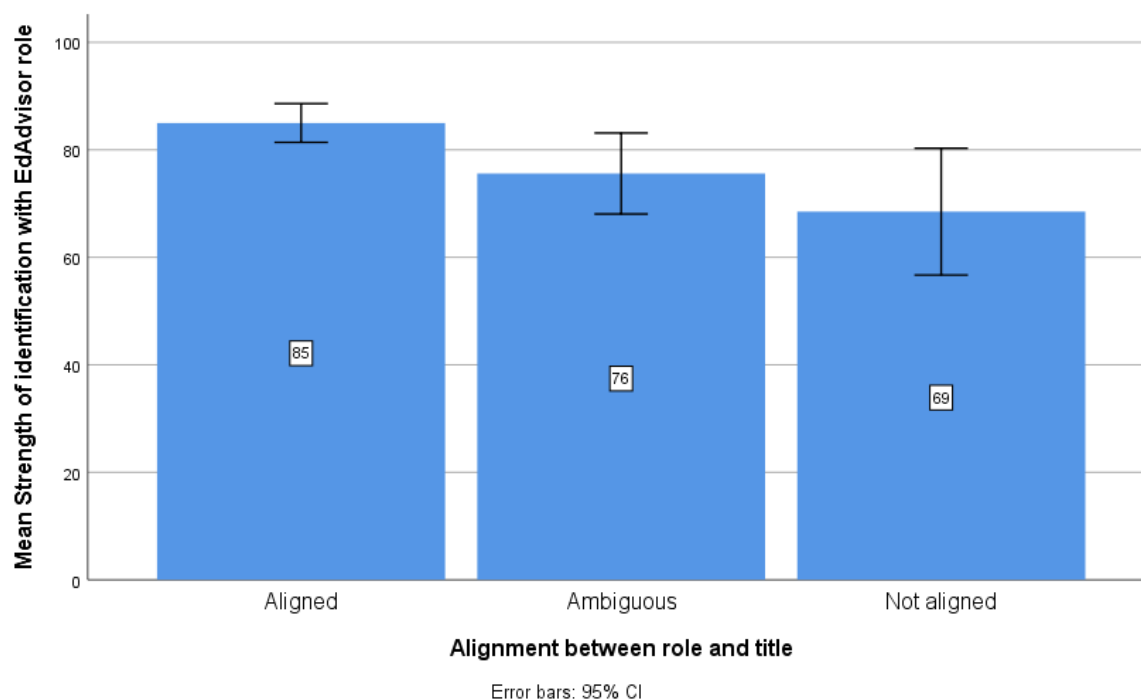
Role	Aligned	Ambiguous	Not aligned
Academic Developers (<i>n</i> = 33)	33%	42%	24%
Educational technologist (<i>n</i> = 23)	39%	26%	35%
Learning Designer (<i>n</i> = 53)	79%	13%	8%
EdAdvisors overall (<i>N</i> = 109)	57%	25%	18%

The majority of **EdAdvisor position titles were aligned** (*n* = 62, 57%) with the role, followed by ambiguous (*n* = 27, 25%) and not aligned (*n* = 20, 18%). For **academic developers**, the majority of **position titles were ambiguous** (*n* = 14, 42%), followed by aligned (*n* = 11, 33%) and not aligned (*n* = 8, 24%). For **educational technologists**, the majority of **position titles were aligned** (*n* = 9, 39%) followed by not aligned (*n* = 8, 35%) and ambiguous (*n* = 6, 26%). For **learning designers**, the majority of **position titles were aligned** (*n* = 42, 79%), followed by ambiguous (*n* = 7, 13%) and not aligned (*n* = 4, 8%). Two respondents did not provide their position title. A Chi-Square test of independence revealed a significant difference between role and alignment type of $p < .001$.

In order to examine whether alignment between role and position title might contribute to stronger identification with a role, results for role/ position title alignment were compared with strength of identification with role for EdAdvisors overall (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3

Relationship Between Identification With Role and Alignment Between Role and Position Title



The strongest mean identification with role occurs when the position title is “aligned” ($n = 62$, $M = 85.00$, $SD = 14.19$). “Ambiguous” position title alignment follows this ($n = 27$, $M = 75.59$, $SD = 19.05$) and “Not aligned” is last ($n = 20$, $M = 68.50$, $SD = 25.19$). This indicates that EdAdvisors identify more strongly with their role when it is aligned with their position title. A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of strength of identification scores across the different role- position title alignments, $p = .005$. Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between not-aligned and aligned, $p = .005$ and between ambiguous and aligned, $p = .022$.

5.2.2 Demographics of EdAdvisors

Survey respondents were asked about their gender identity (Table 5.2), age group (Table 5.3), and current main employer (Table 5.4). EdAdvisors were recruited for this study on the basis of working (or having worked) in an EdAdvisor role for an Australian educational institution offering

higher education qualifications. Respondents came from 41 different institutions and organisations in all states and territories of Australia other than Tasmania.

Institutions are presented in terms of their membership of higher education institution groupings: Australian Technology Network (ATN); Group of Eight (Go8); Independent Research Universities (IRU); and Regional Universities Network (RUN). Where a university is not a member of a university grouping, they are classified as Ungrouped. Non-university institutions and organisations which offer higher education qualifications are classified as Other HE Providers, these include the Australian Institute of Business and the Canberra Institute of Technology. A full listing of respondent institutions and their groupings can be found in Appendix H.

Gender Identity

Table 5.2

Gender Identity of Survey Respondents by Role

Gender identity	AD		ET		LD		All	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Woman	24	73	7	29	41	77	72	65
Man	8	24	16	67	9	17	33	30
Non-binary /Gender diverse	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1
Prefer not to say	1	3	1	4	2	4	4	4

A majority of respondents were women ($n = 72$, 65%), followed by men ($n = 33$, 30%), with a non-binary/gender-diverse person ($n = 1$, 1%) and 4 people who preferred not to say (4%).

Overall, there is approximately a 2:1 ratio between women and men, reflecting reported data about professional staff numbers in Australian higher education (Croucher, 2023). This ratio was very similar for both academic (65:30) and professional staff (66:31), not including “non-binary” and “prefer not to say” responses.

When examined at a role level, the gender ratios are more variable. A majority of academic developers ($n = 24$, 73%) and learning designers ($n = 41$, 77%) were women and a majority of

educational technologists ($n = 16$, 67%) were men. One learning designer (2%) identified as non-binary/gender diverse.

A Chi-Square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between EdAdvisor role and gender identity (this was limited to woman and man). The results of the Chi-Square test were significant, $p < .001$. This indicated that there were significantly more men than women working as educational technologists and significantly more women than men working as learning designers. The proportions of men and women working as academic developers reflected the overall sample.

Age Group

Table 5.3

Age Groups of Survey Respondents by Role

Age	AD		ET		LD		All	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
18-24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25-34	6	18	1	4	3	6	10	9
35-44	7	21	5	21	14	26	26	23
45-54	10	30	12	50	26	48	48	43
55-64	9	27	6	25	10	18	25	23
65+	1	3	0	0	1	2	2	2

The largest group of respondents were aged between 45-54 ($n = 48$, 43%), followed by those aged between 35-44 ($n = 26$, 23%), between 55-64 ($n = 25$, 23%), between 25-34 ($n = 10$, 9%) and the smallest group was those aged 65 and over ($n = 2$, 2%).

Employer Grouping

Table 5.4

Employer Grouping of Survey Respondents by Role

Employer grouping	AD		ET		LD		All	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
ATN	5	15	3	12	9	17	17	16
Go8	10	30	9	38	22	41	41	38
IRU	4	12	4	17	5	9	13	12
RUN	2	6	3	12	5	9	10	9
Ungrouped	5	15	4	17	8	15	17	16
Other	4	12	1	4	4	7	9	8

The university grouping with the largest number of EdAdvisors among survey respondents was the Group of Eight (Go8) ($n = 41$, 38%). This is followed by Australian Technology Network (ATN) ($n = 17$, 16%), Ungrouped universities ($n = 17$, 16%), Innovative Research Universities (IRU) ($n = 13$, 12%), Regional Universities Network (RUN) ($n = 10$, 9%) and Other HE Providers ($n = 9$, 8%)

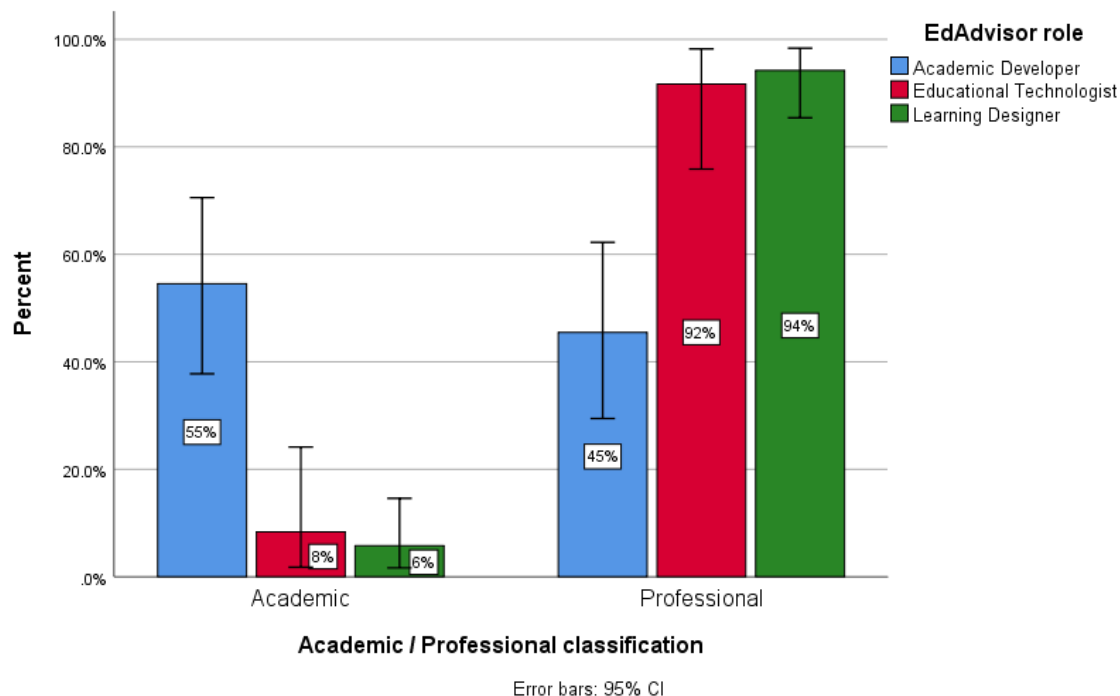
It is notable that a majority of EdAdvisors in the study are employed by Group of Eight universities, but this most likely reflects the relative size of the universities in this group, with Go8 institutions accounting for 42.4% of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in Australian higher education (Department of Education, 2022).

5.2.3 Role Classification of EdAdvisors

EdAdvisors were asked whether their positions are classified as academic or professional roles. The majority of respondents in this study were classified as professional staff ($n = 86$, 77%) followed by academic staff ($n = 23$, 21%). The respondents who nominated as “Other” ($n = 2$, 2%) either worked in a non-university institution which offers HE qualifications or hold a separate management-level contract in their institution. The breakdown of academic-professional classification by role is shown in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4

Position Classification by Role



The majority of academic developers held academic classified positions ($n = 18$, 55%), with a smaller number in professional roles ($n = 15$, 45%). Most educational technologists held professional positions ($n = 22$, 92%), followed by a small number in academic positions ($n = 2$, 8%). Most learning designers also held professional positions ($n = 49$, 91%), with a small minority in academic positions ($n = 3$, 6%).

A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in role classification across the groups, $p < .001$. The mean rank for academic developers was 36.77 ($n = 33$), indicating a tendency towards an academic classification. In contrast, educational technologists and learning designers had higher mean ranks of 61.96 ($n = 24$) and 63.36 ($n = 52$), respectively, suggesting a stronger association with professional roles.

The findings in this section highlight some noteworthy similarities and distinctions in the identities of participants in this study in different roles. Academic developers are more likely to be

women in academic roles; educational technologists are more likely to be men in professional roles and learning designers are more often women in professional roles. In terms of their professional identities, while most participants identify closely with their roles, LDs do so more than ADs, and this may relate to LDs' position titles more frequently aligning with their roles. The next section examines the practices undertaken by and associated with different types of EdAdvisors.

5.3 What Do EdAdvisors Do?

5.3.1 EdAdvisor Activities by Practice Bundle

Survey respondents were asked to select at least seven activities that are regularly performed by each role from a list of 36. Respondents in all roles selected notably more activities as being regularly undertaken by each role. The mean number selected per role by ADs was 21.21 ($SD = 7.38$), by ETs it was 18.67 ($SD = 9.30$) and by LDs it was 20.77 ($SD = 7.68$). These are presented in Table 5.5, grouped by practice bundles. Results are colour-coded to show activities which the highest proportions of EdAdvisors in each role reported regularly undertaking.

Table 5.5*Activities Regularly Undertaken by EdAdvisors by Role*

Practice bundle	Activity	AD % (n = 33)	ET % (n = 24)	LD % (n = 54)
Build learning resources/activities	Audio/video production	21.2	66.7	51.9
	Multimedia/web development	9.1	62.5	59.3
	Use LMS - add content	48.5	66.7	81.5
	Use LMS - build activities	36.4	66.7	85.2
Building capability	Deliver training to academic staff	87.9	79.2	83.3
	Deliver workshops to academic staff	93.9	75.0	83.3
	Design academic staff training	84.8	70.8	74.1
	Design academic staff workshops	87.9	70.8	75.9
Design teaching and learning	Support resource development (e.g. how-to guides)	60.6	83.3	87.0
	Assessment design	87.9	20.8	85.2
	Curriculum design	87.9	8.3	66.7
	Learning activity design	66.7	20.8	94.4
	Learning resource design	69.7	50.0	96.3
	Advising on education technology	60.6	87.5	79.6
	Design digital learning environments (e.g. LMS template)	33.3	91.7	96.3
Facilitate education technologies	Design physical learning environments (e.g. teaching space)	54.5	45.8	44.4
	Education technology procurement	15.2	79.2	20.4
	Evaluate education technology	51.5	83.3	70.4
	Implement education technology	39.4	87.5	70.4
	Non-academic research (e.g. market scan of ed tech tools)	36.4	79.2	81.5

	Activity	AD % (n = 33)	ET % (n = 24)	LD % (n = 54)
	Work with vendors	9.1	70.8	27.8
	Advising on pedagogy	97.0	33.3	81.5
	Develop teaching strategies	93.9	16.7	79.6
	Ensuring compliance with policy	75.8	70.8	81.5
	Evaluate learning resources	84.8	58.3	92.6
	Evaluate teaching practice	90.9	12.5	55.6
Quality management of teaching	Support use of learning analytics data	63.6	79.2	70.4
	Provide emotional support	78.8	75.0	75.9
Relationship and care work	Relationship building	97.0	75.0	98.1
Research	Academic research	93.9	20.8	33.3
	Technical support	6.1	87.5	50.0
Technical support	Use LMS - course administration	42.4	75.0	53.7
	Driving change	90.9	66.7	88.9
	Problem solving	97.0	87.5	98.1
	Project management	78.8	62.5	94.4
Organisational	Troubleshooting	69.7	87.5	77.8

Note: **AD** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100% **ET** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100% **LD** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100%

Pairwise Z-tests were undertaken on these results to determine whether there was a significant difference between the proportions of EdAdvisors in two given roles reporting regularly performing an activity. Where activities in practice bundles are regularly undertaken by EdAdvisors in different roles, non-significant differences were expected. Results of the significance testing, providing comparisons between AD/ET, ET/LD and AD/LD roles, are presented in Appendix I.

Build Learning Resources/Activities

The activities in the *Build learning resources/activities* practice bundle are largely the domain of educational technologists and learning designers. These activities tend to be more technologically oriented. Differences between ETs and LDs were non-significant, but differences between these roles and ADs were all significant, with the exception of *Use LMS - Add content* for AD/ET. A relatively high proportion of LDs reported regularly undertaking *Use LMS - build activities* (85%) and *Use LMS - add content* (81%).

Building Capability

Relatively high proportions of EdAdvisors in all roles reported regularly performing activities which make up the *Building capability* practice bundle. These activities include *Deliver training to academic staff; Deliver workshops to academic staff; Design academic staff training; Design academic staff workshops; Evaluate learning resources* and *Develop support resources (e.g. how-to guides)*.

The relative absence of significant differences between any role pairing for activities in this practice bundle highlights the way that *Building capability* is common to EdAdvisors in all roles. The only significant differences found were between ADs/ETs for *Deliver workshops to academic staff*, and between ADs/LDs for *Support resource development (e.g. how-to guides)*.

Design Teaching and Learning

In contrast, significant differences were found between role pairings for almost all of the activities making up the *Design teaching and learning* bundle. With more of a pedagogical orientation, this bundle is largely the domain of academic developers and learning designers. Few educational technologists reported undertaking any of these activities. The difference between ADs and LDs regularly performing *Assessment design* was non-significant but a significantly higher proportion of ADs (88%) reported *Curriculum design* than did LDs (67%). Significantly high proportions of LDs reported performing *Learning activity design* (94%) and *Learning resource design* (96%), while the proportions of ADs undertaking these activities were smaller, 67% and 70% respectively. This suggests that these activities are a distinctive part of the learning designer role.

Facilitate Education Technologies

Activities in the *Facilitate education technologies* bundle are mostly all undertaken by a high proportion of educational technologists, but high proportions of LDs also reported engaging in five of these and more than half of ADs engage in three of them.

Educational technologists in the survey reported performing *Education technology procurement* (79%) and *Work with vendors* (71%) in significantly higher proportions than ADs (15% and 9% respectively) or LDs (20% and 20% respectively). This indicates that these activities are a distinctive part of the ET role.

Activities which might be considered to be common to ETs and LDs were observed where there were non-significant differences between the relatively high proportions of respondents in each role reporting undertaking *Advising on education technology*, *Design digital learning environments*, *Evaluate education technology*, *Implement education technology*, and *Non-academic research (e.g. market scan of ed tech tools)*.

Differences between the lower proportions of respondents in all roles reporting performing *Design physical learning environments (e.g. teaching space)* were non-significant, indicating that this

is not a frequent activity for any role. This may be due to the relative rarity of new physical teaching spaces being commissioned.

Quality Management of Teaching

The *Quality management of teaching* practice bundle incorporates activities offering several different approaches to its overall aim. As a result, the proportions of respondents in all roles reporting that they perform *Ensuring compliance with policy* and *Support use of learning analytics data* are relatively equal and differences between roles are non-significant. These are the less pedagogically oriented activities in the bundle.

The remaining activities are more pedagogically focused and were reported to be performed by high proportions of both ADs and LDs. There was no significant difference between these roles for *Develop teaching strategies* or *Evaluate learning resources*, but there was a significant difference between ADs and LDs for *Advising on pedagogy* and *Evaluate teaching practice*. The proportional difference between these roles for *Evaluate teaching practice* was noteworthy, with fewer LDs (56%) reporting performing this than ADs (91%). This suggests that this activity is a relatively distinctive part of AD work.

Relationship and Care Work

About three-quarters of respondents in all roles reported that they *Provide emotional support*, a non-significant difference. Virtually all AD (97%) and LD (98%) respondents reported *Relationship building* as a regularly performed activity, a non-significant difference, but there was a significant difference between both of them and ETs (75%). While 75% is still a large proportion, this discrepancy may indicate that ET interactions with academics are less likely to have a long-term focus.

Research

There was a significant difference between ADs and both ETs and LDs when it came to reporting undertaking *Academic research*. The high proportion of ADs reporting this (94%) compared to ETs (21%) or LDs (33%) suggests that this activity may be considered to be a distinctive part of the AD role.

Technical Support

In the *Technical support* practice bundle, the only significant difference between respondents reporting that they *Use LMS - course administration* was between ADs and ETs. This was an activity undertaken by three-quarters of ETs. The activity of *Technical support* was reported by 88% of ETs and there was a significant difference between them and LDs (50%) and ADs (8%) for this activity. This suggests that this activity might be considered to be a distinctive part of the ET role.

Organisational

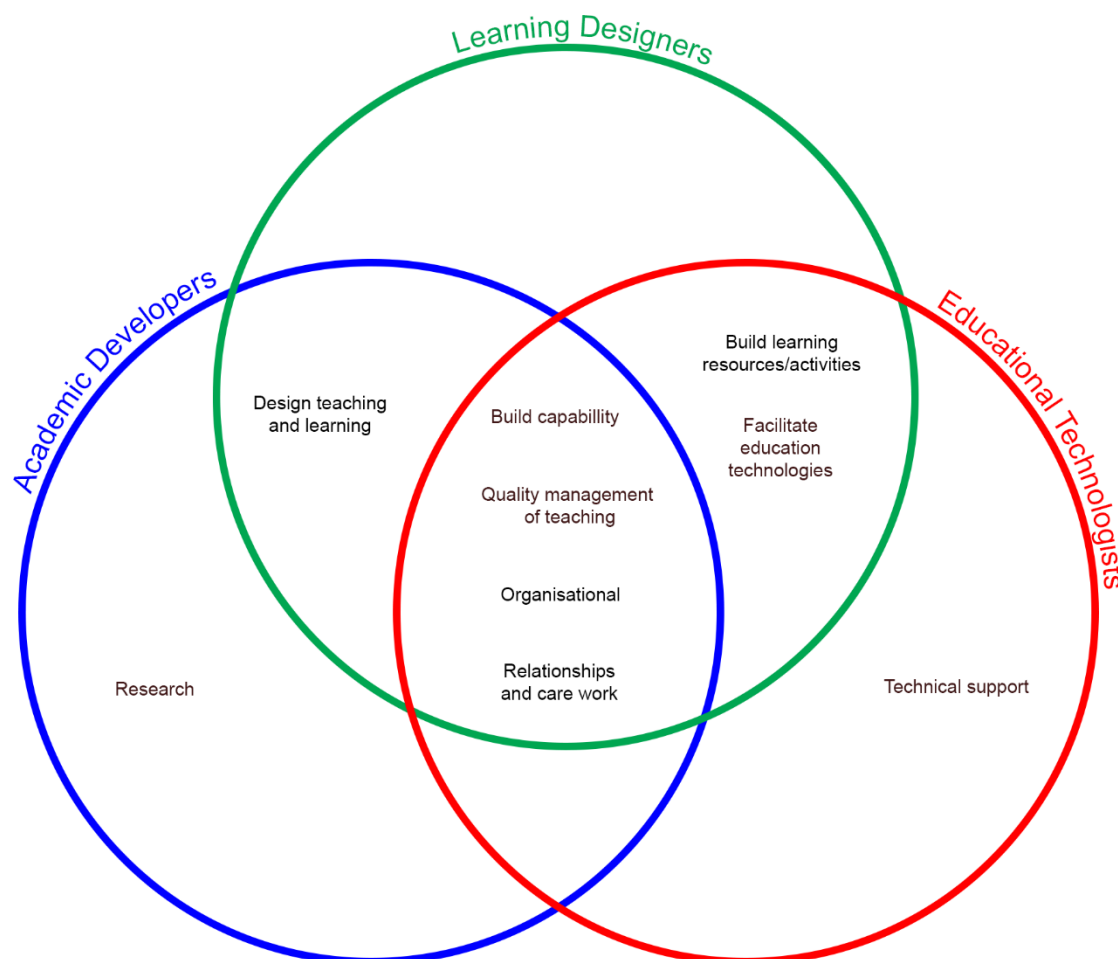
In the bundle of *Organisational* related activities, relatively equal proportions of AD, ET and LD respondents reported regularly performing *Troubleshooting*, a non-significant difference. High proportions of respondents in each role also reported the similar activity of *Problem solving* and these differences were non-significant other than between ETs and LDs. Significant differences were found between the pairings of AD/LD and ET/LD for *Project management* and also between AD/ET and ET/LD for *Driving change*. A high proportion of LDs reported doing *Project management* (94%) and both ADs (91%) and LDs (89%) selected *Driving change*.

5.3.2 Distribution of EdAdvisor Practice Bundles

Section 3.2.5 of the Literature review mapped the associations between EdAdvisor roles and practices in a Venn diagram (Figure 3.1) to highlight shared and role-centric practices. Figure 5.5 uses the results from the survey to present a similar mapping of practice bundles to EdAdvisor roles.

Figure 5.5

Associations Between EdAdvisor Roles and Practice Bundles



It is worth noting that more practice bundles appear in the overlap areas between roles in this version than was observed in Figure 3.1. Some noteworthy differences are that *Facilitate education technologies* is undertaken by ETs and LDs, and that *Quality management of teaching* is undertaken by all three EdAdvisor roles. The practices which are in *Design learning resources/activities* in the Literature review version (Fig. 3.1), which was associated solely with LDs, are in this figure distributed across *Build learning resources/activities*, where they are shared with

ETs, and *Design teaching and learning*, where they are shared with ADs. The importance of these differences will be addressed in the discussion.

5.3.3 Pedagogical-Technological Alignment of Activities

To facilitate further consideration of key characteristics of EdAdvisor roles and the differences between them, the activities which make up practice bundles were categorised as: pedagogical, technological, pedagogical-technological, scholarly, and organisational. Of the 36 activities presented to survey participants, 27 were categorised as pedagogical, technological, and pedagogical-technological. (See Section 4.6.4).

Table 5.6 highlights all activities that 50% or more of EdAdvisors in a role reported performing regularly. Colour coding to a heat map shows the proportion of EdAdvisors that reported an activity being undertaken by a role. Activities reported as performed by LDs by >84-100% of LD respondents are darker green, activities reported by >67-84% are mid-green and activities reported by 50-67% are lighter green. ETs are represented in shades of orange and ADs in shades of blue.

Table 5.6

Location of Regular Activities for EdAdvisors Mapped to Practice Bundles on a Pedagogy-Technology Spectrum

Practice bundle	Type	Activity	AD % (n = 33)	ET % (n = 24)	LD % (n = 54)
Building capability	Pedagogical	Deliver training to academic staff	87.9	79.2	83.3
		Deliver workshops to academic staff	93.9	75.0	83.3
		Design academic staff training	84.8	70.8	74.1
		Design academic staff workshops	87.9	70.8	75.9
		Support resource development (e.g. how-to guides)	60.6	83.3	87.0
Design teaching and learning	Pedagogical	Assessment design	87.9	20.8	85.2
		Curriculum design	87.9	8.3	66.7
		Learning activity design	66.7	20.8	94.4
		Learning resource design	69.7	50.0	96.3
Quality management of teaching	Pedagogical	Advising on pedagogy	97.0	33.3	81.5
		Develop teaching strategies	93.9	16.7	79.6
		Evaluate learning resources	84.8	58.3	92.6
		Evaluate teaching practice	90.9	12.5	55.6
Build learning resources/activities	Pedagogical-	Use LMS - add content	48.5	66.7	81.5
	Technological	Use LMS - build activities	36.4	66.7	85.2
Facilitate education technologies	Technological	Design digital learning environments (e.g. LMS template)	33.3	91.7	96.3
		Design physical learning environments (e.g. teaching space)	54.5	45.8	44.4

Practice bundle	Type	Activity	AD % (n = 33)	ET % (n = 24)	LD % (n = 54)
Quality management of teaching		Support use of learning analytics data	63.6	79.2	70.4
Technical support	Pedagogical- Technological	Use LMS - course administration	42.4	75.0	53.7
Build learning resources/activities	Technological	Audio/video production	21.2	66.7	51.9
		Multimedia/web development	9.1	62.5	59.3
Facilitate education technologies		Advising on education technology	60.6	87.5	79.6
		Education technology procurement	15.2	79.2	20.4
		Evaluate education technology	51.5	83.3	70.4
		Implement education technology	39.4	87.5	70.4
		Non-academic research (e.g. market scan of ed tech tools)	36.4	79.2	81.5
		Work with vendors	9.1	70.8	27.8
Technical support		Technical support	6.1	87.5	50.0

Note: **AD** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100% **ET** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100% **LD** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100%

While ADs reported performing some pedagogical-technological and technological activities, the activities that higher proportions of ADs undertake are pedagogical in nature. In contrast, the activities reported to be regularly performed by ETs are predominately in the technological or pedagogical-technological categories, however it is noteworthy that they also reported undertaking several pedagogical activities. LDs comfortably span almost the entire range of pedagogical, pedagogical-technological and technological activities.

This section has shown that categorising the practices undertaken by different EdAdvisor roles, their *doings*, in terms of practice bundles and on a pedagogical-technological spectrum, illustrates both differences and similarities between these roles. Academic developers, educational technologists and learning designers all work to build the capabilities of academics and ensure that teaching practices align with institutional expectations. The practices of ADs overall are more pedagogically oriented and those of ETs and LDs focus more on a combination of pedagogy and technology.

5.4 What Do EdAdvisors Know?

5.4.1 EdAdvisor Knowledge Areas

Survey respondents were asked to select at least seven of the main knowledge areas that are used by each role from a list of 28. Respondents in all roles selected notably more knowledge areas as being used by each role. The mean number selected per role by ADs was 17.58 ($SD = 6.30$), by ETs it was 15.56 ($SD = 7.68$) and by LDs it was 17.42 ($SD = 6.27$). These selections are presented in Table 5.7, grouped by category. Results are colour-coded to show the main knowledge areas which the highest proportions of EdAdvisors in each role reported using.

Pairwise Z-tests were undertaken on these results to determine whether there was a significant difference between the proportions of EdAdvisors in two roles who reported regularly using a knowledge area. Where knowledge areas are reported to be used by EdAdvisors in multiple different roles, non-significant differences were expected. Full results of the significance testing,

including comparisons between AD/ET, ET/LD and AD/LD roles, are presented in Appendix J.

Significant and non-significant results are discussed in this section.

Table 5.7*Main Knowledge Areas Used by EdAdvisors by Role*

Category	Knowledge area	AD % (n = 33)	ET % (n = 24)	LD % (n = 54)
Pedagogical	Pedagogical theory	100.0	45.8	92.6
	Assessment design principles	97.0	12.5	83.3
	Curriculum structures	93.9	0.0	64.8
	Good practice in face-to-face learning and teaching	87.9	25.0	79.6
	Discipline specific learning and teaching practices	81.8	16.7	72.2
	Learning design models and principles	78.8	37.5	98.1
Ped-Tech	Good practice in blended learning and teaching	84.8	70.8	98.1
	Good practice in online learning and teaching	84.8	75.0	100.0
	Good use of education technologies in learning and teaching	72.7	91.7	96.3
	Current and emerging education technologies	60.6	91.7	85.2
Technological	User experience (UX) and accessibility principles	42.4	75.0	88.9
	Multimedia/web design principles	27.3	79.2	72.2
	Use of multimedia/web tools	21.2	79.2	68.5
	Video production and editing	9.1	70.8	51.9
	General IT systems and processes	21.2	83.3	40.7
Institutional	Academic integrity issues	84.8	37.5	68.5
	Institutional policies (Teaching/assessment)	93.9	41.7	70.4
	Equity and accessibility principles for education	87.9	62.5	94.4

Category	Knowledge area	AD % (n = 33)	ET % (n = 24)	LD % (n = 54)
Institutional	Institutional policies (IP/Copyright)	75.8	75.0	68.5
	Institutional structures, systems and processes	75.8	70.8	70.4
	Institutional policies (Privacy/Security)	45.5	83.3	53.7
Scholarly	Academic research methodology	84.8	4.2	27.8
	Academics' work practices and needs	93.9	20.8	50.0
Organisational	Collaboration	90.9	83.3	88.9
	Negotiation and conflict resolution	75.8	83.3	75.9
	Project management	75.8	58.3	83.3
	Quality management processes	66.7	54.2	79.6
	Relationship building	90.9	79.2	96.3

Note: **AD** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100% **ET** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100% **LD** 50%-67% >67%-84% >84%-100%

Pedagogical

Most of the pedagogical knowledge areas were reported to be used by high proportions of both ADs and LDs, and non-significant differences between these roles were found for *Pedagogical theory*, *Assessment design principles*, *Discipline specific learning and teaching practices* and *Good practice in face-to-face learning and teaching*. The two knowledge areas where significant differences were found between ADs and LDs offer insights into the different focus of each of these roles. Knowledge of *Learning design models and principles* was reported to be used by 98% of LDs and 79% of ADs responding to the survey, and use of knowledge of *Curriculum structures* was reported by 94% of ADs but only 65% of LDs.

In contrast, low proportions of ETs reported use of pedagogical knowledge areas. Differences between ETs and LDs/ADs for all of these were significant and this indicates that the educational technologist role is less pedagogy-focused in nature than ADs or LDs.

Pedagogical-Technological

Very high proportions of LDs reporting using knowledge of *Good practice in blended learning and teaching* (98%) and *Good practice in online learning and teaching* (100%) and significant differences were found between them and both ADs and ETs for these knowledge areas. Differences between ADs and ETs for knowledge in these areas were non-significant. This suggests that work requiring knowledge of blended and online learning is an area of focus for LDs.

High proportions of both ETs and LDs reported using knowledge of both *Good use of education technologies in learning and teaching* and *Current and emerging education technologies* and the difference between these roles was non-significant. This suggests that work requiring knowledge of education technologies is an area of focus of ETs and LDs.

Technological

Differences between ETs and LDs for knowledge areas in the technological category were all non-significant with the exception of *General IT systems and processes*. A notably higher proportion of ETs (83%) reported using this knowledge than did LDs (41%).

Low proportions of ADs reported use of any of these knowledge areas and significant differences were found between them and both ETs and LDs. This indicates that work requiring technological knowledge is generally not an area of focus for ADs.

Institutional

Significant differences were found between each role pairing (AD/ET, ET/LD, AD/LD) for knowledge of *Institutional policies (Teaching/Assessment)* and a high proportion of ADs (94%) reported use of this knowledge area. No significant differences between any role were found for knowledge of *Institutional policies (IP/Copyright)* or *Institutional structures, systems and processes*. This indicates the broad relevance of this knowledge to all roles.

Knowledge of *Institutional policies (Privacy/Security)* appeared to mainly be a focus for ETs (83%), with significant differences between them and both ADs and LDs. This may indicate that this knowledge is needed more for technology-oriented activities. Conversely, the pedagogically focused knowledge of *Academic integrity issues* and *Equity and accessibility principles for education* was more the domain of ADs and LDs, with high proportions of both reporting using these knowledge areas, and a non-significant difference between them.

Scholarly

In the scholarly category, high proportions of ADs reported using knowledge of *Academic research methodology* (85%) and *Academics' work practices and needs* (94%) and there were significant differences between them and ETs/LDs. This indicates that work requiring scholarly knowledge is a focus of ADs.

Organisational

Among the more general organisational knowledge areas, high proportions of respondents in all three roles reported using knowledge of both *Collaboration* and *Negotiation and conflict resolution*, and the differences between these roles were non-significant. For *Project management* and *Quality management processes*, the only significant differences found between pairs were between ETs and LDs. This largely reflects the fact that relatively low proportions of ETs reported using these areas of knowledge. High proportions of all three roles reported using knowledge of *Relationship building*, and again the significant difference was found between ETs (79%) and LDs (96%). This may indicate that the nature of LD work involves longer engagements with stakeholders/academics than ET work does.

The knowledge areas used by EdAdvisors in this study are less directly connected to roles than practices were because they inform the performance of a wide range of practices. The fact that low proportions of ADs reported using technological knowledge and low proportions of ETs reported using pedagogical knowledge nonetheless highlights important differences in the respective focus of these two roles. The wide use of knowledge in all parts of the pedagogical-technological spectrum by LDs illustrates the *all-rounder* nature of this role.

5.5 Becoming an EdAdvisor

5.5.1 Entry Paths

The 16 interviewees described the way they and other EdAdvisors had entered the field. Their relevant responses were coded to the *EdAdvisor entry path* category, and several themes were identified highlighting different careers that interviewees had held before becoming EdAdvisors. These themes, illustrative quotes, number of respondents by role discussing the theme, and number of references (refs) made to the theme are presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8*Interview Themes Relating to EdAdvisor Entry Path*

Themes	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Former teaching academic	"And so, whereas you look at the, the background of a lot of ed designers and it's really varied. Many of them actually come from prior academic roles" (LD Oscar)	9	5	0	4	12
Former school or TAFE teacher	"So, I'm a teacher qualified and worked in high schools in both Victoria and Queensland" (ET Kerry)	8	2	2	3	11
Started in diff EdAdvisor role	"I came in as an ed tech education technology something something, transition to educational designer. Then became professional learning consultant, then became an academic developer." (AD Evelyn)	7	5	2	0	7
Tech/media background	"I was gonna say the thing that probably has helped me most out of my different four or five roles over the years is probably that interactive multimedia design, which was from a long time ago" (ET Don)	6	1	3	2	7
Direct entry	"I started in 2019, through a, a graduate learning design program offered at [university name], continued on there as a, an an assistant learning designer." (ET Paul)	1	0	1	0	1
<i>Total</i>		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	38

Starting as an Educator

Nine interviewees, particularly ADs (5 of 6), reported that they (or people that they were aware of) had been *former teaching academics* before becoming EdAdvisors. The move to an EdAdvisor role was often discussed in relation to a desire to make a greater contribution to learning and teaching in the institution. One AD discussed her prior experience teaching education students about IT in education. “What I discovered as I was doing that is that, you know, there was a missing piece where the academics that were teaching these teachers did not understand the role of technology in education” (AD Acia). Similar numbers of interviewees (8 of 16) noted that they or colleagues were *former school or TAFE (Technical and Further Education) teachers* before becoming EdAdvisors in higher education. “I’ve worked as a teacher. I’ve been a teacher for 10 years and I’ve also been looking after e-learning in TAFE for many years” (ET Don).

Starting out Elsewhere

A slightly smaller group of people (6), including half of the ETs (3/6), had come into the EdAdvisor field with a *tech/media background* after working in IT or media and multimedia production roles. This work sometimes involved assisting academics with the production of resources or providing training and support in the use of technology in other organisations. “I would end up creating learning material and, and providing, you know, training either one on one sort of, at the desk or small group training” (ET Peta). A recurring thread in discussion of entry to EdAdvisor roles was that five of the six ADs and two ETs described *starting in different EdAdvisor roles* to their current one. Moving between a range of EdAdvisor roles and responsibilities was a common story, although nobody mentioned moving away from an AD role to become an LD or ET.

So, my job title is lecturer academic development, and the job that I had immediately before this one was, um, educational technologist or something like that, E eLearning advisor, which was an educational technologist job. (AD Rosella)

Direct Entry

While 15 of 16 interviewees described different careers that they had held before becoming an EdAdvisor, the youngest interviewee, ET Paul, entered the field directly from university after studying for a learning design qualification. ET Paul was the only interviewee to discuss holding a qualification directly related to working in an EdAdvisor role.

5.5.2 Qualifications and Accreditation

Survey respondents were asked in a free-text question to list their post-secondary qualifications that they believed were relevant to their role. These included qualifications in progress. I grouped these qualifications as Education, IT/Education Technology, Other disciplines, Doctoral degrees and HEA (Advance HE) fellowships (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9

EdAdvisor Qualifications by Role

Qualification in	AD (<i>n</i> = 33)		ET (<i>n</i> = 24)		LD (<i>n</i> = 54)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Education	28	85	13	54	44	81
IT/Ed tech	4	12	7	29	5	9
Other disc	18	55	6	25	12	22
Doctorate	16	48	3	12	3	6
HEA fellow	19	58	5	21	16	30

Qualifications in Education

High proportions of ADs (*n* = 28, 85%) and LDs (*n* = 44, 81%) reported holding a qualification in education. A majority of ETs (*n* = 13, 54%) also hold a qualification in education. A slightly higher

proportion of EdAdvisors in academic roles ($n = 20$, 85%) hold these qualifications than those in professional roles ($n = 70$, 81%).

A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution across the different roles, $p = .013$. Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated statistically significant differences between academic developers and educational technologists, $p = .022$, and between learning designers and educational technologists, $p = .027$. These differences indicate that ADs and LDs are more likely to hold a qualification in education than ETs.

Qualifications in IT/Education Technology

While the majority of respondent EdAdvisors in any role do not have an IT/Education Technology related qualification, more ETs ($n = 7$, 29%) have them than do ADs ($n = 4$, 12%) or LDs ($n = 5$, 9%), however this was not a statistically significant difference ($p = .064$).

Qualifications in Other Disciplines

A substantially larger proportion of ADs ($n = 18$, 55%) hold qualifications in a discipline that might be considered less relevant to EdAdvisor roles than ETs ($n = 6$, 25%) or LDs ($n = 12$, 22%). A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution across the different roles, $p = .005$. Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between academic developers and learning designers, $p = .006$. This indicates that ADs are more likely to hold a qualification in another discipline than LDs. No significant differences were found between LDs and ETs ($p = 1.000$) or between ADs and ETs ($p = .058$).

Doctoral Degrees

While close to half of ADs ($n = 16$, 48%) responding to the survey have a doctoral degree, far fewer ETs ($n = 3$, 12%) or LDs ($n = 6$, 11%) have one. This is likely due to the higher proportion of ADs holding an academic role ($n = 19$, 55%) than do ETs ($n = 1$, 8%) or LDs ($n = 3$, 6%). A Kruskal-Wallis H

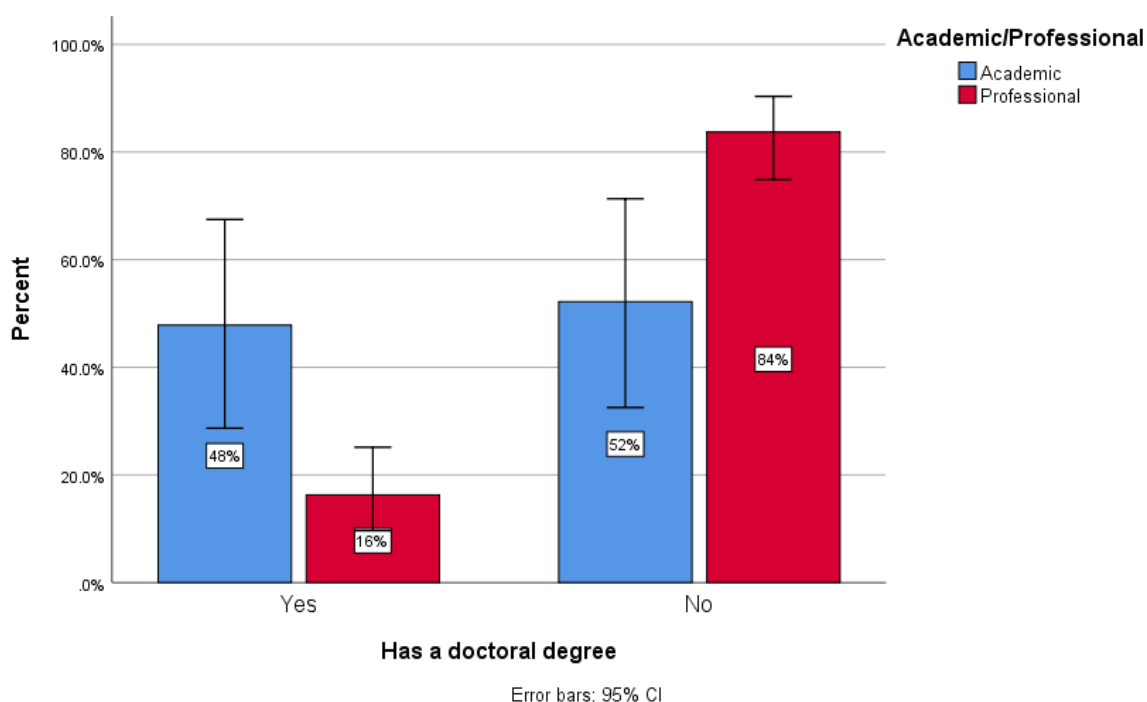
test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution across the different roles, $p < .001$.

Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between academic developers and learning designers, $p < .001$. Similarly, a significant difference was observed between Academic Developer and Educational technologist, $p = .004$. This indicates that ADs are more likely to hold a doctoral qualification than LDs or ETs. No significant difference was found between Learning Designer and Educational technologists ($p = 1.000$).

A further examination of doctoral degrees by professional or academic classification is presented in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6

EdAdvisors With a Doctoral Degree by Academic-Professional Classification



As might be expected, a significantly higher proportion of responding EdAdvisors in academic roles ($n = 11$, 48%) than those in professional roles ($n = 14$, 16%) hold doctoral qualifications.

A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that academic EdAdvisors are more likely to hold a doctoral degree than professional EdAdvisors, $p = .001$.

Advance HE / HEA Fellowships

Among survey respondents, notably more ADs ($n = 19$, 58%) than ETs ($n = 5$, 21%) or LDs ($n = 16$, 30%) have gained accreditation through the Advance HE/HEA fellowships program.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution across EdAdvisor roles, $p = .007$. Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between academic developers and learning designers, $p = .026$. Similarly, a significant difference was observed between academic developers and educational technologists, $p = .014$. These indicate that ADs are more likely to hold (Advance HE) HEA Fellowships than ETs or LDs. No significant difference was found between learning designers and educational technologists ($p = 1.000$).

The experiences of almost all EdAdvisors in this study indicate that this field is commonly a second career, entered into after working in other roles. These prior roles were often located elsewhere in education or academia for ADs and LDs, and sometimes, but not always, IT or media production for ETs. Several participants noted that it was not uncommon for EdAdvisors to move between roles, and only one interviewee had entered the field directly as their first career. The next section examines findings pertaining to the conditions that EdAdvisors commonly work in.

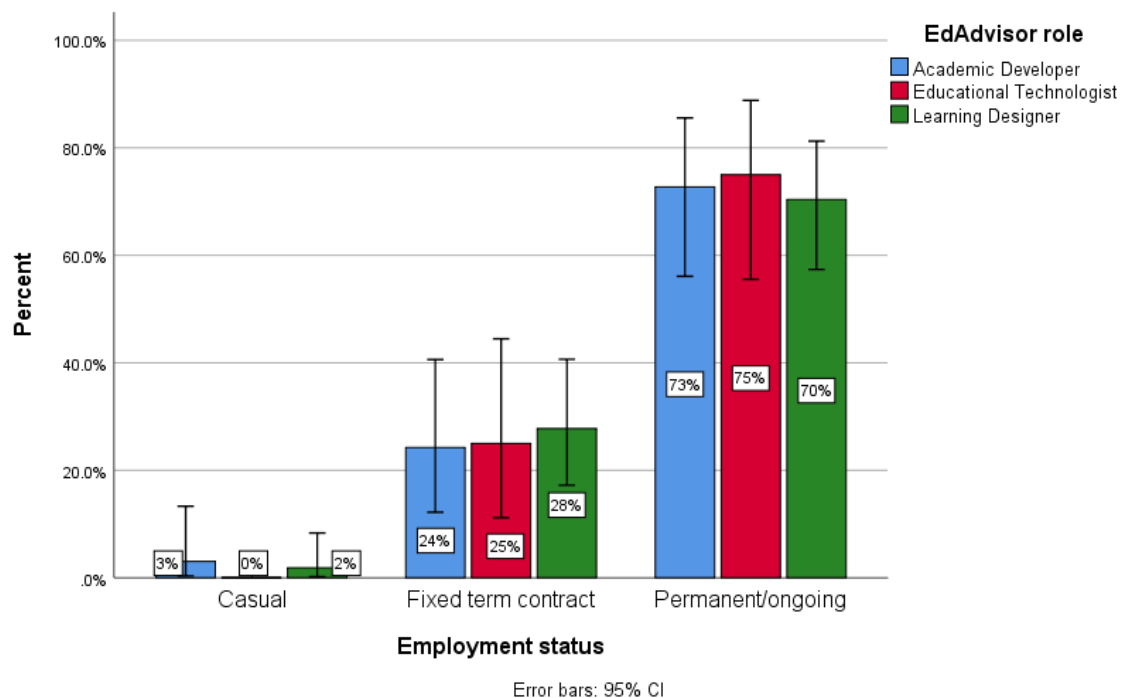
5.6 EdAdvisors in the Workplace

5.6.1 Working as an EdAdvisor

Survey respondents were asked about the nature of their employment, in terms of whether their position was casual, a fixed term contract or permanent/ongoing. This is reported in Figure 5.7 by EdAdvisor role and in Figure 5.8 by academic or professional staff classification.

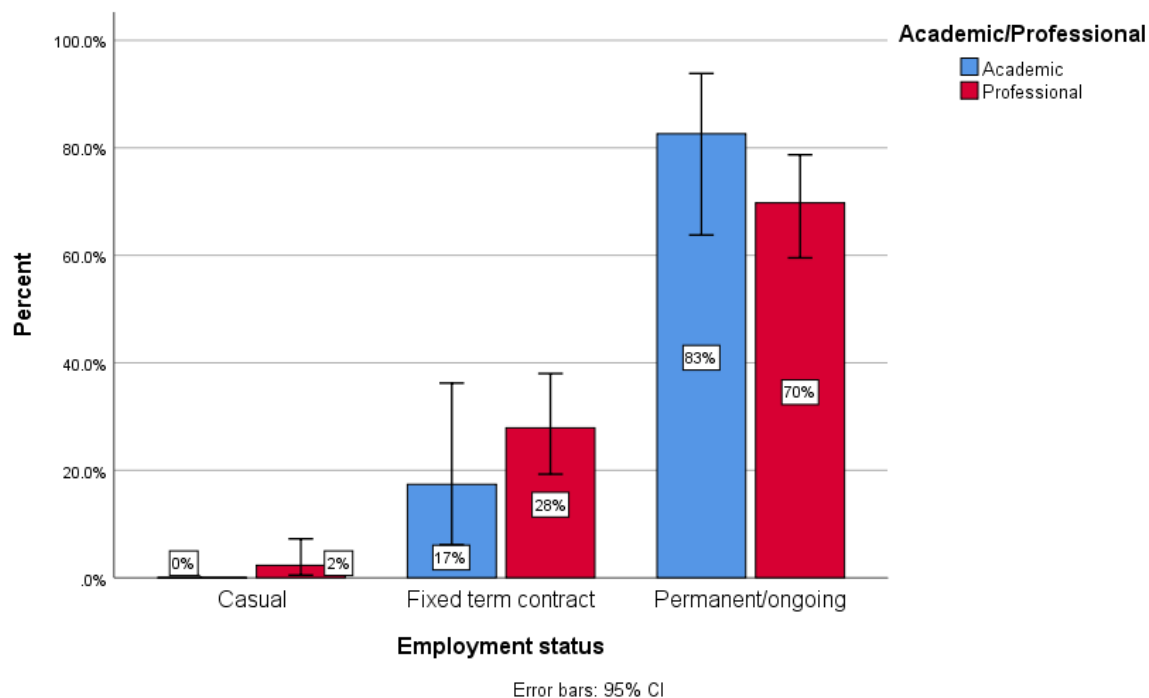
Figure 5.7

Nature of EdAdvisor Employment by Role



Differences in the distribution of nature of employment based on role were examined using a Kruskal-Wallis H test but were not statistically significant ($p = .900$). The overall high levels of permanent/ongoing positions in all three roles are nonetheless noteworthy as Department of Education (2022) data indicates that across higher education overall, permanent/ongoing or “tenurial term” staff make up between 27% and 37.6% of FTE positions.

Figure 5.8

Nature of EdAdvisor Employment by Classification

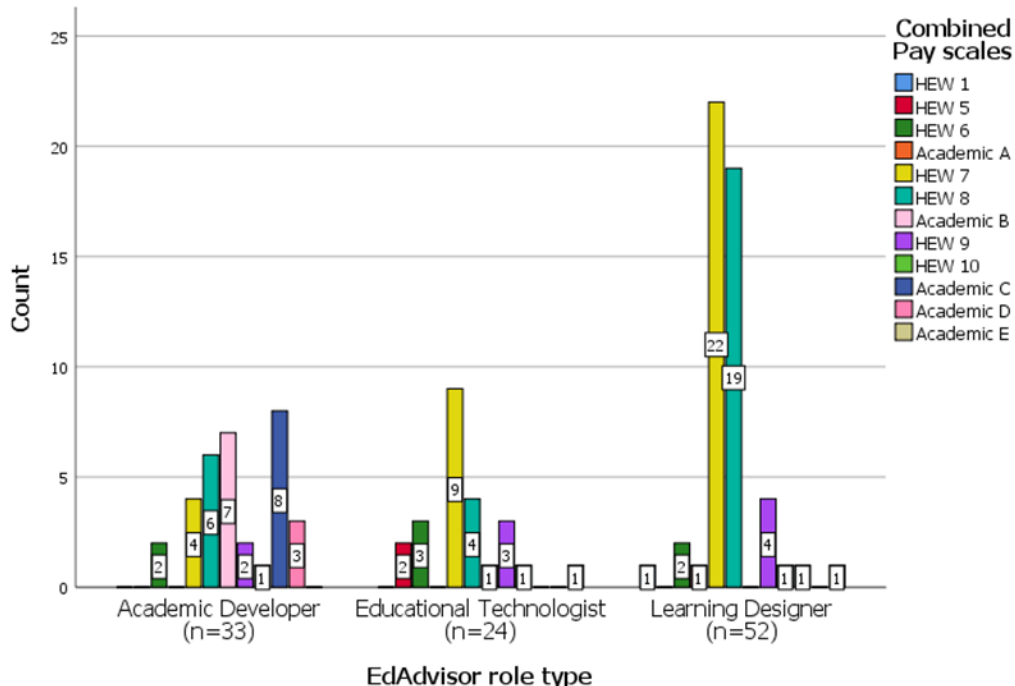
Similar, a non-statistically significant result was obtained when using a Mann-Whitney U test to compare the employment status of EdAdvisors in academic and professionally classified positions ($p = .210$). Two professional staff (2%) held casual positions, 24 (28%) were on fixed term contracts and 60 (70%) were in ongoing roles. No academic staff held casual positions, 4 (17%) had fixed term contracts and 19 (83%) were in ongoing roles.

Pay Rates for EdAdvisors

Survey respondents were asked what level role (HEW1-10 or Academic A-E) they hold, depending on whether they reported holding a professional or academically classified position. These levels are presented as a single, ordinal scale reflecting mean salary for these levels across ten universities in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9

Frequency of EdAdvisors at Different Pay Levels by Role



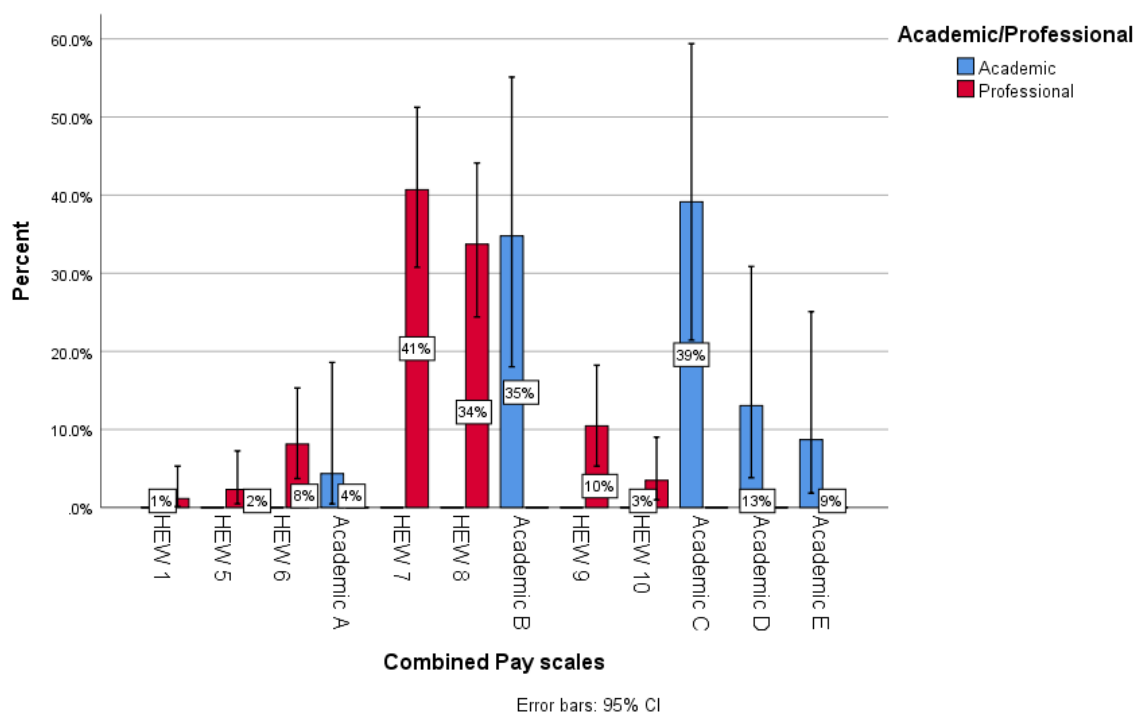
The Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of pay levels across the different roles, $p < .001$. Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between academic developers and educational technologists, $p = .001$ and also between learning designer and academic developers, $p < .001$. This indicates that ADs are more likely to be paid more than LDs or ETs. No significant difference was found between educational technologists and learning designers ($p = 1.000$).

Pay Levels for EdAdvisors by Academic-Professional Classification

Survey respondents were asked whether they held a professional or academically classified position. These levels are presented as a single, ordinal scale reflecting mean salary for these levels across ten universities in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10

Frequency of EdAdvisors at Different Pay Levels by Academic-Professional Classification



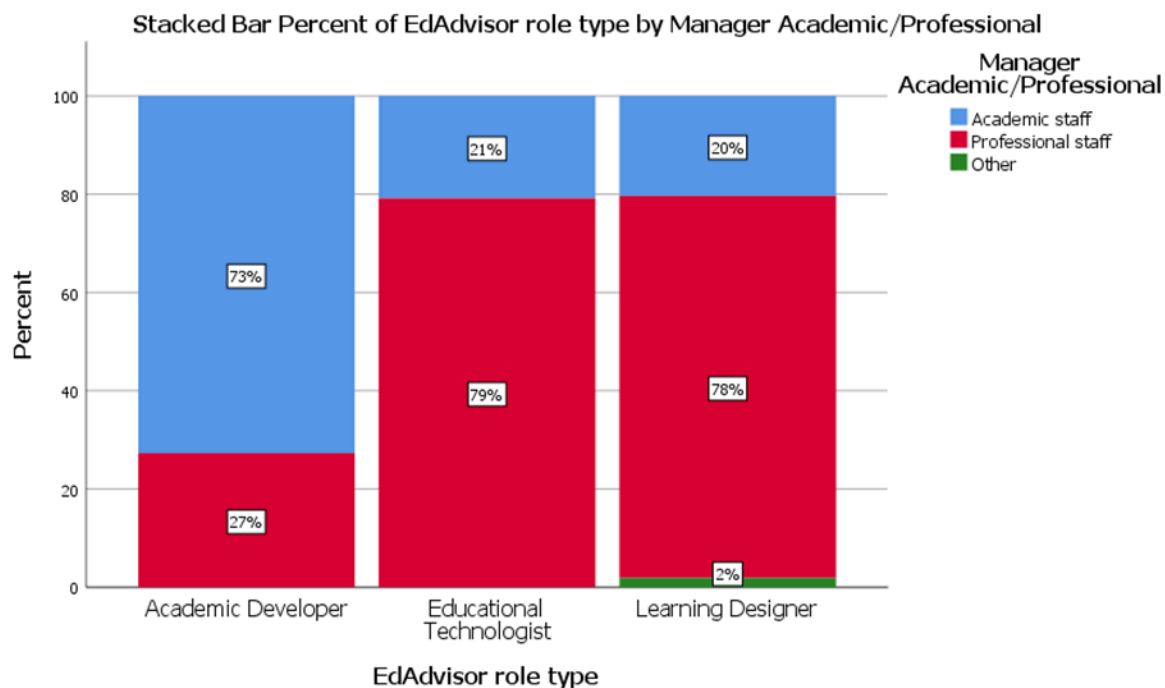
A Mann-Whitney U test showed a statistically significant difference between these classifications, $p < .001$, indicating that academic EdAdvisors are more likely to be paid more highly than those in professional roles.

Direct Managers

Survey respondents were asked whether their direct manager holds an academic or professionally classified position. (Figure 5.11)

Figure 5.11

EdAdvisors with a Direct Manager in an Academic or Professional Position by Role



A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution across the different roles, $p < .001$. Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between academic developers and educational technologists, $p < .001$, as well as between academic developers and learning designers, $p < .001$. This indicates that ETs and LDs are more likely to have a direct manager with a professional classification than ADs. No significant difference was found between educational technologists and learning designers ($p = 1.000$).

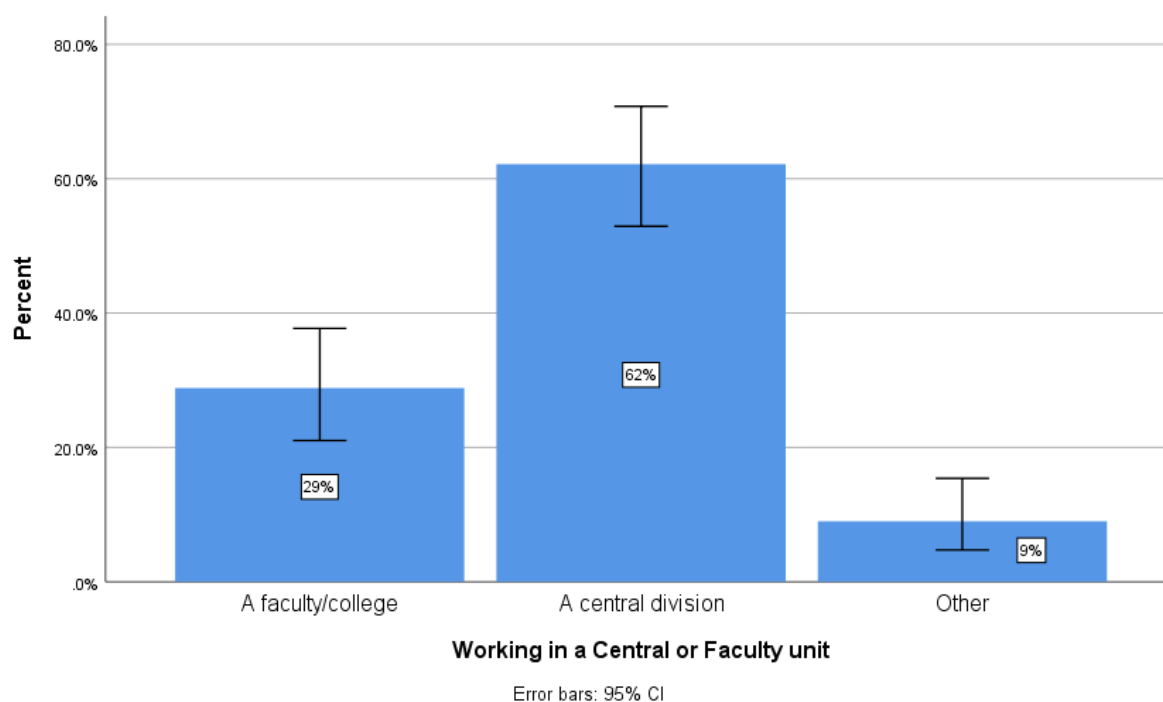
The difference in the classification of direct manager as academic or professional between ADs and ETs/LDs is striking. While a strong majority of ADs (73%) report to a manager in an academic position, an equally strong majority of ETs (79%) and LDs (78%) report to a manager in a professional role. One LD also reporting having a direct manager classified as “other” (a “senior executive”).

5.6.2 Working in a Higher Education Institution

Higher education institutions can be structured in a range of ways to provide pedagogical and technological support to educators and to meet higher-level institutional needs. A common approach sees EdAdvisors working either in a central, university-focused unit or in faculty-based units. Survey respondents were asked if they work in a faculty, central or other unit (Figure 5.12). This is also presented by role (Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.12

Proportion of EdAdvisors Working in Central, Faculty or Other Units



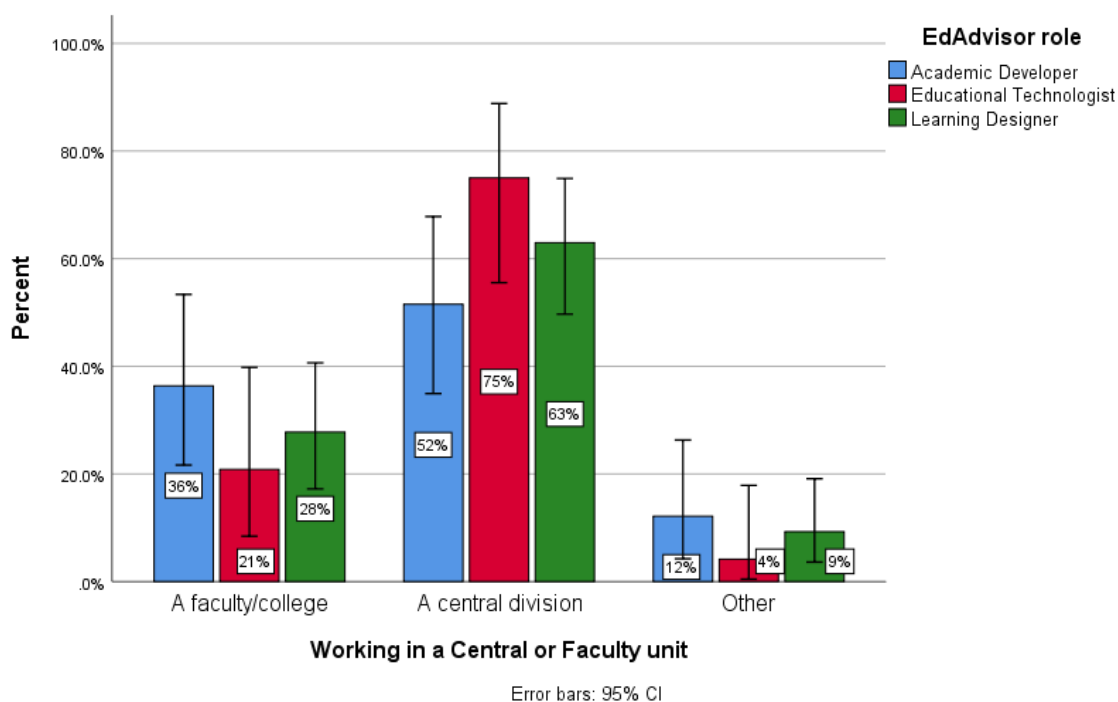
The majority of respondents ($n = 69$, 62%) reported working in a unit in a central division. Of the remaining respondents, 32 (29%) reported working in a unit in a faculty or college and 10 (9%) reported working in a unit elsewhere. Of those EdAdvisors working in “other” units, those that responded to the free text question mostly noted that they were working either in a central unit but serving a specific faculty or the worked in school or department level teams within faculties but not

for the entire faculty. This third tier of EdAdvisor units at a sub-faculty level has largely not been reported in current literature.

A Chi-Square goodness of fit test found that the higher-than-expected number of EdAdvisors in central units was unlikely to be due to random variation, $p < .001$.

Figure 5.13

Proportions of EdAdvisors Working in Central, Faculty and Other Units by Role



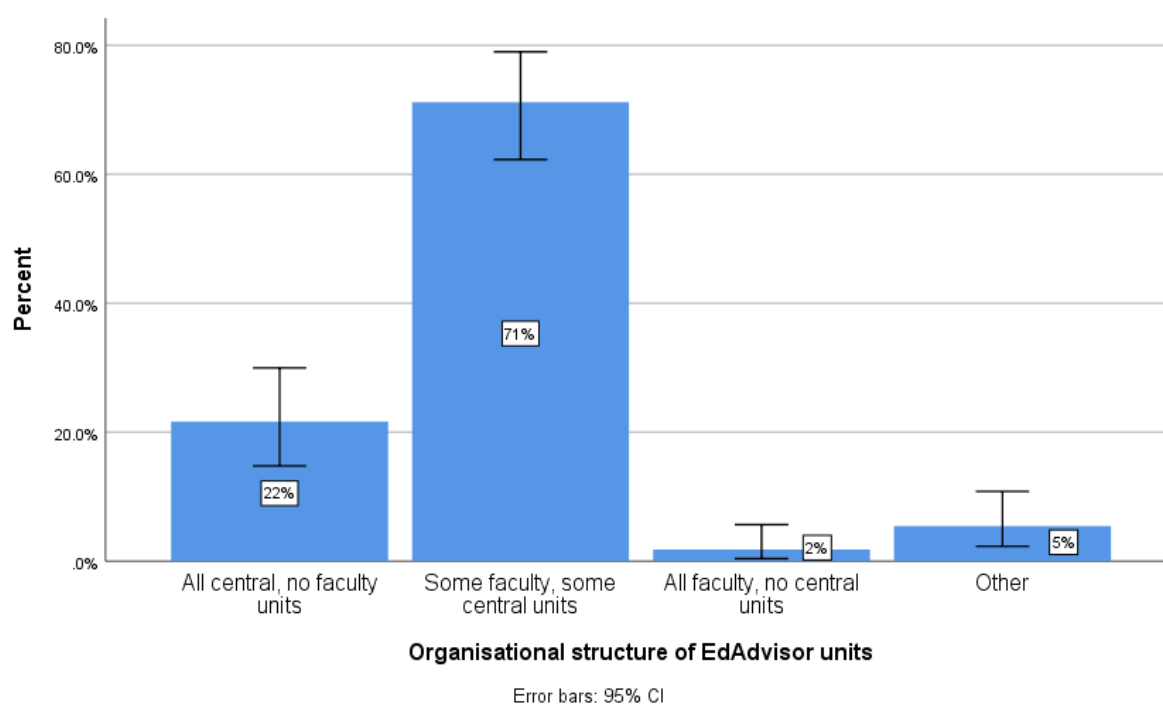
A Kruskal-Wallis H test found no statistically significant difference in the distribution across the different roles, $p = .795$. Respondents were asked about the composition of EdAdvisor units in their institution (Figure 5.14), in terms of whether there was a central unit and no faculty units, faculty units and no central unit, a mixture of both or “other”. The full choices offered in the question were:

- All advisors are part of a centrally based team and there are no separate faculty/department-based teams

- Some advisors work in centrally based teams and some advisors work in teams based in faculties/departments and they belong to different teams
- All advisors work for teams based in faculties/departments and there are no centrally based teams
- Other

Figure 5.14

Organisational Structures of EdAdvisor Units



A notable majority of EdAdvisors (71%) work in institutions where there is a combination of central and faculty based units. A smaller group (22%) work in institutions where there is only a centrally based unit and very few EdAdvisors (2%) work in institutions where there are only faculty based EdAdvisor units.

A Chi-Square goodness of fit test was performed to examine the distribution of different organisational structures in the organisation. A statistically significant result was found, $p < .001$,

indicating that the higher than expected number of EdAdvisors in institutions with some faculty and some central units was unlikely to be due to random variation.

EdAdvisor Unit Naming Conventions

The names of EdAdvisor units can help academics and leaders to understand their purpose. Survey respondents were asked whether the name of their unit includes words (or close variations) including Education/Teach/Learn; Design/Develop/Support; Innovation/Future/Transformation; or none of these (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10

Prevalence of Common Terms in EdAdvisor Unit Names

Unit name contains a variation of	% of AD (n = 33)	% of ET (n = 24)	% of LD (n = 54)
Teaching/Learning/Education	82	75	81
Design/Develop/Support	30	38	31
Future/Innovation/Transformation	45	38	35
None of these	12	0	4

The high levels of use of words similar to “Teaching” (AD 82%; ET 75%; LD 81%) is unsurprising given the general educational remit of all EdAdvisors.

This section indicates that EdAdvisors in academic positions in this study — mostly, as discussed, working as ADs — receive better pay and job security overall than their mostly professional LD and ET colleagues. While acknowledging that the findings in this study were collected in 2022 and conditions may have since changed, EdAdvisors in all roles in this study have greater job security than other workers in higher education.

The final section of this chapter considers the implications of the findings so far.

5.7 Summary

Results in this chapter provide a foundational understanding of the kinds of people that work in EdAdvisor roles, the things they do and need to know, how they enter the field and some of the conditions under which they work. These results contribute to answering RQ1: *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* and RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?*

5.7.1 RQ1: *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian Higher Education?*

This chapter has presented a wide range of findings about the professional identity of EdAdvisors and their working conditions in Australian higher education which have illustrated both differences and similarities between roles. While these differences and similarities inform our general understanding of EdAdvisors in this study, as well as some of the material-economic and social-political arrangements which affect their practices, the pathways that EdAdvisors took to enter this field tell us something important about who they really are as practitioners. Many of the EdAdvisors in this study chose to become EdAdvisors after working in another field, commonly another area of education, academia, information technology or media production. In addition to interviewees explicitly discussing these choices, the decisions of the study participants to transition to this field were evident in the diverse qualifications they held and suggested in their long workplace experience: more than two-thirds of them are older than 45. Their decisions suggest that EdAdvisors in Australian higher education are people with diverse expertise in different facets of learning and teaching and a desire to share this experience to support learning and teaching practices.

5.7.2 RQ2: How do EdAdvisors Contribute to Learning and Teaching

Practices?

The three EdAdvisor roles bring expertise and experience in many different areas of pedagogy and technology to their work to contribute to learning and teaching practice in Australian higher education. The practices they perform, and the types of knowledge that they use highlight commonalities between all EdAdvisor roles in areas such as building capability and quality management of teaching, and also commonalities between pairs of roles. These commonalities include ADs and LDs both working to design teaching and learning, and ETs and LDs building learning resources and activities and facilitating education technologies. While ETs are the only EdAdvisors in this study to substantially undertake technical support, and ADs similarly undertake research, there are far more overlapping practices than unique ones. Considering the pedagogical or technological nature of these practices and knowledge areas adds to our understanding of differences between the roles, with ADs in the study rarely reporting engaging in technological practices in their contributions to learning and teaching practice. ETs mostly focus on technological or pedagogical-technological activities but undertake pedagogical work in building capability of academics, and LDs reported working in all parts of the pedagogical-technological spectrum. In these different ways, EdAdvisors make distinct contributions to learning and teaching.

5.7.3 Next Chapter

While understanding what EdAdvisors do in their different roles provides insights into the ways they contribute to learning and teaching practices, examining the purposes these practices serve — their teleoaffective structures — and the different ways that EdAdvisors have impact in their work deepens this understanding. This is the focus of the next chapter.

6. EdAdvisor Purpose and Contribution

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results relating to EdAdvisors' views of their ability to make a meaningful contribution to learning and teaching practices in Australian higher education and examines findings pertaining to the effect of role clarity on this impact. It draws from findings in the survey ($N = 111$) and semi-structured interviews with 16 EdAdvisors in the three roles of Academic Developer, Educational technologist and Learning Designer. All findings relate only to EdAdvisors included in the sample and are not extrapolated to the wider EdAdvisor population.

In considering the factors affecting the impact of EdAdvisors' practices, it is first necessary to understand what EdAdvisors wish to achieve in them and why, what Schatzki describes as *teleoaffective structures* (Schatzki, 2002). The first section — Section 6.2 *EdAdvisor purpose* — presents findings from the survey and interviews relating to EdAdvisor views about the purpose of their roles and those of their colleagues. It includes their aims, who their work is intended to serve (the institution, academics, students, or learning and teaching practices in general), and the things they want to achieve in their work.

The next section — Section 6.3 *EdAdvisor impact*— presents findings pertaining to the extent to which EdAdvisors feel that they can make meaningful contributions to decision-making around pedagogy and technology in their institutions. It includes examples of their experiences working with academics and institutional leaders.

In the following sections (Section 6.4 and Section 6.5), results are presented about the understanding of EdAdvisors, both in terms of how their purpose and expertise are understood by academics and leaders and how they understand EdAdvisors in other roles. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of key findings (Section 6.6).

6.2 EdAdvisor Purpose

This section presents findings from survey questions and interviews relating to the purpose of EdAdvisor work, including the aims of these practices. While the focus of the work of most EdAdvisors is shaped by institutional learning and teaching leaders, understanding EdAdvisors' own motivations and values, the *teleoaffective structures* of their practice (Section 2.2.2), as they navigate complex competing needs and priorities offers insights into their practices.

6.2.1 EdAdvisor Purpose Between Roles

Survey participants were asked to select the three main purposes that they have in their day-to-day work from a list of 10. These results are presented in Table 6.1. Academic developers selected the fewest ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 2.052$), followed by learning designers ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 2.895$) and educational technologists selected the most ($M = 6.63$, $SD = 2.916$). These differences were not statistically significant.

Table 6.1*Heat Map of EdAdvisor Purpose by Role*

Purpose	AD% (n = 33)	ET% (n = 24)	LD% (n = 54)	All% (N = 111)	Sig. (p)
Building staff capability	79	50	54	60	0.035
Driving innovation and change	55	71	57	60	0.428
Supporting innovation and change	30	79	54	52	< .001
Education technology governance	15	67	19	28	< .001
Ensuring and enhancing the quality of education technology	12	83	41	41	< .001
Ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching practice	70	50	72	67	0.146
Ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching resources	24	58	76	57	< .001
Improving student learning experience	55	63	93	75	< .001
Supporting teaching staff	36	79	63	59	0.004
Supporting wider institutional needs	33	63	37	41	0.059

Note: < 25% 25% - 33% 66% - 75% > 75%

Kruskal-Wallis H tests revealed statistically significant differences between roles for seven of the 10 purposes. Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons between roles were also made for these purposes and these results are presented below.

Building Staff Capability

More ADs (79%) reported *building staff capability* as one of their main purposes than did ETs (50%) or LDs (54%). This was the purpose that they higher proportion of ADs selected. After applying the Bonferroni correction, the differences between pairs of roles were not significant.

Driving and Supporting Innovation and Change

More ADs reported driving innovation and change (55%) than supporting it (30%). Relatively equal proportions of LDs reported driving it (57%) and supporting it (54%). ETs had the highest proportions of respondents reporting supporting (79%) and driving (71%) innovation and change although the only significant difference between roles was between ETs and ADs for supporting innovation and change ($p = .001$).

Education Technology Governance and Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of Education

Technology

Very low proportions of ADs (15%) or LDs (19%) among respondents reported *education technology governance* as a purpose of their work as EdAdvisors but more than two-thirds of ETs selected this purpose. The pairwise differences for ETs and ADs and ETs and LDs were significant ($p < .001$). Low proportions again of ADs (12%) and LDs (41%) reported *ensuring and enhancing the quality of education technology* as part of their purpose compared to the high proportion of ETs (83%) who selected it. This purpose was selected by the most ETs. The pairwise comparisons were again significant for ADs and ETs ($p < .001$) and ETs and LDs ($p = .001$) as well as between ADs and LDs ($p = .027$).

Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching Practice and Resources

While the differences were not significant between respondents in different roles who reported that *ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching practice* was part of their professional purpose, it is worth noting that this is one of only two purposes reported by more than two-thirds of ADs (70%). Slightly more LDs (72%) in the survey regarded this as part of their purpose, as did half of ETs (50%). Substantially fewer ADs (24%) considered *ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching resources* to be part of their purpose, drawing a clear distinction between learning and teaching practices and learning and teaching resources. A relatively high

proportion of LDs (76%) selected this purpose, indicating its connection to this role. Significant pairwise differences were found between ADs—ETs ($p = .032$) and ADs—LDs ($p < .001$).

Improving Student Learning Experience, Supporting Teaching Staff, and Supporting Wider

Institutional Needs

The final three purposes offer some insights into the ways that different stakeholders in institutions view some of their key stakeholders in their roles. *Improving student learning experience* was reported as a purpose for almost all LDs (93%) but less than two-thirds of ETs (63%) and close to half of ADs (55%). It was the most reported purpose for LDs and significant differences were found between LDs—ETs ($p = .015$) and ADs—LDs ($p < .001$). Meanwhile, a high proportion (79%) of ETs reported *supporting teaching staff* was one of their purposes, more than double the proportion of ADs (36%). Just under two-thirds of LDs (63%) viewed this as part of their purpose. The differences between ADs—ETs ($p = .004$) and LDs—ETs ($p = .045$) were significant. Only a third of ADs (33%) or LDs (37%) reported that *supporting wider institutional needs* was part of their purpose, compared to 63% of ETs, however these differences were not significant.

6.2.2 EdAdvisor Purpose Themes

Interviewees discussed the purpose of their roles and activities as they described their work. The major themes that emerged were *Learning and teaching*, *Capability building*, *Change bringing* and *Compliance enforcing*. These themes, illustrative quotes, number of respondents by role discussing the theme, and number of references (refs) made to the theme are presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2*Interview Themes Relating to EdAdvisor Purpose*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Good learning and teaching	"All of our work absolutely falls in the ballpark of shaping teaching and learning practice" (LD Daria)	14	6	4	4	40
Capability building	"I have some work, which is to directly teach the academic teaching staff how to teach" (AD Rosella)	14	6	5	3	33
Change bringing	"I worked with that whole pharmacy team for a couple of years on transitioning to a blended model of delivery and what that might look like" (ET Kerry)	12	4	5	3	35
Compliance enforcing	"And next week, I'm going to start checking hundreds of Canvas sites for correct exam information" (ET Barbara)	10	4	3	3	21
Total		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	129

Good Learning and Teaching

EdAdvisors in all roles (14 of 16) described the primary aim of their work as being about enhancing both learning and teaching practices to benefit students and educators. Interviewees mentioned the different ways that they work towards this in their roles, from changing “the way academics were seeing the role of technology in education” (AD Acia) to “putting together a quality framework of learning design standards” (ET Paul). In discussing her work, an AD noted that enhancing learning and teaching practices for students and educators is not necessarily always mutually beneficial, as improvements for students may necessitate additional work for the educator. “I think I'm doing something for the students and not hurting the teachers. And that's probably my main operation” (AD Rosella).

Capability Building

Most interviewees (14 of 16) identified building capability in pedagogy and the use of education technologies by academics as a key aspect of their work. This commonly involved designing and delivering group and individual training, as well as creating user guides and other resources. Capability building of academics was also linked to sustainability, as the ratio of academics to EdAdvisors in institutions meant that it was not always possible for EdAdvisors to do all the work for academics that was requested (for example, building learning resources or activities in the LMS). Giving the academic the skills to do it themselves was seen as the best way to maximise the EdAdvisor's time. One LD talked about enjoying doing this building work for his academics, “but if I was to try and adopt that with every unit I, I know that the, my manager wouldn't be happy ... because they see it more about enabling” (LD Oscar). In some institutions, capability building sometimes extended “to focus on career development for educators, whatever level they're at” (AD Evelyn), which included providing advice on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) focused research publications or the academic promotion process.

Change Bringing

Another widely discussed theme around the purpose of EdAdvisor work related to their involvement in facilitating innovation and change in the institution. This was commonly associated with education technology-based initiatives. An LD observed that these projects often have a wider strategic focus.

So, at the moment we are talking about we use the word uplift to describe the idea that when you transition to a new or new version learning management system, that's a very good opportunity to actually, improve the quality of our online teaching. (LD Daria)

One AD raised concerns about the way that change is often handled in higher education, highlighting a lack of long-term planning.

So often we do big changes and then you just kind of assume they will diffuse out through the university because you've worked with a few big units and people will just see them and pick them up and do it themselves. That needs ongoing support and resourcing. And I think that's something that universities across the board don't necessarily do very well, continuing to have that support for things to be BAU [business as usual]. (AD Georgie)

Compliance Enforcing

The final theme that emerged from discussions of purpose related to the responsibility of EdAdvisors to ensuring compliance with institutional policies and procedures, as well as some wider legal obligations such as privacy or copyright. This aspect of EdAdvisor work was considered important but was also identified as a source of friction with academics. In answering a question about challenging experiences with academics, one AD shared an example of this:

I was working with a group of academics in the arts faculty, and we were walking along and then they saw a bunch of my colleagues walking across the campus from the learning and teaching unit. And one of them said, 'oh, here comes the Gestapo'. And I thought, 'hey, you know, those are my friends', but you know what I mean? ... I've always found it really

detrimental if you're seen as the, you know, the, the police and it's, it gets tricky ...because the quality standards arm of the university is sometimes incorporated in learning and teaching units. (AD Nicolas)

The idea of acting as some kind of *teaching police* was not a comfortable one for some interviewees, with one AD preferring to reframe it as “I support people understanding what they need to do” (AD Evelyn).

The findings from this section indicate that while EdAdvisors share overarching goals of supporting learning and teaching, different roles also have their own distinct purposes which shape their practices.

6.3 EdAdvisor Impact

This section presents results about EdAdvisors' impact and their ability to contribute to decision-making pertaining to pedagogy and education technology. It also presents responses from the interviews about the nature of the working relationships that EdAdvisors have with academics, leaders and other EdAdvisors. Two key themes emerged from interviewees related to the main ways they had impact in their work. These were *Building relationships* and *Bringing change*. These themes are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3*Interview Themes Relating to Impact*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Building relationships	"If you're gonna build trust with academics or, you know, build real substantial change, you need the time and the relationships to make that happen" (LD Fiona)	13	6	3	4	39
Bringing change	"But they [the academics] said, this will change the way we teach. And I thought, well, this is remarkable" (ET George)	12	5	3	4	25
Total		15/16	6/6	5/6	4/4	64

Building Relationships

EdAdvisor practices frequently involve working with people and this was reflected in the high numbers of EdAdvisors (13/16) who reported building effective relationships with academics, leaders and other EdAdvisors as a key element of having impact in their work. Relationships were considered important in understanding academics' needs - "to find out what was going on" (AD Grace) - which was regarded as important in building trust as academics "don't know what the hell to expect when they start working with us" (LD Henrietta).

Bringing Change

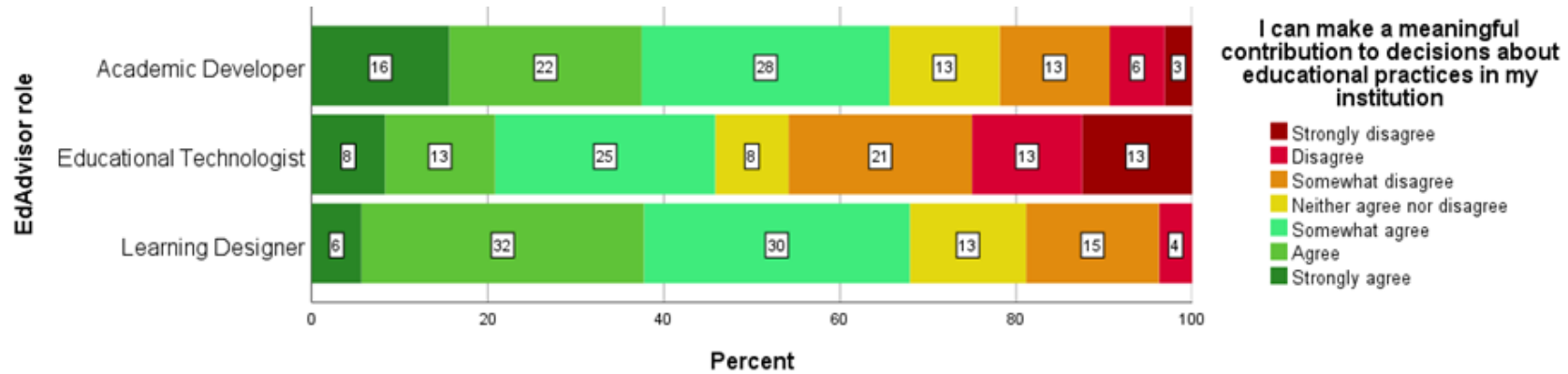
EdAdvisors also valued the times when they believed that their work made a meaningful contribution to improving learning and teaching practices in their institution. This was considered important for both the learner and the educator experience. "So, what, what makes it positive is that I feel I am improving what the students see. And I feel I am helping the teachers stand on their own two feet" (AD Rosella).

6.3.1 Contributing to Decision Making

Survey respondents were asked two questions about the extent to which they agree with the statement that they can make a meaningful contribution to institutional decisions about educational practice (Figure 6.1) and education technologies (Figure 6.2). While all seven responses to these Likert scale questions are presented in the figures for transparency, description of these results is based on broad agreement (*strongly agree + agree + somewhat agree*) and broad disagreement (*strongly disagree + disagree + somewhat disagree*) for clarity.

Figure 6.1

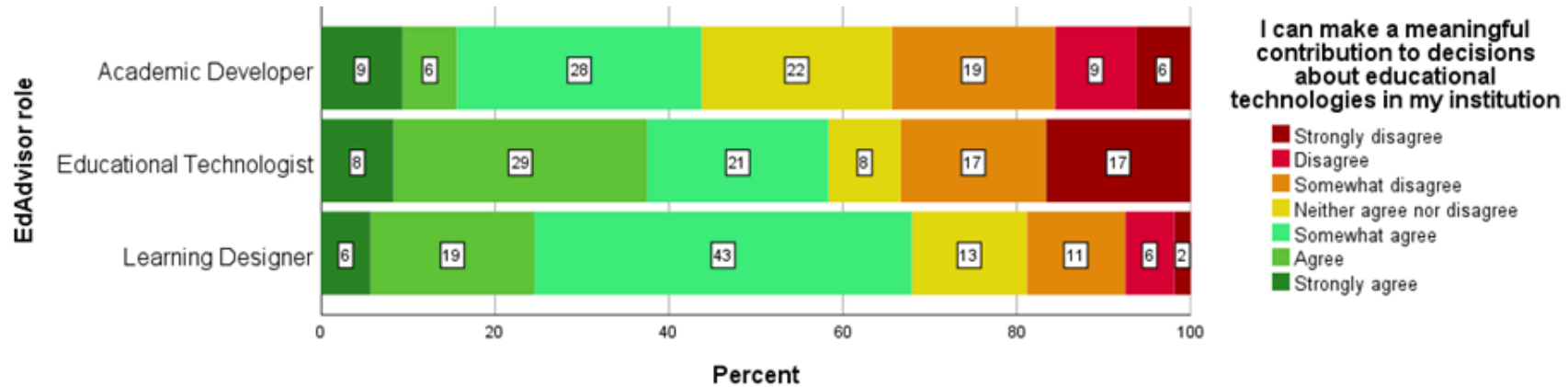
EdAdvisors' Views of their Ability to Contribute to Decision Making about Educational Practice in their Institution



Academic developers (66%) and learning designers (68%) expressed similar levels of broad agreement that they are able to contribute to decision making around educational practices. Nearly equal proportions of educational technologists broadly agreed (46%) and broadly disagreed (47%) that they are able to contribute to decision making about educational practice.

Figure 6.2

EdAdvisors' Views of Their Ability to Contribute to Decision Making About Education Technologies in Their Institution



Responses pertaining to the ability of respondents to meaningfully contribute to decisions around education technologies in their institution were more varied. Of ADs, 43% broadly agreed that they can, while 34% broadly disagreed. A higher proportion, 58%, of ETs broadly agreed and 68% of LDs broadly agreed that they can. Kruskal-Wallis tests of the differences between roles in relation to education technologies ($p = .211$) and educational practices ($p = .068$) were not statistically significant.

6.3.2 EdAdvisors' Relationships with Academics

Interviewees were asked to describe positive and challenging experiences that they had had while working with academics. In discussing *Good relationships with academics*, the main themes that emerged related to *trust and respect, persistent relationships, open-minded, academic champions*, and these relationships being *voluntary*. In discussion of *Poor relationships with academics*, the main themes related to *resistance, lack of respect, relationships being imposed*, and *gender*. References to all of these themes were found among ADs, ETs and LDs. These themes are presented in Table 6.4 and Table 6.5.

Table 6.4*Interview Themes Relating to Good Relationships With Academics*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Trust and respect	"I think what's helped build the really good relationship there is, is him [the academic] respecting my, I guess my, my smarts" (ET Don)	12	5	4	3	33
Persistent relationships	"it's just been generally a really good, productive relationship. It's taken a while to establish ourselves. But, you know, she [the academic] keeps coming back to me with problems" (AD Evelyn)	11	5	3	3	14
Open-minded	"And the head of the head of department in social sciences now just says, you know, tell me, tell me your ideas. I, I know they're gonna be wonderful and that's just a great way to start" (LD Henrietta)	10	5	3	2	14
Academic champions	"Not only we have become colleagues and friends, but he [the academic] was actually, able to then introduce me to other people and to other academics. So, he was basically my champion." (AD Acia)	5	2	1	2	10
Voluntary	"Most the experiences I have with academics tend to be quite positive by simply by the fact that they're often the one to reach, coming out to me" (LD Oscar)	4	2	0	2	6
Total		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	77

Characteristics of Good Relationships with Academics: Trust, Respect and Open-Mindedness

The most prevalent theme when good relationships with academics were discussed involved the importance of building mutual *trust and respect*. This process often involved ensuring that the academic felt that the EdAdvisor understood their context and their needs. This helped the academic to feel confident in the expertise of the EdAdvisor.

We spent a lot of time working together and talking about, what she [the academic] wanted to achieve in the unit, what she was trying to do, what she was comfortable with, but also how we could work together and how we could do things differently in ways that she was comfortable with. (AD Georgie)

This trust was often manifested in the academic being *open-minded* about following suggestions for new approaches to teaching from EdAdvisors. Interviewees in all roles (10 of 16) discussed this as a key element of good relationships. “He [the academic] was keen to explore. He wasn't afraid of making mistakes. He wasn't afraid of trying new things. And I found that that, that, that we had a really amazing connection” (AD Acia).

Good Relationships are Voluntary and Persistent

Interactions between EdAdvisors and academics tend to begin in one of two ways. Either the academic approaches the EdAdvisor for support of their own volition or they are told by a manager that they need to work with the EdAdvisor. Although only four interviewees spoke directly to this theme, the voluntary nature of these engagements is important in setting the tone for the relationship. “It tends to be people you know, coming to us or applying to get support” (LD Fiona).

While some EdAdvisor interactions with academics are relatively transactional, one-off events, many interviewees (11 of 16) highlighted the importance of persistent relationships developed over time with academics. These were regarded as valuable for the insights into the individual academic's practices and teaching approach that they provided the EdAdvisor. They also illustrated the trust and respect which had been built in the relationships.

I've worked in different faculties and sometimes people because of relationships and trust, contact me, for example, even though I'm no longer directly working in their faculty and so, you know, I then try to pass that on, but sometimes it's, it's easier for me to do to work with them. (AD Nicolas)

Five interviewees noted that when these relationships are at their most effective, the academics would then go on to become *academic champions*, who would advocate for the EdAdvisor or the new pedagogies or technologies among their academic peers. These were described by some in terms of academics who had been *converted* by the EdAdvisors. "And there's been a few people who we have really seen switch from becoming very, very challenging to now being extremely supportive and influencing their colleagues" (LD Daria).

Table 6.5*Interview Themes Relating to Poor Relationships With Academics*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Resistance	"You know what it can look like is someone saying, oh, well I need evidence that this is a good teaching practice before I take it on. When in fact really it wouldn't matter what evidence I gave them [the academic]." (LD Fiona)	13	6	4	3	20
Lack of respect	"You say, 'is it possible for the student to misunderstand this?' So, you take the student's view and, and say, 'you know, if I was reading this, I might think this'. And I think that the academic... said, 'well, you, no, no, you're just a stupid bitch' " (AD Rosella)	10	3	5	2	17
Imposed	"I think the, the most challenging relationships are those where people are mandated to come along, and they don't really understand or get the context and why it's important for them" (ET Kerry)	8	3	2	3	10
Gender	"Academic developers, learning designers, people in my old roles are super qualified in all these different things. And it's like being the women of the relationship and the academics are the men. So, they've got this one qualification and that's good enough for them to do whatever and have a window and be paid well and have very flexible, you know, working, working lives. And it's like they see the rest of it as unimportant, even the knowing how to teach bit as unimportant." (ET Barbara)	2	0	2	0	6
Total		15/16	6/6	6/6	3/4	53

Characteristics of Poor Relationships with Academics: Resistance and Lack of Respect

The most common theme in discussing poor relationships with academics involved the academics actively *resisting* the advice of the EdAdvisor (13 of 16 interviewees). While some interviewees acknowledged some of the reasons that academics may have for this, others pointed out that it nonetheless had an impact on them, with one noting that “there is a certain, um, humiliating aspect to being ignored when you are giving informed advice” (AD Rosella).

A majority of interviewees (10 of 16) described instances of being or feeling disrespected as they discussed poor relationships with academics. This is most prevalent among ETs who mentioned being expected to stay at work until a problem was fixed, being excluded from education technology discussions, and “aloofness and arrogance” (ET George). One ET even discussed an academic taking their work and using it, uncredited, in another institution.

Poor Relationships are Often Imposed on the Academic

Half of interviewees (8 of 16) observed that poor relationships were more common when the academic had been directed to work with them, either due to poor teaching ratings for their subject or as part of a change project. They felt that in these instances, it might be seen as punitive or as an attack on the academic’s capabilities, provoking a defensive response. One ET described being told to introduce a new grading tool in a mathematics school that the academics didn’t want and that they “in some ways made sure that it was not gonna work, and in the end the feedback was, ‘takes too much time to set it up’ “ (ET Don).

Gender

A final factor raised by two ETs related to whether certain EdAdvisor roles and practices might be considered to be gendered and whether this affects how some academics regard them. One noted that “within our unit, all the learning designers are female. We have no male learning designers. All the learning technologists are male. And we have no female learning technologists”

(ET George). At another point in the interview, he noted that he had been working in a team where all of the managers were women, and they had found themselves unable to be heard when raising serious concerns about the implementation of a new education technology by the university IT department. He said that it was only after he entered the conversation that these concerns were taken seriously, saying “I think that because it came from a male, possibly” (ET George)

The other ET who spoke about gendered roles, and who had earlier observed that there is a strong component of caring and human development in EdAdvisor work, suggested that this may influence the way male academics work with EdAdvisors.

I think male academics occupy a separate space to female academics. And I say that because female academics tend to also have childcare responsibilities. So, there's a different framing of women's work. and a lot of advisors are women ... So, I think they understand, women's work and the double shift much better. And so that's a common ground that I don't think male academics have with advisors. So, there may also be a bit of gendered stuff going on with male academics and female advisors (ET Barbara)

The relationships that EdAdvisors have with academics are some of their most important because it is ultimately the academics' practices that EdAdvisors primarily work to support. As academics are not a monolith, the nature of these relationships can vary greatly, often depending on the personal traits of the academics and the context in which they find themselves working with EdAdvisors.

6.3.3 EdAdvisors' Relationships with Leaders

Interviewees were asked to describe positive and challenging experiences that they had had while working with institutional leaders of learning and teaching. In discussing good relationships with leaders, themes emerged about how the leader would *champion and protect the team*, *demonstrate trust*, and *provide vision*. When discussing poor relationships with leaders, the themes

addressed leaders' *bad decisions, poor communication, and lack of support and trust*. References to all of these themes were found among ADs, ETs and LDs. These themes are presented in Table 6.6 and Table 6.7.

Table 6.6*Interview Themes Relating to Good Relationships With Leaders*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Champion and protect team	"I had a new boss who would just turn around and go, 'we're not gonna do that. We don't have time. Sorry. Find someone else'." (ET Barbara)	11	2	5	4	30
Trust	"So, he [her manager] and I both get along quite well because he lets me do whatever I need to do. And with minimal checking in, he's respectful, I'm respectful of his advice, but also I know that he respects what I do and, and knows that I'll get things done." (ET Kerry)	9	5	3	1	26
Providing vision	"I've worked with senior leaders who have very clear ideas about what should happen with learning and teaching, and they're prepared to, you know, bang heads together to make that work" (AD Nicolas)	7	3	3	1	20
Total		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	76

Characteristics of Good Relationships with Leaders: Trust, Vision and Championing the Team

Leaders who *championed* the work and skills of the team in the institution were identified by the most interviewees (11 of 16) as contributing to good relationships. Interviewees also recognised and appreciated leaders that resisted poor decisions that would negatively affect team members.

"He never took credit for my stuff. He would always say, you know, AD Acia had a, this brilliant idea, you know, and I really respected that" (AD Acia).

Interviewees also appreciated leaders who demonstrated *trust* in their skills and knowledge. This sometimes took the form of the leader presenting the EdAdvisor with a broad objective and allowing them to find a way to realise that goal. At other times, it was described in terms of "the leaders that were prepared to listen, and there were leaders that were prepared to take advice" (AD Acia). In return, interviewees (7 of 16) felt greater trust in their leaders when they saw the ability of their leaders to provide a useful overall *vision* for learning and teaching in the institution and for the activities of the EdAdvisors. This gave them confidence that the leader understood the work, and that the work of the EdAdvisors mattered. "She's actually been able to give us guidance and an understanding of our identity in terms of learning and teaching" (AD Evelyn).

Table 6.7*Interview Themes Relating to Poor Relationships With Leaders*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (<i>N</i> = 16)	ADs (<i>n</i> = 6)	ETs (<i>n</i> = 6)	LDs (<i>n</i> = 4)	Refs
Bad decisions	"decisions being made at that level that have very little bearing or recognition of the impacts or what it means for those on the ground" (LD Oscar)	10	5	2	3	30
Poor communication	"So, the lack of understanding is because there is, there is lack of communication and lack of clarity" (AD Acia)	9	3	4	2	14
Lack of support and trust	"Our director of education has chosen quite a conservative head of teaching and learning. And basically the, the director of education doesn't want any, any touching of things like assessment" (LD Henrietta)	7	3	2	2	11
Leaders must lead	"at some point you do need someone to go, well, actually, we're never going to reach consensus on this. This is the direction we are taking, and these are the reasons why" (AD Georgie)	3	2	1	0	3
Total		13/16	5/6	4/6	4/4	55

Characteristics of Poor Relationships with Leaders: Bad Decisions, Poor Communication and a Lack of Trust

The factors that interviewees identified when they discussed poor relationships with leaders largely revolved around the professional skills of the leaders. The most frequently expressed theme (10 of 16 interviewees) related to *bad decisions* about learning and teaching and education technologies. “We were having our senior management really pressuring us to deploy a technology that wasn't ready and fit for purpose” (ET George). These decisions were regarded by some EdAdvisors as demonstrating poor knowledge of pedagogy and technology and also of how the university works in practical terms. One LD said, “So that's where sometimes there can be challenges because we're all being asked to do something that actually really isn't feasible within the per the, the parameters and scope of what we're working within” (LD Fiona).

Poor communication, largely taking the form of a lack of regular, clear information from leaders paired with these leaders being unwilling to listen to them was another theme tied to poor relationships with leaders by 9 of 16 interviewees. “They come in with their own ideas of who they think we should be, but they don't listen to who we are” (AD Evelyn). This reflects the theme of EdAdvisors *not feeling supported or trusted* by leaders which was reported by nearly half of all interviewees (7 of 16). This included being excluded from certain areas of work, being micro-managed, not adequately resourcing projects and in some cases, bullying. “I think they think we are disposable and could be replaced by a labour hire company or some sort of automation” (ET Barbara).

Leaders Must Lead

Outside of good or poor relationships with leaders, another theme emerged from three interviewees, who recognised that leadership can be challenging and that ultimately, somebody needs to be responsible for decision making.

One of the really big things that my manager [manager's name] taught me was you don't know what's going on up there and who's fighting with who or what objectives they've got or what, you know, what things are going on. So, we don't know why they're asking us to do this. It might be stupid, but it might not be, it might be fitting into something that they just don't have the time to tell us about. So, could we just get on and do it and not have an argument about it? (AD Grace)

The working relationships that EdAdvisors have with institutional leaders directly affect the conditions in which they work, their resourcing, and the nature of their work. Given the power differential between EdAdvisors and leaders, these relationships are largely dependent on the leaders' attitudes toward EdAdvisors and the leaders' skills in communication and knowledge of the work that EdAdvisors are doing.

6.3.4 EdAdvisors' Relationships with Other EdAdvisors

Interviewees were asked to describe positive and challenging experiences that they had had while working with other EdAdvisors. When they discussed their good relationships with other EdAdvisors, key themes referred to the *complementary* nature of these relationships and their *collaboration*. Discussion of poor relationships with other EdAdvisors raised themes of institutional *politics*, and *disagreements*. References to all of these themes were found among ADs, ETs and LDs. Specific characteristics of relationships between EdAdvisors in specific roles (*AD & LD*, *ET & LD*, *AD & ET*) also appeared as themes. These themes are presented in Table 6.8, Table 6.9, and Table 6.10.

Table 6.8*Interview Themes Relating to Good Relationships With Other EdAdvisors*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Complementary	"I'm finding much more now, we [EdAdvisors in his team] are finding a lot more overlap. Our learning designers are not as distanced anymore from the technology, you know, they feel far more comfortable using the tech and then advising on the tech. And then they bring us in if there's something a bit more curly." (ET George)	7	3	3	1	10
Collaboration	"I work quite well with the people in the central team. Cause I asked them to do stuff for me all the time. I drive them mad, but you know, that's when you get help" (ET Kerry)	7	3	2	2	8
Total		11/16	5/6	4/6	2/4	18

Characteristics of Good Relationships Between EdAdvisors: Complementary and Collaborative

The ways in which the differing skillsets found in different EdAdvisor roles work together were raised by several interviewees (7 of 16) as a key element of good relationships between EdAdvisors.

You know, there's some learning designers who are very tech focused. There are others who are almost like academic developers you know, and so it, we, it, it usually works well if, if you have complementary roles you know, and, and complementary skills (AD Nicolas)

This was noted by interviewees (7 of 16) as an important part of having EdAdvisors in different roles and from different units collaborating on major projects.

So, I was working with a few advisors in, different roles, whether they were learning designers or educational technologists, academic developers in faculties, cuz we'd kind of run that main project centrally and then moving out into them, being supported by the the faculty teams. (AD Georgie)

Table 6.9*Interview Themes Relating to Poor Relationships With Other EdAdvisors*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Politics	"I was employed to be a, a project edvisor over in [faculty name] where I wasn't able to be called an educational designer because they get managed centrally. You can't have that title, or you can, but we'll manage you instead." (ET Kerry)	10	3	4	3	24
Disagreements	"So, the, the [other EdAdvisor unit] members having different ideas makes it very siloed for us and makes it challenging." (LD Henrietta)	5	3	0	2	8
Total		11/16	3/6	4/6	4/4	32

Characteristics of Poor Relationships Between EdAdvisors: Politics and Disagreements

Conversely, inhibitors created by institutional *politics* between EdAdvisor units in different parts of their university, including division over areas of responsibility and competition for resourcing was a frequently reported theme in discussion of poor relationships with other EdAdvisors (10 of 16 interviewees). “We tend not to be cohesive teams because again, of funding structuring and political infighting in universities” (ET Barbara). Disagreements about which pedagogical approaches should be taken or how education technologies should be used was another notable theme raised by a smaller group of interviewees (5 of 16). This was reported to go so far as to involve EdAdvisors in one unit actively (and incorrectly) contradicting the advice given by another unit in their work with academics. “These people had literally cut themselves off from us. And were, in many respects, pooh poohing us because they said, ‘Oh, why would you ever listen to those people in [ET George’s unit]?’ ” (ET George).

Table 6.10*Interview Themes Relating to Relationships Between EdAdvisor Roles*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Relationships between ADs and LDs	"Often learning designers tend to be in a separate team from my experience to academic developers. And, and we both kind of, there's some, some overlap in the kind of work we do. And there's been a lack of clarity in that space around that overlap and what that means. And so, what happens is that... lines get drawn in the sand about who can do what, but this doesn't necessarily reflect their skill sets." (LD Fiona)	5	3	0	2	25
Relationships between ETs and LDs	"And initially in my first two years, I really felt as an ET the learning designers there was a, you had to earn your respect. And it was like, even though I'm the same level, it was a bit of a feeling as well, 'You're not really a learning designer'." (ET Don)	6	0	3	3	14
Relationships between ADs and ETs	"I think we've got an academic developer. Well, I never heard of that one person before, but we got an academic developer in the role here ... They probably do great stuff. I dunno. " (ET Kerry)	3	3	1	0	4
Total		11/16	4/6	4/6	3/4	43

Relationships Between ADs and LDs

While half of AD or LD interviewees (5 of 10) mentioned relationships between these two roles, the variance in the opinions held by ADs and LDs is noteworthy and may indicate a power imbalance between these roles. One AD thought that “the working relationship is quite good” (AD Acia) and another said that “I’d love to work with them, they’re great people” (AD Evelyn). An LD however had a different experience. “The previous head of teaching and learning, she did know what we did and didn’t like it, didn’t respect or value it” (LD Henrietta). Another LD discussed her challenging experiences with ADs at length and mentioned experiencing “gatekeeping” in her experiences with them, possibly due to “being kind of similar to academic developers and sometimes seen as a competitor or a threat” (LD Fiona).

Relationships Between ETs and LDs

The LDs and ETs that discussed these relationships (6/10) were generally positive and appreciated the complementary skills and knowledge that the other was able to contribute. The ETs recognised many overlaps between the roles and the fact that LDs are frequently involved in work with education technologies. Two LDs questioned whether ETs could do the kind of work they do, with one saying that an ET might say “this is how you use the equipment” (LD Oscar) without digging any deeper into the educator’s needs, and another saying “I would expect an ed tech to be able to do, you know, some of that kind of mapping work at a stretch, but it may not be what they kind of do as their bread and butter” (LD Fiona).

Relationships Between ADs and ETs

These relationships were the least frequently raised, possibly due to there being less overlap between these roles (4/12). No ETs reported working with ADs, and they seemed to have minimal understanding of what ADs do. The ADs that did mention working with ETs were positive about their experiences, appreciating the knowledge that ETs contributed.

We found something out about the LMS. So, I was able to sort of give them additional information for their work, so that was great, you know? But nice. They they're teaching me lots of stuff. I got to teach them something back, you know? (AD Rosella)

In summary, the complex and interconnected nature of a lot of EdAdvisor work means that EdAdvisors in different roles and different units frequently work together. When these collaborations are effective they draw on the distinct skills and knowledge of each role, but institutional politics and disagreements about approaches can negatively impact these collaborations.

6.4 Understanding EdAdvisors and Being Understood

This section examines findings pertaining to EdAdvisors' views about how well they understand EdAdvisors in other roles and how well they believe their work is understood and valued by academics, leaders and other EdAdvisors. The value of EdAdvisors understanding each other is captured well in this comment from ET Kerry.

I know those people and I've had working relationships with them over the last five years, on and off in different ways. So, I know their expertise, and I will ask them for some particular support in a particular way. So, it might be a PebblePad workbook, or it might be a, you know, an online quiz design. And so those sorts of things where you, where I need to learn more and and I'm, I'm actually drawing on their expertise ... and valuing what they give to the relationship, I think is really important (ET Kerry)

6.4.1 EdAdvisors' Understanding of EdAdvisor Roles

Survey respondents were asked about their agreement with the statements "I feel confident in my understanding of the AD/ET/LD role". The proportions by role who broadly agreed, disagreed and were neutral ("neither agree nor disagree") are presented in Figures 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5.

Figure 6.3

EdAdvisors' Agreement About Their Understanding of the Academic Developer Role

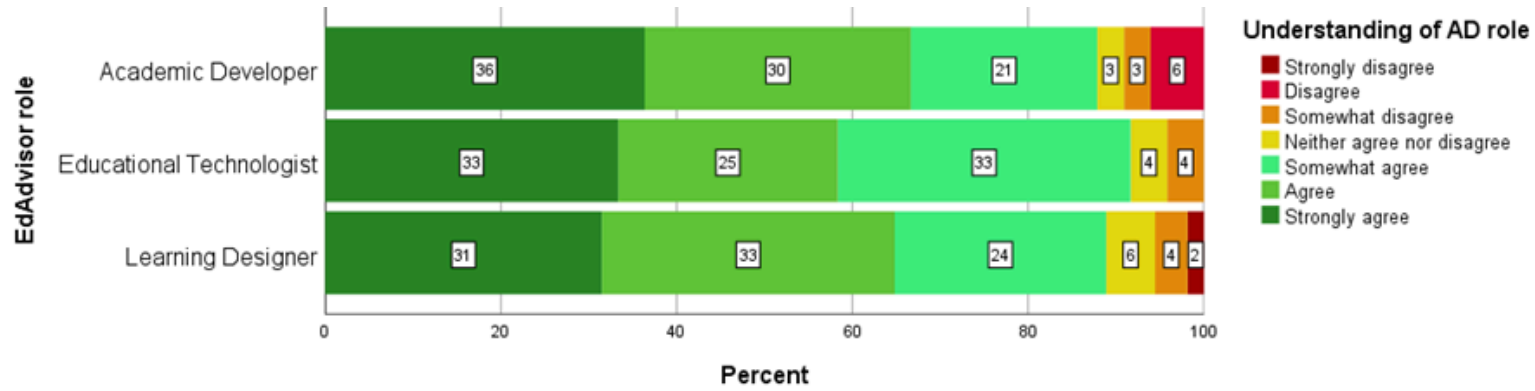


Figure 6.4

EdAdvisors' Agreement About Their Understanding of the Educational Technologist Role

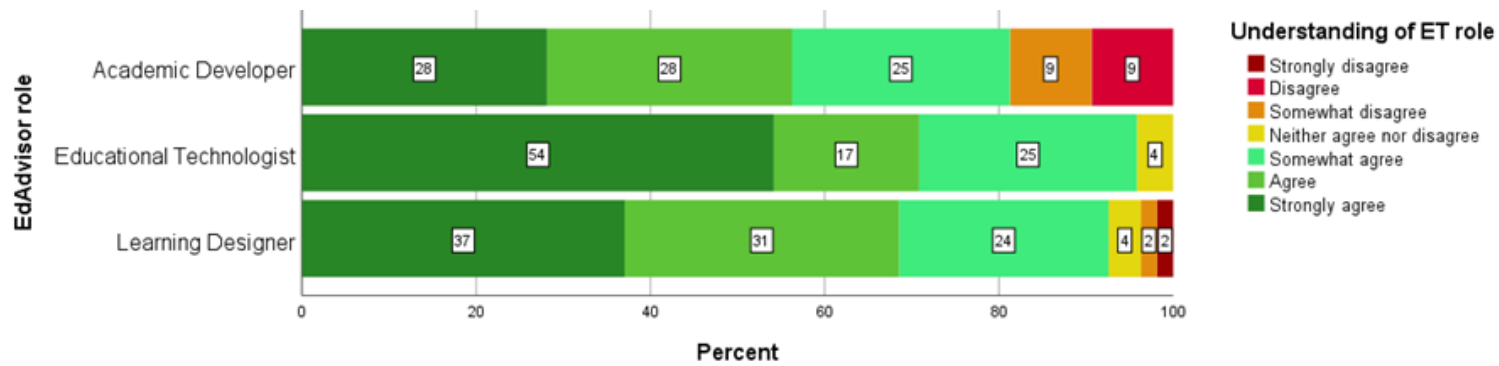
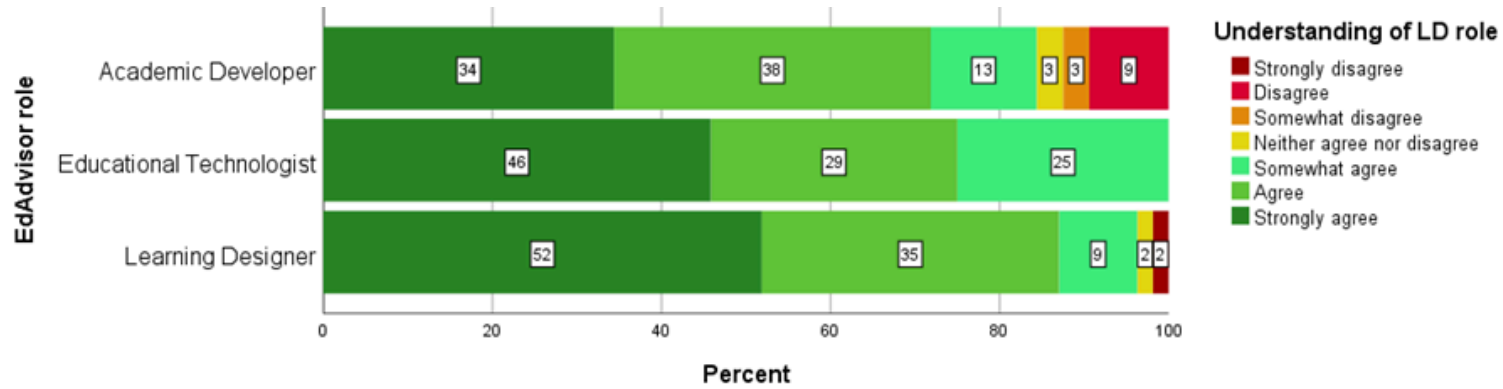


Figure 6.5

EdAdvisors' Agreement About Their Understanding of the Learning Designer Role



High proportions of EdAdvisors in all roles broadly agreed that they understood the AD role (ADs 87%, ETs 91%, LDs 88%), the ET role (ADs 81%, ETs 96%, LDs 92%) and the LD role (ADs 85%, ETs 100%, LDs 96%). Of note is the relatively high proportion of ADs that broadly disagreed that they understood the ET role (18%) and the LD role (12%).

Kruskal-Wallis H tests revealed no statistically significant differences in the reported understanding of roles between the different roles:

- Understanding of ADs $p = .942$
- Understanding of ETs $p = .119$
- Understanding of LDs $p = .14$

In interviewees' discussions of *Good understanding of EdAdvisor roles* by EdAdvisors, the key themes which emerged included their own *experience in a role*, whether the *role purpose is clear*, the impact on understanding of having *regular contact* with people in those roles, and *Third Space positionality*. When they discussed *Poor understanding of EdAdvisor roles*, common themes included *role variability*, and having *minimal contact* with EdAdvisors in other roles. References to almost all of these themes were found among ADs, ETs and LDs. These themes are presented in Table 6.11 and Table 6.12.

Table 6.11*Interview Themes Relating to Good Understanding of EdAdvisor Roles*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (<i>N</i> = 16)	ADs (<i>n</i> = 6)	ETs (<i>n</i> = 6)	LDs (<i>n</i> = 4)	Refs
Experience in the role	"I was a education technology specialist in one Institute, in another one, I was an educational developer. When I first got employed here, I was a curriculum and learning designer." (AD Nicolas)	12	5	4	3	16
Role purpose is clear	"Ed tech is basically, if it's not in the LMS, it's not theirs, generally. They set up the room shell. You know, we'll say what's in it. We basically choose what's in it. And they'll action that." (LD Henrietta)	9	4	3	2	19
Regular contact	"I'm, you know, regularly working with the other learning designers to kind of, you know, get input on what are the priorities" (ET Paul)	7	3	2	2	8
Third Space positionality	"I span both the professional and the academic. I do have a mix of backgrounds, responsibilities, things like that. But I do use boundaries to my advantage. And I tell people how to use boundaries to their advantage." (AD Evelyn)	13	4	5	4	28
Total		15/16	5/6	6/6	4/4	71

Characteristics of Good Understanding by EdAdvisors of Other EdAdvisors: Experience, Clarity, and Regular Contact with Colleagues

Among the 16 interviewees, 12 reported having previous *experience of working in other EdAdvisor roles*. Five ADs had held both ET and LD roles. Two ETs had both worked as LDs and one ET also had experience as an AD. Two LDs had prior experience as an ET and one LD had worked as an AD. Only one AD, two ETs and one LD had not worked in other roles. Prior experience in other EdAdvisor roles was mentioned by a majority of interviewees as contributing to their understanding of them.

But if I was in a faculty, I would expect that even if I was called a learning designer it would be some kind of cross between a learning designer and educational technologist. So, I think, you know, realistically I probably understand what ADs and ed techs do, like 70%, 80, 80% (LD Fiona)

When interviewees had not personally worked in another role, they (9 of 16) noted the value of these roles being well-defined in their institutions with a clear and consistent purpose. This generally included having well-defined boundaries around which roles are responsible for which activities in the institution. "The ed techs are much easier because their focus is education technology. And they're about skill. They, they see themselves more about skill development and choosing the right technology" (AD Evelyn).

Regular contact with EdAdvisors in other roles was also reported to contribute to having a good understanding of those roles by 7 of 16 interviewees. This often involved working on projects together or sharing a working space.

Other other E advisor type, like learning designer, I think, I think we understand each other pretty well. As I said before, you know, the, the working relationship is quite good. You know, I chat to them all the time (AD Acia)

Third Space Positionality

Another important facet of understanding the roles of EdAdvisors which emerged in discussions related to the bigger picture of how and where EdAdvisors occupy a third space in higher education, working across and between traditional academic and professional domains. Interviewees were asked about their understanding of Whitchurch's idea of the third space in higher education, how Whitchurch's four categories of boundedness for third space professionals (bounded, blended, cross-boundary, unbounded) (Section 2.4.2) relate to the way they see their place in the institution, and how the categories affect the interviewee and their work. While the interviewees acknowledged that their roles positioned them as third space practitioners, Whitchurch's categories of boundedness were not associated with any specific role, with some interviewees in all roles identifying with (or aspiring to) all categories.

One interviewee stated that "I think that your typical advisor is always a bounded role, sorry" (AD Rosella) while another identified as *cross-boundary* because "I totally recognize that, you know, there is boundaries and, and that I'm happy to, and I have been able to, you know, work across them" (ET Peta). Several interviewees regarded themselves as a combination of *cross-boundary* and *blended* professionals. Another interviewee questioned whether Whitchurch's categories described job positions. "So, as far as cross boundary professionals, I think that's, I don't think that's a job. I think that's a skill" (ET Barbara).

A few interviewees aspired to be *unbounded* but recognised that this generally involves higher levels of authority than EdAdvisors usually hold. One LD noted that "I was very tempted to kind of get my fingers into things that I couldn't." (LD Henrietta).

One interviewee noted that the idea of the third space had been useful in helping the academics that he worked with to better understand his purpose.

It was actually academics I work with who shared these articles [about third space practitioners] with me and said, 'oh, you know, I just saw this thing the other day. And I realized that's what your role is' ... The attitude they have to, my work has changed

somewhat, or they've said like, 'it's helped me contextualize your work as not just professional, but in this kind of intermediary space (ET Paul)

Table 6.12*Interview Themes Relating to Poor Understanding of EdAdvisor Roles*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (<i>N</i> = 16)	ADs (<i>n</i> = 6)	ETs (<i>n</i> = 6)	LDs (<i>n</i> = 4)	Refs
Role variability	"In my current role, there's a delineation between two roles, which is education design and learning design. And to be honest, I don't think the institution really understands what they mean in those boundaries." (ET Peta)	7	2	3	2	12
Minimal contact	"I think the weakest one, weaker one, I'd say is the academic developer, cuz that one is the one that's less, I think generally at [university name], it's not really a title I've seen a lot." (LD Oscar)	6	0	3	3	9
Total		9/16	2/6	4/6	3/4	21

Characteristics of Poor Understanding by EdAdvisors of Other EdAdvisors: Role Variability and Minimal Contact

The *variability of EdAdvisor roles* within institutions, often taking the form of inconsistencies in the use of position titles between different areas of the institution, such as central and faculty teams, as well as these roles having differing purposes, was identified by several interviewees (7 of 16) as contributing to their poor understanding of other EdAdvisor roles.

I think that's also an issue like at a lot of institutions and where even in our roles, you'll get weird delineations around like, learning designer versus lead learning designer. And whether somebody then is responsible for mapping a subject or not (LD Fiona)

A lack of contact in the workplace with EdAdvisors in other roles was identified as another factor contributing to poor understanding of other EdAdvisor roles. This was sometimes related to being in different units or having a different work focus.

So essentially my manager talks to them on a daily basis. And so, I would talk to them rarely.

If I, if I needed to know something particular I would, but my manager kind of interfaces that well while I more interface with the academics (LD Henrietta)

EdAdvisors' relationships with other EdAdvisors are influenced by the degree to which they understand the other roles. This is influenced by their own experience of working in other roles, the time they spend working with EdAdvisors in other roles and how clearly these roles are defined in their institutions. The third space categories identified by Whitchurch (2008) which describe third space practitioners in terms of how their practices relate to boundaries between academic or professional domains may not greatly assist this understanding of EdAdvisors as many interviewees reported identifying with multiple boundaries depending on their work at the time.

6.5 How EdAdvisor Work Is Understood and Valued

This section examines EdAdvisors' views about how well academics, leaders and other EdAdvisors understand and value the work that EdAdvisors do. It includes results from survey

respondents as well as interviewee observations about how their work is understood and some enablers of understanding.

6.5.1 How EdAdvisor Work is Understood and Valued by Stakeholders

Survey respondents were asked to what extent they agree that stakeholders in their institutions understand and value the work that they do. These stakeholders were:

- EdAdvisors in other roles in your team or area
- EdAdvisors in other roles in other areas
- Academics in your institution
- Senior leaders with decision-making power about learning and teaching in your institution

These findings are presented in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13*Broad Agreement That EdAdvisors' Work Is Understood and Valued by Stakeholders*

Stakeholder understands / values EdAdvisors' work	AD % <i>n</i> = 24	ET % <i>n</i> = 24	LD % <i>n</i> = 54	Sig. (<i>p</i>)
EdAdvisors in other roles in their team understand their work	85	80	80	.560
EdAdvisors in other roles in their team value their work	90	80	94	.386
EdAdvisors in other roles in another team understand their work	63	44	79	.034
EdAdvisors in other roles in another team value their work	69	53	84	.091
Academics understand their work	60	41	57	.230
Academics value their work	66	55	77	.313
Senior leaders understand their work	51	46	53	.695
Senior leaders value their work	54	50	61	.452

Higher proportions of all roles broadly agreed that their work was valued by stakeholders than understood by them. In comparing these results, it may be observed that the highest levels of agreement that EdAdvisors' work is understood and valued are recorded for stakeholders in closest proximity to them in the workplace, both physically and in terms of practice.

Kruskal-Wallis H tests were undertaken, and no statistically significant differences were found between the responses of EdAdvisors in different roles about their work being understood ($p = .560$) or valued ($p = .386$) by EdAdvisors in other roles in the same team, understood ($p = .230$) or valued ($p = .313$) by academics, or understood ($p = .695$) or valued ($p = .452$) by senior leaders. No significant difference was found in responses to whether EdAdvisors in other roles in other teams valued their work ($p = .091$) (Figure 7.1) however a significant difference was found in their responses about EdAdvisor work being understood by EdAdvisors in other roles in other teams ($p = .034$). Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a significant difference between learning designers and educational technologists ($p = .042$) but results between ADs and LDs and ADs and ETs were not significant.

6.5.2 Work is Understood and Valued by Academics

When interviewees discussed how they believed their work was understood and valued by academics, three main themes emerged. Two of these characterised good understanding by academics and involved the academics understanding the *benefits* of the working with the EdAdvisor and the EdAdvisors having *regular contact* with these academics. Academics having *minimal exposure* to EdAdvisors however was a theme related to poor understanding by academics. References to all of these themes were found among ADs, ETs and LDs. These themes are presented in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14*Interview Themes Relating to Work Being Understood by Academics*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (<i>N</i> = 16)	ADs (<i>n</i> = 6)	ETs (<i>n</i> = 6)	LDs (<i>n</i> = 4)	Refs
Benefits	"And so, we've come in and we've given a lot of autonomy and helped them to achieve things that they didn't think that they could. And you know, so for us, that's been wonderful because we, people enjoy working with us, even though they don't know what the heck to expect when they start working with us." (LD Henrietta)	10	4	3	3	12
Regular contact	"I find generally when you are working with someone regularly, or at least in regular contact with those people, then they do kind of get a sense of what it is we do" (AD Georgie)	10	4	4	2	13
Minimal exposure	"if they haven't worked with somebody in my position before, they don't necessarily know what it is that someone like me can offer" (AD Grace)	9	4	4	1	12
Total		14/16	6/6	5/6	3/4	37

Academic Engagement With EdAdvisors Affects Their Understanding

Interviewees in all roles (10 of 16) reported that the more time that they spent working with academics, commonly over multiple interactions, the better the academics understood and valued them and their work. “I think it comes, come back to ... depends on how much interaction they've had, how much they've been able to see the work we've done” (LD Oscar).

Conversely, the times where academics were considered to have a poor understanding of EdAdvisors and their work, were associated by many interviewees (9 of 16) with the academics having not worked with them or seen what they do.

I think is probably the, the bigger issue is that a lot of people actually haven't seen what really learning design looks like. And so, they think they understand what learning design is while only having a narrow exposure to what ... learning learning design could be and should be (LD Fiona)

Three of the ETs mentioned that the nature of their work was such that they were less likely to have regular contact with specific academics. One noted that “you tend to meet academics rarely as opposed to learning designers who work longer term with them” (ET Don).

In addition to the amount of time that academics spend working with EdAdvisors, 10 of 16 interviewees noted the importance of academics experiencing *benefits* from the EdAdvisor’s work. “One of the working experiences I had was when I showed an educator Echo360 analytics. They were immediately blown away by how incredibly rich the data was” (ET George).

6.5.3 Work is Understood and Valued by Leaders

Responses from interviewees about institutional leaders indicated that ways that leaders understand, and value EdAdvisors’ work were believed to be more impactful than understanding by academics or other EdAdvisors. This primarily related to the control that leaders have over the direction and resourcing of EdAdvisors’ work. Discussion of *positive impacts* provided themes for maximising these relationships, including making leaders aware of the *benefits* of EdAdvisors and the

visibility of EdAdvisors. More of the discussion about this impact focused on *negative impacts* and the emergent themes related to potential reasons for poor understanding of EdAdvisors including *poor leader understanding of TELT* and *poor leader understanding of work on the ground*. These themes are presented in Table 6.15 and Table 6.16.

Table 6.15

Interview Themes Relating to the Positive Impact of How Leaders Understand and Value EdAdvisor Work

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Positive impacts	"But the leaders that actually knew what, what the team might have been up to as far as next steps, or even approaching a, a major LMS upgrade you know, the workload involved in that is, is huge. And, and so the senior leaders that, you know, would, recognize that, and even sort of dip in and say, you know, you can have time off in lieu" (ET Peta)	3	0	1	2	6
Benefits	"However, it, we always did, you know, statistics. And so, the senior leaders and the senior academics that understood the workload that you're under and would perhaps acknowledge the stats for, for the BAU work was always appreciated." (ET Peta)	6	1	2	3	12
Visibility	"Depends on how much interaction they've [leaders] had, how much they've been able to see the work we've done." (LD Oscar)	5	2	1	2	7
Total		9/16	3/6	2/6	4/4	25

Positive Impacts

While it was not widely discussed (3 of 16 interviewees) the extent to which leaders understand EdAdvisors' work and roles was reported to have a few positive outcomes, including trust in EdAdvisor decisions, sensible management of time and resources, and recognition of effort through nomination for institutional awards. One interviewee also pointed out that an inadvertent benefit of her leader not having a strong understanding of her work was that "I'm left to my own devices to some degree ... I get to shape my role and get to shape the project" (LD Fiona).

Enabling Leader Understanding of EdAdvisors

As with academics, interviewees (6 of 16) reported that leaders seemed to best understand their roles and work when they saw the benefits of it. One interviewee noted that one of her most important skills was "being able to actually translate the teaching and learning results into things that the executive care about" (LD Daria). Good understanding was also associated by some interviewees (5 of 16) with the extent to which leaders were aware of or involved in the work that EdAdvisors were doing. "But now I have a bit more visibility and if the provost understands that I did all the work for last year as well, then she starts to get a concept of who I am and what I can do" (AD Evelyn).

Table 6.16*Interview Themes Relating to the Negative Impact of How Leaders Understand and Value EdAdvisor Work*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Negative impacts	"Or once they [leaders] start looking into how much we cost mm-hmm then then they can like, especially if they don't really understand what we do or what the impact is, they can then very quickly decide like, okay, we can make some savings here, if we're clever about it." (AD Nicolas)	9	4	2	3	11
Poor leader understanding of TELT	"So, I think the, the major challenge is the inability of most staff at senior levels to understand anything about the learning and teaching process that operates today in hybrid, online and face-to-face mode and their insistence on saving money at the cost of the experience of work and study for students and staff." (ET Barbara)	9	4	3	2	18
Poor leader understanding of work on the ground	"I get these emails every now and then. 'I don't know if you're the right person to ask this question', you know, and 99% I am the right person to ask that question, but they always start with that kind of sentence. And that, that sentence shows me, they don't understand what I do because they that's why they ask, you know?' (AD Acia)	5	2	1	2	8
Total		10/16	4/6	3/6	3/4	37

Negative Impacts

The negative aspects of poor leader understanding of EdAdvisors were more frequently discussed (9 of 16 interviewees), and these included poor allocation of staffing and resources, ineffective and impractical projects, delays in decision-making, poor morale and organisational instability. One ET described the practical outcome of a new assessment extension policy that was announced without considering how it would be implemented.

Like we've got, we've got clinical placements, we've got all sorts of things that don't play nice with a five-day extension, but that just gets randomly applied. And so now every single assessment task in every single [LMS] site has to be reviewed for suitability. And if necessary redone to fit around this kludge, that's added, that the students found out about it before the instructors did. So that's one way that senior leadership influences our work in the institution. And like all of a sudden in the team, everyone is now doing that. Right. Bigger anything else we were meant to do this this month (ET Barbara)

Possible Reasons for Poor Understanding of EdAdvisors by Leaders

Several interviewees (9 of 16) mentioned their experiences of some leaders who didn't seem to understand or value technology-enhanced learning and teaching overall as leaders that also didn't understand the EdAdvisors' roles and work. One suggested that this may reflect narrow experience of learning and teaching informed only from their personal teaching practice. "Academics in, when they move into leadership, aren't coming into it with the broad understanding of teaching and learning practice" (LD Daria). Another theme relating to poor understanding of EdAdvisors' work raised by a smaller group of interviewees (5 of 16) was that it demonstrated a lack of understanding of the practicalities of the work that EdAdvisors do. This lack of understanding included who performed the work and what resources and time were needed for new initiatives.

I've seen great strategic direction: I've seen great awareness raising of the central L and T unit. I've seen all this stuff. I just wish that they had a little bit more understanding of what it's like to be us (AD Evelyn)

6.5.4 Enabling Understanding of EdAdvisors

Responses from interviewees in all roles discussing ways that their work could be better understood and valued by all stakeholders provided several themes including *visibility and exposure*, *professional accreditation and qualifications*, *better role definitions* and the *value of ambiguity*.

These themes are presented in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17*Interview Themes Relating to Enabling Understanding*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Visibility and exposure	"So, we have a learning design meetup that is university wide and it's open to both professional staff and academic staff. And we have ... presenters from both academic and professional backgrounds. So, I've seen aspects of learning design and learning delivery." (ET Paul)	16	6	6	4	43
Professional accreditation and qualifications	"It needs to also be about professionalizing the field and using, building professional accreditation as far as, you know, minimum qualifications, building career progression structures in, so that institutions recognize what that might look like and how these roles can come together and how people might move up the chain also across roles." (LD Fiona)	12	5	4	3	32
Better role definitions	"I think we need to figure out, what is it that someone needs to be able to do and demonstrate to be able to be a learning designer." (AD Georgie)	10	5	3	2	17
Value of ambiguity	"The more I have tried to keep my, my title vague, the more ... actually allowed me to do things that I would not normally do if I had that title." (AD Acia)	3	1	0	2	4
Total		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	96

Visibility and Exposure

All 16 of the interviewees mentioned different ways that EdAdvisor roles and work might be better understood by academics, leaders and other EdAdvisors. These ranged from better communication of which teams to contact for support in specific contexts as well as promoting their work and achievements. Official recognition through institutional awards and having a role on committees was also regarded as valuable in establishing credibility, as was having opportunities to publish research in the TELT field. One interviewee noted the importance of personal contact.

Most of the learning designers in my team, I would say, have a fairly poor understanding of what advisors in the [unit name] do, the learning technology specialists. And the only reason I have a slightly better understanding is because of my secondment at the moment, has required me to have a lot more day-to-day interaction with them (ET Paul)

Professional Accreditation and Qualifications

Specific EdAdvisor qualifications and professional accreditation were regarded by many interviewees (12 of 16) as another useful approach to enabling understanding. Setting consistent standards for practice was considered useful in establishing credibility as practitioners and as a profession overall. The current tendency for these qualifications to primarily target learning designers was noted by one ET, who said “there's no real, there is no formal path to become a learning tech. I don't know of any courses that are run for learning technologists” (ET George).

Better Role Definitions

Enhancing the clarity and consistency of EdAdvisor roles between and within institutions was another key theme that was raised by 10 of 16 interviewees. This was also considered to be a necessary first step before professional accreditation could occur and needed to address the variability of roles depending on their location (for example, central or faculty), the nature of the

work (business-as-usual or project-based) and the needs of their departments. One interviewee discussed an inclusive approach to this issue of role variability that was taken in her institution.

They were very, very careful to make sure that they consulted ed tech about what they wanted, to really work with ed tech, to give them power to sort of say, no, I don't think this is my role, or yes, I'd like to take this on as my role (LD Henrietta)

Value of Ambiguity

A final minor theme was found as a small number of interviewees (3 of 16) noted that an advantage of poorly defined roles was that they had more variety in their work and more opportunities to try different things than they might if their responsibilities were clearer.

Well, what my title at the moment is team leader and senior educator, because I didn't want to have anything that actually tied me down to something that 'I'm a developer I'm this and that' because you know, it just confuses everybody, and it has worked really well (AD Acia)

The ways in which the work of EdAdvisors is understood and valued by the different stakeholders reflect the ways that their roles are understood and valued. Common threads across all stakeholders suggest that having regular contact with EdAdvisors and experiencing benefits in working with them contribute greatly to EdAdvisors and their work being understood and valued. Steps which could be taken to bolster this understanding could include establishing clearer definitions of EdAdvisor roles and using them consistently, however some EdAdvisors question whether this may restrict the scope of these roles.

6.6 Summary

This chapter has sought to expand on the answers to RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?* that were found in Chapter 5. This has included EdAdvisors' views of the purposes of their roles (Section 6.2) and two approaches taken to having impact in their work through bringing change and building relationships (Section 6.3). The chapter has highlighted that the ways that stakeholders understood, and valued EdAdvisors' practices (Section 6.5) were an

important indicator of EdAdvisors' effectiveness in building relationships and bringing change because they reflected the time that EdAdvisors and stakeholders spent working together and stakeholders' appreciation of the benefits of this work. These collaborations form an important part of the relationships component of their practices.

6.6.1 RQ2: How Do EdAdvisors Contribute to Learning and Teaching

Practices?

While the overarching purpose of EdAdvisors in this study related to supporting *good learning and teaching* (Section 6.2.2), the different skill sets, and operational foci of different roles meant that EdAdvisors serve different purposes as they work to contribute to this objective. Broad purposes of capability building, change bringing, and compliance enforcing were common to all roles to different degrees, but it is the more specific findings about purpose (Section 6.2.1) that offer the greatest insights into how different roles view their contributions to learning and teaching. For ADs, their focus was on building staff capability and ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching practice. This focus largely did not extend to ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching resources or educational technology or supporting wider institutional needs.

Educational technologists reported more of a focus on driving or supporting innovation and change through their work with education technology, particularly ensuring and enhancing its quality. It is notable that the proportion of ETs who viewed supporting teaching staff as their purpose was more than double that of ADs. A very high proportion of LDs viewed improving student learning experience as part of their purpose, connected to their work to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching practice and resources. Close to two-thirds of LDs considered supporting teaching staff to be part of their purpose.

These differences in purpose between roles suggest an important difference in the nature of relationships between academics and ADs and between academics and ETs along with LDs in this study. For the latter two roles, providing support to academics in different areas of their practice is

important, although it is not as important as improving student learning experience is for LDs. For ADs, the relationship is less about support and more about helping academics to be better educators. All of the AD and LD interviewees, and half of the ET interviewees, discussed how important building relationships was to the impact they have in their work (Section 6.3). Discussion of the kinds of good relationships with stakeholders which led to EdAdvisors being understood and valued by the stakeholders, included good communication, choosing to spend time working together, being open to new ideas, and understanding the benefits of the work that EdAdvisors undertake. Conversely, poor relationships were characterised by bad communication, being forced to work together, internal politics, and closed mindedness. In many ways it is in these relationships that the contributions that EdAdvisors make to learning and teaching practices are most visible.

6.6.2 Next Chapter

Other factors in Australian higher education institutions also influence EdAdvisors ability to contribute to learning and teaching practices and their efficacy in serving their other purposes. Many of these factors directly affect their relationships with stakeholders, including the divide between academic and professional staff in Australian higher education and differences between pedagogical and technologically oriented work. In addition, wider institutional factors such as competing priorities between central and faculty areas, organisational structures and institutional culture also contribute to EdAdvisors efficacy. These factors are examined in the next chapter as part of addressing RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?*

7. Inhibitors and Enablers of EdAdvisor Work

This chapter presents results pertaining to factors identified by participants which act as inhibitors to and enablers of their ability to affect change in learning and teaching practices and technologies. These factors include the divide between academic and professional staff, differences between pedagogical and technological focused roles, institutional factors including differences between Central and Faculty units, and attitudes to learning and teaching in higher education.

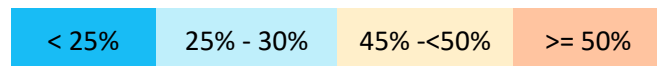
7.1 Inhibitors

Survey respondents were presented with a list of eight workplace factors derived from the literature and asked to select all of those that make it challenging for them to have an impact on learning and teaching in their institution (Table 7.1). Academic developers selected the fewest ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.87$), followed by learning designers ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.71$) and educational technologists selected the most ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.86$). These differences were not statistically significant.

Table 7.1

Heat Map of Factors That EdAdvisors Report as Affecting Their Impact on Learning and Teaching by Role

Factor	AD% (n = 33)	ET% (n = 24)	LD% (n = 54)	EdAdvisors% (N = 111)	Significance (p)
Academic—Professional staff divide	55	54	69	61	.314
Differing qualifications and skills held by EdAdvisors in same roles	21	29	30	27	.670
Lack of clarity around EdAdvisor roles	48	42	52	49	.710
Most EdAdvisor focused research is not done by EdAdvisors	9	13	28	19	.066
Perceptions of EdAdvisors as tools of management	39	50	26	35	.102
Perceptions that EdAdvisors don't understand academics	36	33	30	32	.806
How EdAdvisor units are structured in the organisation	42	50	35	41	.457
Division between technology and pedagogy focused roles	24	50	48	41	.058



The most highly reported factor was the *Academic-Professional staff divide*, with a majority of respondents in all roles (AD 55%, ET 54%, LD 69%) reporting this as causing them challenges. Relatively high numbers of ADs (48%), ETs (42%), and LDs (52%) reported a *lack of clarity around EdAdvisor roles* as factor. Educational technologists also considered *Perceptions of EdAdvisors as tools of management* (50%) and *How EdAdvisor units are structured in the organisation* (50%) to be factors affecting their impact.

High numbers of educational technologists (50%) and learning designers (48%) both reported *Division between technology and pedagogy focused roles* as a factor affecting their impact, however few academic developers (24%), a role previously observed to have a pedagogical focus (Table 5.4), saw this as a concern. Factors that were largely not considered to affect EdAdvisors' ability to have impact were *Differing qualifications and skills held by EdAdvisors in the same roles* (AD 21%, ET 29%, LD 30%) and *Most EdAdvisor research is not done by EdAdvisors* (AD 9%, ET 13%, LD 28%). Kruskal-Wallis H tests revealed no statistically significant difference in the selection of any inhibitor between the different roles.

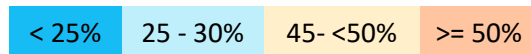
7.2 Enablers

Survey respondents were presented with a list of four actions derived from the literature and asked to select all of those that might be helpful in addressing challenges faced in having impact (Table 7.2). Academic developers selected the fewest ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 1.02$), followed by educational technologists ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 0.91$); learning designers selected the most ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 1.17$). These differences were not statistically significant.

Table 7.2

Heat Map of Actions That EdAdvisors Report as Potentially Enabling Their Impact on Learning and Teaching by Role

Solution	AD % (n = 33)	ET % (n = 24)	LD % (n = 54)	EdAdvisors % (N = 111)	Significance (p)
Clarifying and standardising Edvisor roles	61	38	48	50	.221
Professional accreditation for Edvisors	33	75	57	54	.006
Changing the way Edvisor units are organised	27	50	35	36	.210
Greater Edvisor involvement in research	46	33	57	49	.135



No individual enabler was selected by a majority of ADs, ETs and LDs collectively. *Clarifying and standardising Advisor roles* was selected by the highest proportion of ADs (61%) and by nearly half of LDs (48%), but fewer ETs (38%) selected it. A large proportion of ETs (75%) instead selected *Professional accreditation for Advisors*, followed by 57% of LDs and only 33% of ADs. *Changing the way Advisor units are organised* was also selected more often by ETs (50%) than by LDs (35%) or ADs (27%). *Greater Advisor involvement in research* was selected more often by LDs (57%) than by ADs (46%) or ETs (33%).

Kruskal-Wallis H tests revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution for selecting *Professional accreditation for Advisors* across the different roles, $p = .006$. Pairwise comparisons indicated a statistically significant difference between ETs and ADs, $p = .006$. This indicates that ETs are more likely to select *Professional accreditation for Advisors* as an enabler than ADs. No significant difference was found between LDs and ETs ($p = .456$) or between ADs and LDs ($p = .089$). The tests revealed no statistically significant difference in the distribution for selecting any other enabler across the different roles.

7.3 The Academic-Professional Divide

More than half of respondents from each role selected the cultural divide between academics and professional staff in higher education as an inhibitor of their work (Section 7.1). This reflects widespread discussion in the literature about the different ways that this *social-political* arrangement affects working relationships in higher education (Caldwell, 2022; Chen & Carliner, 2021; Mueller et al., 2022; Sturm, 2022). It influences relationships in two ways: in the relationships between academics and EdAdvisors, and also in relationships between academic EdAdvisors and professional EdAdvisors.

7.3.1 Academic and Professional EdAdvisor Views on Inhibitors and Enablers

A comparison was undertaken of the overall proportions of EdAdvisors in academic and professional roles who reported workplace factors as an inhibitor to their ability to having an impact on learning and teaching in their institution. The results are presented in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3

Proportions of EdAdvisors in Academic or Professional Roles Agreeing That Factors Serve as an Enabler or Inhibitor of Their Work

Factor	Academic % (n = 23)	Professional % (n = 86)	Significance (p)
Enabler: Changing the way EdAdvisor units are organised	39	36	.786
Enabler: Greater EdAdvisor involvement in research	39	52	.263
Enabler: Clarifying and standardising EdAdvisor roles	52	49	.777
Enabler: Professional accreditation for EdAdvisors	44	57	.251
Inhibitor: Academic-Professional staff divide	35	69	.003
Inhibitor: Most EdAdvisor research is not done by EdAdvisors	4	23	.042
Inhibitor: Perceptions of EdAdvisors as tools of management	17	41	.039
Inhibitor: Differing qualifications and skills	13	31	.081
Inhibitor: Lack of clarity around EdAdvisor roles	48	49	.932
Inhibitor: Perception that EdAdvisors don't understand academics	26	35	.428
Inhibitor: How EdAdvisor units are structured	48	40	.475
Inhibitor: Division between pedagogically and technologically focused roles	35	43	.478

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed statistically significant differences for selecting three of these inhibitors. A notably larger proportion of EdAdvisors holding professional positions (69%) reported that the academic-professional staff divide serves as an inhibitor than did those in academic positions (35%) ($p = .003$). Few academic (4%) or professional (23%) EdAdvisors reported that they thought that who *undertakes research into Edvisors* was an inhibitor, however this difference was nonetheless significant ($p = .042$). More than twice as many professional EdAdvisors (41%) reported *Perceptions of Edvisors as tools of management* as did academic EdAdvisors (17%) ($p = .039$).

The tests revealed no other statistically significant differences for selecting enablers or inhibitors across academic and professional classifications.

7.3.2 Academic and Professional EdAdvisor Views on Work being Understood and Valued

Survey respondents were asked how much they agree with the statements that their work is understood and valued by various stakeholders in their institution (Section 6.5). These same responses were this time analysed based on whether respondents held academic or professional roles. Mann-Whitney U tests were undertaken and no statistically significant differences were found between the responses of academic EdAdvisors and professional EdAdvisors about their work being understood ($p = .112$) or valued ($p = .866$) by EdAdvisors in other roles in the same team, understood ($p = .512$) or valued ($p = .18$) by EdAdvisors in other roles in other teams, or understood ($p = .954$) or valued ($p = .503$) by senior leaders. No significant difference was found in responses to whether academics understood their work ($p = .848$) (Figure 7.1) however a significant difference was found in responses about EdAdvisor work being valued by academics ($p = .039$) (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.1

EdAdvisors' Agreement That Academics Understand Their Work by Classification

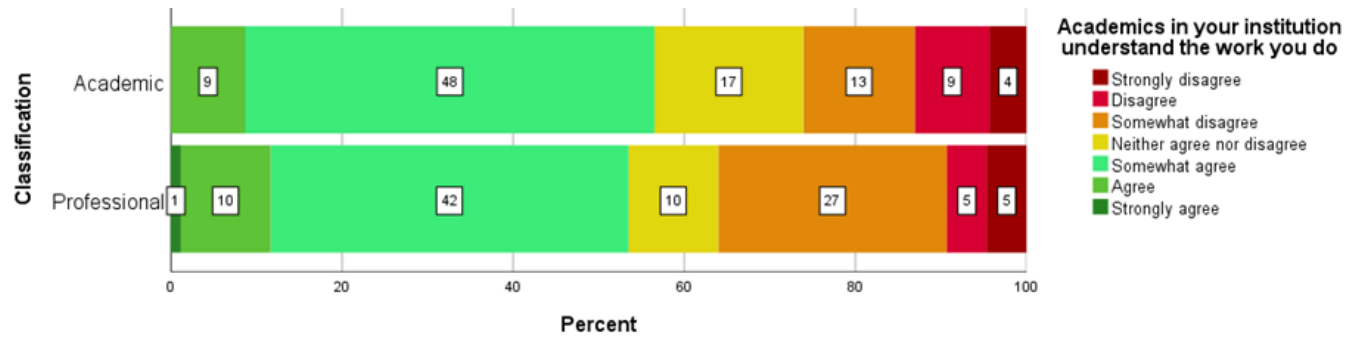
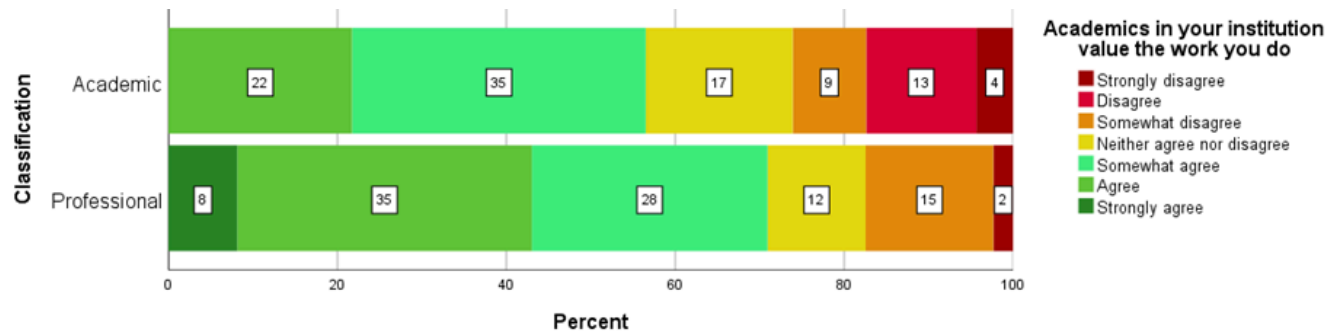


Figure 7.2

EdAdvisors' Agreement That Academics Value Their Work by Classification



Responses from EdAdvisors in academic positions were the same for agreeing that academics Understand and Value their work, with 57% broadly agreeing. This contrasts with responses from EdAdvisors in professional positions, where 53% broadly agreed that academics understood their work but 71% broadly agreed that academics valued their work. Similar proportions of professional staff were neutral about their work being understood (10%) or valued (12%).

7.3.3 Impact of the Academic-Professional Divide on EdAdvisors and Their Work

Responses from interviewees about the impact of the academic-professional divide on work focused chiefly on their working relationships with academics. These responses addressed two main themes, institutional *hierarchies* between academic and professional staff, and the benefits of *shared understanding* between academic EdAdvisors and academics. The impact of the academic-professional divide on EdAdvisors' working *relationships with leaders* and *relationships with other EdAdvisors* was discussed by only a small number of interviewees but their insights are worth noting. Interviewees also commented on the impact of this divide on *local institutional culture* and the ways it affected them *materially*. These themes are presented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4

Interview Themes Relating to the Impact of the Academic-Professional Divide on EdAdvisors' Work with Academics, Leaders and EdAdvisors

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Aca (n = 5)	Prof (n = 11)	Refs
Hierarchy	"I know at my previous work academics were much more tolerant of advisors who had PhDs than who didn't. So, there's a little bit of structural view there." (ET Barbara - Professional)	12	4	5	3	2	10	23
Shared understanding	"I think academic status comes with a certain level of credibility when you work with academics. Because, you know, just because you, you talk at a particular level to, academics that shows that you understand what they do and what the role is and what the tensions are" (AD Nicolas - Academic)	9	6	1	2	4	5	15
Academic-Professional divide with leaders	"Employing academics in leadership is challenging because it would be more logical to employ leaders in leadership so that they actually feel equipped to you know, meet the demands of the, the role to effectively lead an institution rather than feeling, torn at wanting to maintain, you know, they still have the academic identity" (LD Daria - Other)	1	0	0	1	0	0	6

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Aca (n = 5)	Prof (n = 11)	Refs
Academic-Professional divide with EdAdvisors	"it just feels like somehow that's I guess a way to push back on us being in that space or a way to kind of gate keep that... and whether that's because I'm in a professional role or because I don't have a PhD or because I sit in a central team or I don't know, but yeah... it's frustrating and it kind of hurts a little bit, you know?" (LD Fiona - Professional)	3	2	0	1	2	1	5
Local culture	"I have worked at a, at a Group of Eight university in which they, it did feel there was more of a distinction between academics and professional staff." (AD Georgie - Academic)	5	2	1	2	2	3	10
Material impacts	"If you're in an academic staff agreement, you have to have a window in your office. Professional staff members do not require natural light" (ET Barbara - Professional)	4	1	2	1	1	3	5
Total		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	5/5	11/11	64

Hierarchy

The most prevalent theme pertaining to the academic-professional divide focused on the sense of there being a social hierarchy in higher education, with academic staff receiving more respect and recognition than professional staff. This was reported by EdAdvisors in all roles (12/16) but largely by respondents in professional positions (10/11).

If you do have a PhD, if you are a research-informed person, if you are not, that can make a big difference to how, how you're initially, I think, accepted or or how relationships perhaps begin (ET Kerry - Professional)

Shared Understanding

All of the 6 interviewees in AD roles (including the one who held a professional position), as well as an LD who was a former academic, noted that their classification led to them being regarded as understanding the practices and needs of academics. This was considered to be a valuable enabler of their work. One interviewee in a professional role did not believe that her professional classification inhibited her work or relationships with academics.

I don't think it's a requirement to understand what people do. I think over the last probably 10 or 15 years, I've connected with academics, both through, you know, my recent work experience, my current work and through my open scholarship with academics across the globe, which has helped me you know, understand that they're just people and most of them are pretty passionate about a thing. And if you get them to talk about the thing, then you can usually understand their point of view a bit better (ET Peta - Professional)

Working with Leaders

Leaders were generally not discussed by interviewees in terms of being academic or professional and tended not to be associated with the academic-professional divide. Notably

however, one interviewee with leadership experience observed that academic and leadership identity does not always align and could lead to under-informed decision making.

But because academics in leadership have gone there via their own teaching and learning practice, so, they have like sample size of very small in terms of what does teaching practice look like? Whereas what's needed is the, less in depth, but much more broad understanding of what does teaching practice look like across the board (LD Daria - Other)

Working with EdAdvisors

Similarly, few interviewees (3 of 16) noted the academic-professional divide as affecting their working relationships with other EdAdvisors. Of those that did, one LD felt that position classifications created a limited career path for EdAdvisors in professional roles, one AD reported using her academic status to advocate for professional EdAdvisors when working with academics, and another AD regarded academic positions as something that some LDs aspired to.

Some of them have no desire to be academics. They, they're very happy to be in a professional role and to be quite tech focused in, in a lot of ways, you know, and to, to work purely on the tech side of things. That's one extreme and then the other, and, and, but then there's also learning designers who want to be academics or want to be academic developers, or want to be, you know, have more have different ambitions really (AD Nicolas - Academic)

Local Culture

Some interviewees with experience in multiple universities (5 of 16) noted that the extent to which the academic-professional divide impacted their efficacy varied between institutions. One reported that this variability extended also to faculties and departments. "Where you've got a good culture within the department I've found within our faculty, you tend to find the academics are a bit more receptive, a bit more positive" (LD Oscar - Professional).

Material Impacts

A minor theme, reported by a handful of interviewees (4 of 16) but nonetheless noteworthy, related to professional staff being paid less than peers in academic positions and also being less likely to receive other benefits - “they don’t want to send professionals to a conference” (AD Grace - Professional).

The academic-professional divide affects the work of EdAdvisors in a variety of ways, from the social-political arrangements influencing relationships and hierarchies between academics and professional staff to the material-economic arrangements which influence working conditions. These factors are reported as inhibitors by notably higher proportions of professional EdAdvisors than by academic EdAdvisors, indicating that academic EdAdvisors may be less impacted by them.

7.4 The Pedagogical-Technological Spectrum

This section examines the pedagogical-technological aspects of EdAdvisor work and the ways that different roles occupy a pedagogical-technological spectrum of practice. It presents findings about the ways that this spectrum informs the EdAdvisors’ identities and practices and contributes to the status of EdAdvisors in different roles. These differences reflect cultural-discursive arrangements in higher education relating to the way that pedagogical and technological practices are valued (Bridge et al., 2023; Brogt, 2025; Movahhed, 2021).

7.4.1 Pedagogical-Technological Aspects of EdAdvisor Practice

Most interviewees (13 of 16) spoke about the pedagogical-technological nature of their practices and four main themes emerged from this: the degree to which *pedagogy and technology are entangled*, that *technological activities were less respected*, concerns about being regarded as *technical support*, and the *pedagogy-first mindset*. These themes are presented in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5

Interview Themes Relating to the Impact of the Pedagogical or Technological Nature of EdAdvisor Practices and Roles

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Refs
Pedagogy and Technology entangled	"I feel like you can't separate the pedagogy and the technology, and I feel like a lot of people say that, but you really, you really can't" (AD Grace)	11	3	4	4	24
Technological activities are less respected	"If you are dealing with people that are teaching online, you need to understand some of that technology that's supporting them online. You can't just say, No, no, no, no technology, that's beneath me. Give it to the learning technologist." (ET George)	8	3	3	2	18
Technical support	"So, one of the ones that I don't necessarily want to hear is, oh, you help me, you know, turn my computer on and make my browser work" (ET Don)	7	2	2	3	11
Pedagogy first	"The people in my team laugh that pedagogy is just the, you know, the third, every third word that comes outta my mouth is pedagogy" (LD Henrietta)	7	2	1	4	8
Total		13/16	4/6	5/6	4/4	61

Pedagogy and Technology Entangled

The most common theme in these responses from interviewees (11 of 16) related to the idea that it is difficult to separate the pedagogical and technological elements of the work that EdAdvisors do. One interviewee pointed out that this is often because each element influences the other.

Yeah, the pedagogy. Yes. It can drive the technology. And what I'm aiming to achieve is driving that, that focus and the selection of technology, but then the technology also changes and influences what, what we are doing as well (AD Georgie)

Technological Activities Are Less Respected

Another key theme that was raised by EdAdvisors in all roles (8/16) was about technologically focused knowledge and practice being less respected in higher education than pedagogically focused knowledge and practice. This attitude was reported in academics, leaders and also EdAdvisors and appeared connected to a belief that technology was not as complex as pedagogy. One interviewee noted that this had a material impact on his career.

we had very academic, like with a capital A, leadership. And they focused much more on learning designers because they believed they were educated people and understood learning and teaching better than learning technologists. As a result, they, they actually set the HEW levels of payment one level higher for learning designers than learning technologists. Infuriating (ET George)

Another ET shared his experiences of being excluded from academic-led sessions about education technologies, which he felt was due to his being in a professional technological role.

There's a small group of academics that ... they tend to be involved in technology and in that field and run, they'll often even run sessions on it, but I know that they're not very good with it and therefore they avoid me, but it's not just me. They'll avoid the other educational technologists, so it's not just me, it's not a personality thing. And don't, it's almost like, 'oh,

I'm not gonna involve these two ETS because they might show me up'. And I, I wouldn't, I don't think I'd do that (ET Don)

Technical Support

A parallel theme reported by interviewees (7 of 16) was that academics who didn't know the scope of their role would assume that the EdAdvisor was there to provide technical support for IT issues. This was regarded as making poor use of the EdAdvisor's expertise. "There's no point paying me, you know, someone who's at a certain professional level to basically just like Tetris, you know, to like slot. PDFs into a, you know, LMS" (LD Fiona).

Pedagogy First

Learning designers (4/4) in particular expressed a preference that pedagogy should be the primary focus of EdAdvisor activity, even if it was entangled with technology. This was generally associated with learning and teaching being the ultimate purpose of higher education for EdAdvisors. One LD noted that his prior experience as a schoolteacher was vital in his ability to support this.

And it's not just the peda like theory of and understanding, like it's actually the student experience, being in the classroom, knowing the, the, the dynamics that play out based on particular skills or, or year levels that you're teaching is something you need to really consider. So that's why I'm saying the, the teaching experience is critical in these roles (LD Oscar)

Cultural-discursive arrangements such as where practices or roles are found on a pedagogical-technological spectrum were infrequently discussed in the literature (Conde et al., 2017), yet these issues were noted in some way by most of the interviewees in this study. Although many EdAdvisors in this study understand that technology and pedagogy are *entangled* in higher education (Fawns, 2022), a prevailing sense that more technologically oriented practice is valued less

by some stakeholders than pedagogically oriented work may affect the credibility of educational technologists.

7.5 Attitudes to Learning and Teaching

One theme which emerged from interviewee discussions was the way that institutional attitudes to learning and teaching can influence the ways that EdAdvisors and their work are viewed by stakeholders. These attitudes formed an important cultural-discursive arrangement which influenced the degree to which EdAdvisors' practices to support learning and teaching were prioritised in the institution. Several interviewees also discussed the shift in these attitudes occurring when EdAdvisors made a helpful contribution to the rapid shift to online teaching which resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. These themes are presented in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6*Interview Themes Relating to Attitudes to Learning and Teaching*

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total	ADs	ETs	LDs	Refs
		<i>(N = 16)</i>	<i>(n = 6)</i>	<i>(n = 6)</i>	<i>(n = 4)</i>	
Attitudes to learning and teaching	" I think when you talk about institutional culture, I think that has, that's really been that focus on teaching and learning, and the student experience has really been, been promoted by leadership for a long time. And I mean, I suppose you could say that, technically for every institution and they all talk about the importance of the student experience, but at my university, it's, it has felt, well for a long time, it felt genuine" (AD Georgie)	9	4	3	2	23
The impact of COVID-19 on attitudes towards learning and teaching	"And I think there's less there's there's, Ooh should I say this, there seems to be less resistance around this since COVID it was, it was like a huge pivot that people had to do." (ET Kerry)	11	4	4	3	20
Total		15/16	6/6	5/6	4/4	43

Attitudes to Learning and Teaching

Differing cultural attitudes in higher education institutions were another factor identified by interviewees in all roles as impacting their work. These attitudes most commonly related to the prioritisation of disciplinary knowledge and research over learning and teaching practice in some institutions.

I think there's a belief that anything that involves human development or care is somehow, not, not intellectual, doesn't have a thought component, doesn't have a skill or expertise component. Shouldn't be remunerated, really doesn't need to be taken seriously. Really doesn't add value to the important thing, which is the content knowledge (ET Barbara)

This was considered challenging by several interviewees because they felt that it meant that because academics were more valued for their disciplinary expertise, their ability to teach well was undervalued, and they were often expected to know how to teach without any formal requirement for them to have training or qualifications in education.

So, you know, we've set up a situation in which there's this big vulnerability of, [academics] can't say out loud, 'I don't have expertise here. I don't know'. So, [academics] have to put on the veneer of, 'I am an expert because that's what the whole system has told me academics are.' And then this profession [EdAdvisors] that got invented to address that fact has to come along and work out how to influence without saying those things out. Like, you know, it's all of that. It's all of the, all of the things that we can't say out loud and continuing to run an entire industry on those things that we can't say out loud (LD Daria)

Other interviewees reported that when attitudes to learning and teaching were more positive, it created a very positive working environment. "And you see that in the staff and especially the teaching staff, they, all they want is for their students to have a really good learning experience through their time at [University name]." (ET George)

The Impact of COVID-19 on Attitudes Towards Learning and Teaching

The COVID-19 pandemic was identified by interviewees in all roles as having affected their work in notable ways. The urgent need to rapidly transition learning and teaching from face-to-face or blended modes to fully online substantially raised both awareness of EdAdvisors and their value from the early months of 2020. Some interviewees noted a positive shift overall in attitudes towards online learning and teaching as academics who they had not previously worked with engaged with online teaching practices that they had previously avoided and developed new confidence in the space. One interviewee noted that this shift also highlighted the value of EdAdvisors to leaders.

COVID comes along and they're like, 'can we even go online?' was actually said at a very senior level in March of 2020, like, 'wow, is that even possible? Like, can we actually go online?' And that's when our like seven day work weeks started. Because somebody went, I think we've got a learning and teaching team that actually know about it a little bit about this (AD Grace)

While attitudes to learning and teaching are difficult to generalise, EdAdvisors are keenly aware of the ways that these cultural-discursive arrangements influence the work that they do in supporting learning and teaching practices. As has been previously noted (Section 6.3.2), good working relationships with academics are found when both parties are engaged in and value the work.

7.6 Institutional Factors

One set of factors which was identified repeatedly by participants as affecting their impact related to organisational elements of the institution. These included the ways that EdAdvisor units were structured, how closely participants worked with EdAdvisors in other roles, how EdAdvisors were distributed in the institution and, most notably, conflicting priorities in the institution which manifested as friction between centrally based and faculty-based EdAdvisor units. This section reports findings relating to these issues, as well as some proposed strategies for mitigating them.

7.6.1 Centrally and Faculty-Based EdAdvisors' Views on Inhibitors and Enablers

A comparison was undertaken of the overall proportions of EdAdvisors working in centrally based and faculty-based units who reported workplace factors as an inhibitor or enabler of their ability to have an impact on learning and teaching in their institution. The results are presented in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7

Proportions of EdAdvisors in Central or Faculty Units Agreeing That Factors Serve as an Enabler or Inhibitor

Factor	Central % (n = 69)	Faculty% (n = 32)	Significance (p)
Enabler: Changing the way EdAdvisor units are organised	42	25	.100
Enabler: Greater EdAdvisor involvement in research	46	50	.736
Enabler: Clarifying and standardising EdAdvisor roles	48	56	.433
Enabler: Professional accreditation for EdAdvisors	59	50	.377
Inhibitor: How EdAdvisor units are structured	48	25	.031
Inhibitor: Perceptions of EdAdvisors as tools of management	38	38	.986
Inhibitor: Perceptions that EdAdvisors don't understand academics	36	28	.425
Inhibitor: Division between technology and pedagogy focused roles	48	31	.119
Inhibitor: EdAdvisor research not done by EdAdvisors	25	13	.164
Inhibitor: Lack of clarity around EdAdvisor roles	49	47	.823
Inhibitor: Differing qualifications and skills	29	25	.679
Inhibitor: Academic-Professional divide	61	63	.876

Views on How Stakeholders Understand and Value EdAdvisor Work by Central-Faculty

Employment

Mann-Whitney U tests revealed one statistically significant difference in the distribution for selecting these inhibitors and enablers which related to *How EdAdvisor units are structured* ($p = .031$).

The tests revealed no statistically significant difference in the distribution for selecting any other enabler or inhibitor between EdAdvisors working in central or faculty units.

7.6.2 Centrally and Faculty-Based EdAdvisors' Views on Their Work Being

Understood and Valued and Contributing to Decision Making

Survey respondents were asked how much they agree with the statements that their work is understood and valued by various stakeholders in their institution (Section 6.5). These results were further compared based on whether respondents worked in a central or faculty unit. (Respondents who worked in *other* units were excluded for clarity). No statistically significant differences were found between the responses of central EdAdvisors and faculty EdAdvisors about their work being understood ($p = .521$) or valued ($p = .689$) by EdAdvisors in other roles in the same team, understood ($p = .165$) or valued ($p = .501$) by EdAdvisors in other roles in other teams, understood ($p = .360$) or valued ($p = .672$) by academics, or understood ($p = .477$) or valued ($p = .899$) by senior leaders.

Survey results pertaining to the extent to which respondents agreed that they were able to contribute to decision making (Section 6.3.2) were compared between central and faculty-based EdAdvisors. No significant differences were found between these groups for either contributing to decision making for educational practice ($p = .480$) or for education technologies ($p = .427$).

7.6.3 Impact of Differences and Relationships between Central and Faculty Areas on EdAdvisors and Their Work

All of the interviewees expressed their views about the impact of relationships between central and faculty areas on their own work. Themes acknowledged that tensions arose due to *competing priorities* between central and faculty areas, suggesting that *central teams serve the big picture* of the university while *faculty teams serve local needs*. They addressed common frustrations which were found in faculty teams that initiatives driven by central teams used *imposed and uncollaborative approaches to projects*, while a smaller group of centrally based interviewees noted that faculties often supported *unsustainable practices*. Half of interviewees discussed characteristics of *good central-faculty relationships*. These themes are presented in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8

Interview Themes Relating to the Impact of Relationships Between Central and Faculty Areas on EdAdvisor Efficacy

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Central (n = 12)	Faculty (n = 4)	Refs
Competing priorities	"Cause one of the big tensions is the hand waving neoliberalism, the tension between education as a public good versus education as a business. And you know, the people in the ground are like, 'I care about teaching and learning in the Dead Poet's Society sense' and the executive are, 'we need to be a financially viable institution'. And most people think those two things can't coexist." (LD Daria - Central)	12	5	5	2	9	3	15
Faculty teams serve local needs	"So, our job is we work with academics, academic teams, and we provide advice and support for really the... the development of their resources in our learning management system and whatever else falls out of that." (ET Kerry - Faculty)	11	3	6	2	7	4	19
Central teams serve the big picture	"I'm in the strategic side of academic division, so strategic implementation, so strategy, policy, all of this stuff. They're [faculty-based EdAdvisors] in the practical programs, courses, academic facing side" (AD Evelyn - Central)	11	4	5	2	9	2	18

Imposed and uncollaborative approaches to projects	"And more often than not this kind of unsuccessful relationships come from when you've got a central team that is over imposed over another group or another team, but there is no, there is no clear purpose of why. And also, once all this is done... they [centrally based EdAdvisors] just disappear. And the home team is just left with this project that they don't know very much about. They were not involved. They are the one that are supporting the academics. And you say, what can I do? I didn't design this." (AD Acia - Faculty)	8	3	3	2	4	4	14
Good central-faculty relationships	"So, working with the faculty advisors to help them build their confidence and capability in using the the platform and using and designing e-portfolio activities. So maybe attending meetings with teaching teams with them. And certainly, at the beginning I would kind of lead those meetings, but then afterwards catch up with the advisor one on one and you know, what did you think, what do you think we can do here?" (AD Georgie - Central)	8	3	2	3	6	2	10
Unsustainable practices	"They [academics] have developed really what's the word their own tools and ways of doing things and are not really thinking about the next lot of academics that come in and haven't got all that background " (ET Don - Central)	4	2	1	1	4	0	4
Total		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	12/12	4/4	80

Key Differences Between Central and Faculty Areas Causing Tension

Discussion of centrally based EdAdvisors and central areas in general centred around their work having a “whole of university” focus, where solutions generally needed to be universally applicable in the institution. Many interviewees (12 of 16) accepted the core premise that *Central serves the big picture*, both those from central (9 of 12) and faculty units (3 of 4). One faculty-based interviewee found this problematic as “they're big picture, you know, they don't have any skin in the game, so they don't really care” (ET Kerry - Faculty), however another acknowledged the extra responsibilities that this work carried.

because any tool like that needs to be more centrally managed, updated, and make sure things are working. If there's a problem, it needs to be fixed in a timely event. Like the, the impacts, the, the impact can be greater if something breaks, particularly for the students (LD Oscar - Faculty)

The idea of faculty-based EdAdvisors having closer relationships with academics and a stronger sense of how learning and teaching works “on the ground” (*Faculty serves local needs*) was another significant theme in discussion from interviewees in central (7 of 12) and faculty (4 of 4) areas.

They're [faculty-based EdAdvisors] speaking to the students, they're collecting data. They're speaking to the academics. They've got the subject matter expert. They've got the learning technologist, they've got the educational designer, they've got the multimedia people. And they've recognized that these are all the people that you need to produce high class learning and teaching (AD Grace - Central)

The tensions arising from these *competing priorities* were widely reported in discussions of relationships between centrally-based and faculty-based EdAdvisors (12 of 16 interviewees, 9 of 12 Central, 3 of 4 Faculty). These priorities were frequently framed in terms of educational versus the larger operational and financial goals of leaders, and in some ways positioned EdAdvisors on the side

of either management or academics. One centrally based interviewee expressed concerns about these priorities.

I feel like a lot of the time the leaders are spending so much time running the business that they are so focused on the marketing and the buildings and what we look like in the newspapers and that kind of stuff, that a lot of the time they forgot that we're in the business of teaching students and we should really be getting that right (AD Grace - Central)

The Impact of Central and Faculty-Led Projects

All of the faculty-based interviewees (4 of 4) and some of the centrally based ones (4 of 12) discussed the idea that faculty units often had little say in how things were done in initiatives driven by leadership through central units. These projects were regarded as *imposed and uncollaborative* and not respectful of the faculty expertise or needs. One faculty-based interviewee described feeling stuck in the middle, where “we are the ones that sort of have to try and buffer both the directives from above and then the discontent from below” (LD Oscar - Faculty). A centrally-based interviewee however pointed out that this was not always the case, and at times faculties wielded greater political influence in their institutions and refused to support important change initiatives.

we have a structure where, you know, faculties have held a lot of autonomy. So being in central team, we can't be seen to push too hard around, you know, directing or mandating anything. And that includes leadership at, at a certain level (LD Fiona - Central)

Several centrally based interviewees (4/12) identified cases where faculty-based initiatives were *unsustainable* in the institution because they had not considered wider institution level factors and policies such as privacy, security or educational strategies. These initiatives were commonly independent education technology implementations driven by individual academics but sometimes extended to pedagogical approaches.

And I know that these disciplines are a little bit different, but have you considered doing this because faculties tend to get stuck on certain pedagogies? Sometimes it's a fad sometimes

it's just, that's what we do. It's like, you know, theology, which you probably don't have.

They were really big on Socratic questioning and like, there are other ways of doing it (AD Grace)

Good Central-Faculty Relationships

Having more effective central-faculty relationships was another more positive theme in discussions, with half of interviewees (8 of 16, 6 of 12 Central, and 2 of 4 Faculty) describing collegial and respectful collaborations between these two areas. This included actively sharing information and interesting practices in different areas of the university, using the strengths of EdAdvisors in different areas, and willingness to change plans to better suit educator needs.

They [faculty-based EdAdvisors] were really bringing their relationships with the teaching teams to the table and their understanding of what was happening in the faculty and those contexts. I was bringing my knowledge of the, the platform and this particular pedagogy (AD Georgie - Central)

7.6.4 Organisational Structures and Their Impact on EdAdvisors and Their Work

The nature of the organisational structures within which EdAdvisors work was discussed by all of the interviewees as something which affects them and their work. This discussion encompassed themes relating to *good structures* and *bad structures*, including *centralised and decentralised* models, as well as the *impact of restructures* and *changes of leader*. Challenges encountered in working with *university IT departments* were also raised. These themes are presented in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9

Interview Themes Relating to the Impact of Organisational Factors on EdAdvisor Efficacy by Role and Location

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Central (n = 12)	Faculty (n = 4)	Refs
Centralised and decentralised	"And usually you've got this, either everything is centralised, and we want to control everything out there. Or we are centralised simply because the money come from the central, but we're gonna put people over there. And they're just little islands that nobody talks to" (AD Acia - Faculty)	14	4	6	4	10	4	31
Impact of restructures	"And it was really positive and collaborative, but as soon as they got sent out, decentralised, and I stayed central. Haven't, I've talked to them maybe five times in about 18 months" (AD Evelyn - Central)	9	5	2	2	6	3	26
Bad structures	"I'd say the university like most large institutions is more siloed than it claims to be. More siloed than it would like to be." (ET Paul - Central)	6	1	5	0	4	2	8

Theme	Illustrative quote	Total (N = 16)	ADs (n = 6)	ETs (n = 6)	LDs (n = 4)	Central (n = 12)	Faculty (n = 4)	Refs
Good structures	"So again, our institutions are a bit different to lots of tertiary institutions because we're quite a flat organization compared to them... So, it's, it was basically three [levels], you know, it was managing director, my boss, and then me" (LD Henrietta)	3	1	0	2	3	0	3
Change of leader	"So just to give you a bit of context, in eight years, we had nine team leaders and some of them were, well, one of them was the worst in my whole career." (ET Peta - Central)	7	4	2	1	5	2	14
University IT departments	"Like in my experience at [University Name], it was a flat-out turf war. So, ICT wanted to own everything that plugged into a PowerPoint or had a login... And within those silos, there were sub factions who were desperately trying to grab onto anything they could to control it because that's where the funding was... But the, but that was, that was really highly contested." (ET Barbara - Faculty)	5	0	4	1	3	2	8
Total		16/16	6/6	6/6	4/4	12/12	4/4	90

The Nature of EdAdvisor Organisational Structures

Almost all interviewees (14 of 16) referred to the *centralised or decentralised* nature of EdAdvisor units in their institution in this theme. This generally related to whether all EdAdvisors worked for one centrally managed area, sometimes with EdAdvisors *embedded* in faculties to build local relationships, or if faculties also employed their own independent EdAdvisors in what is sometimes called a *hub and spoke* model. The hub and spoke model was common but it was reported to depend on the relative power of faculties in the institution, and many interviewees described a tendency for institutions to switch between more centralised or decentralised approaches over time.

Central teams and, and faculty teams come and go in fashion. So, like 10 years ago it was all central. And then, I don't know, eight years ago it was all hub and spokes, and then it all got recentralised and then all hub and spokes again. So, it's always a bit uneven (ET Barbara - Faculty)

Bad organisational structures were described by twice as many interviewees (6 of 16, 4 of 12 Central, 2 of 4 Faculty) as *good organisational structures* were (3 of 12 Central, 0 of 4 Faculty). Isolating teams from each other in *silos* negatively impacted collaboration and the sharing of information, and rigid hierarchies similarly inhibited communication between EdAdvisors, and leaders. A proliferation of separate units made it “very difficult to have a coherent identity as a collective” (ET Barbara - Faculty).

Conversely, others described more positive experiences with relatively flat organisational structures designed to minimise hierarchies, or units comprised of all EdAdvisor roles co-located to maximise collaboration. “They've [institutional leaders] actually gone, ‘Here's the structure of what you need to do course design, and here's all the people that need, you need to be able to do it’ ” (AD Grace - Central).

Impact of Restructures and Leadership Change

A common theme related to the challenges that regular changes between different organisational structures brought to EdAdvisors' work lives (9 of 16, 6 of 12 Central, 3 of 4 Faculty). Interviewees reported weakened communication and collaboration with colleagues, stress about employment instability, and changing responsibilities and strategic goals as negatively affecting their efficacy. One ET reported that she was waiting to hear the outcome of a restructure decision at the time of the interview. "Well, I could not have a job. That's how significant it is. All of them, all of the people" (ET Kerry - Faculty). (Happily, her position was retained). A parallel theme related to the impact of changes in leadership (7 of 16, 5 of 12 Central, 2 of 4 Faculty). New leaders were associated with changes in work focus and often changes in organisational structure, as well as potentially questioning of the value of EdAdvisors and their work. "So, we have a bit of concern as to who's gonna be the next ADE [Associate Dean Education] because they, we really need that kind of support from them to be able to do the work we do" (LD Oscar - Faculty).

University IT Departments

A final theme, which largely appeared in responses from ETs (4 of 6), related to working with university IT departments. These departments were reported to have substantial input into decision-making when it comes to the education technologies used in an institution on the basis of cost, integration with existing systems, and security. Their responsibility for the support and upkeep of education technologies meant that ETs worked closely with them and needed to maintain strong relationships, which EdAdvisors found challenging at times when IT started making decisions about the educational use of technologies that were the responsibility of EdAdvisors.

IT, behind our backs, started creating accounts for [academic teaching] staff for their units that they were teaching, to use [Microsoft] Teams rather than Collaborate Ultra, which was the only official supported real-time collaboration tool. So, we were furious, because we

were saying to IT, 'Stop doing this', and they just kept doing it. They just kept doing it and we said, 'Well then, you have to support them' (ET George - Central)

The environments in which EdAdvisors work affect their practices by influencing the overall purpose of their positions and their relationships with other EdAdvisors. These environments included central or faculty-based units, as well as the stability of these units in terms of institutional changes. Only half as many faculty-based EdAdvisors in this study as central EdAdvisors reported that the *structure of EdAdvisor units* was an inhibitor of their work, suggesting that structures used in faculties may be more effective.

7.7 Summary

This chapter presented findings from interviewees and survey respondents about the inhibitors and enablers of their work to contribute to learning and teaching practices. These factors included the divide between academic and professional staff, differences between pedagogically and technologically focused work, attitudes towards learning and teaching, relationships between central and faculty-based units, and organisational structures. These findings contribute to answering RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?* and can be considered in terms of social-political, cultural-discursive, and material-economic factors.

7.7.1 Social-Political Factors

The importance of building and maintaining good relationships with stakeholders in the work of EdAdvisors of stakeholders was noted in the last chapter (Section 6.6). One of the most important factors influencing this is the divide between academic and professional staff, which was reported by significantly more professional EdAdvisors than academic EdAdvisors as an inhibitor of their work (Section 7.3.1). Interviewees primarily noted that this took the form of a social hierarchy in the institution, and academic EdAdvisor interviewees discussed the value of having a shared understanding of academic practices and culture in building their relationships with academics (Section 7.3.3). The views of participants in this study about the reasons why the academic-

professional divide affected their work and how this might be mitigated varied between roles, but building academics' understanding of EdAdvisors by clarifying or even accrediting EdAdvisor roles was one commonly selected approach. While the idea that *EdAdvisors don't understand academics* was not widely regarded as an inhibitor to EdAdvisors work, having *greater EdAdvisor involvement in research* was regarded by more than half of professional EdAdvisors as a potential enabler.

7.7.2 Cultural-Discursive Factors

Other factors reported by study participants link back to the academic-professional divide in some ways but reflect larger philosophical tensions in higher education about the purpose of the university and attitudes toward learning and teaching. A significant difference was found between the proportion of academic EdAdvisors and professional EdAdvisors who reported that perceptions of EdAdvisors as tools of management served as an inhibitor to EdAdvisor work (Section 7.3.1). Discussion by interviewees indicated that this related to the different and competing priorities of central and faculty areas of the university and it often reflected the approaches taken by central EdAdvisor units when working with faculties and faculty-based EdAdvisors on institutional educational initiatives (Section 7.6.3). The extent to which these approaches were regarded as collaborative and respectful of disciplinary views of learning and teaching practice was considered to affect the work of faculty EdAdvisors particularly. This was also dependent to some extent on whether central areas were regarded as undertaking these initiatives because learning and teaching was valued in the institution or whether the initiatives served other non-education or financial goals. Another cultural-discursive factor reported as an inhibitor by half of ETs and LDs (but only a quarter of ADs) was a division between technology and pedagogy-focused EdAdvisor roles. Interviewees reported that technology-focused work was less respected, although overall there was generally a consensus that pedagogy and technology are entangled in most EdAdvisor practice.

7.7.3 Material-Economic Factors

The organisational structures in a university and their stability were also reported to influence EdAdvisors' ability to do their work. Significantly more survey respondents working in central areas (48%) identified the ways that EdAdvisor units are structured as an inhibitor to their work than did those working in faculty-based units (25%) (Section 7.6.1). Most interviewees discussed the way that many universities have centralised and decentralised (faculty-based) EdAdvisor units, and twice as many interviewees discussed their experiences of bad structures (generally siloed work units) as discussed good structures (Section 7.6.4). Organisational instability was also widely discussed by interviewees as an inhibitor of their work, most commonly relating to changes in leadership and restructures.

This chapter has showed that EdAdvisors in different roles, position classifications, and organisational areas shared different perspectives on the enablers and inhibitors of their work, an important reminder that EdAdvisors do not exist as a monolith in Australian higher education. The factors which influence their work are shaped by their individual context. Together, all of these findings contribute to answering RQ3: *What are the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisors' work?*

7.7.4 Next Chapter

The next chapter discusses the ways that the findings in the last three chapters help to answer the research questions of this study in greater depth. It positions this study in terms of existing literature about EdAdvisor roles and their purpose, providing descriptions of the roles which enable better understanding of academic developers, educational technologists, and learning designers. It will then address the ways that EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching in Australian higher education. Finally, the chapter will examine the inhibitors and enablers of EdAdvisor practice.

8. Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses findings which offer answers to the four research questions of this study, informed by theories of practice, practice architectures, and the third space, as well as current literature on the field. In some instances, to inform the discussion, it also draws on my personal experiences of EdAdvisor practices and of the institutional factors which influence these practices.

8.2 Who Are EdAdvisors in Australian Higher Education?

This section addresses the first research question of this study - *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* The section examines the findings and literature pertaining to the characteristics and purposes of people working in these roles, and in doing so, contributes to new descriptions of the roles of academic developer, educational technologist, and learning designer.

8.2.1 EdAdvisors in General

EdAdvisor Demographics

Learning designers make up a substantial portion of the participants in this study, given 54 LDs, 33 ADs and 24 ETs participated in the survey. Unfortunately, there is no sector-wide data available about the numbers of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education to inform understanding of the overall composition of roles. Two notable findings did emerge however about the proportions of academic and professional staff in given roles and gender balance within roles in this sample.

There was a significant difference in the proportions of EdAdvisors among survey respondents classified as academic or professional across the three roles. Among academic developers, 55% held academic positions, but most educational technologists (92%) and learning designers (94%) held professional positions. The proportion of ADs in professional roles was lower

than is often reported (Fraser, 2001; Green & Little, 2016) but the rising number of professional staff numbers in AD roles has been discussed since the early 2010s (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Macfarlane, 2011; Sturm, 2022). The distinction between academic and professional roles will be discussed later in this chapter, but findings have shown a key difference: LDs and ETs are primarily professional EdAdvisors and ADs as primarily academic, and this impacts on their differing status within institutional culture.

In this study, 73% of ADs and 77% of LDs identified as female, while 67% of ETs identified as male. These differences in gender ratios were statistically significant and raises a question about whether certain aspects of EdAdvisors' practice or expertise have qualities which are gendered or perceived to be gendered. ET Barbara observed that many EdAdvisors are women, and she felt that her engagement with male academics was affected by differing understanding and valuing of caregiving between the genders (Section 6.3.2). While there is little research specifically about women in EdAdvisor roles or the impact of gender on these roles, some researchers have highlighted that women in higher education more often take on service-based work and emotional labour than their male colleagues (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2024; Newcomb, 2021). The overall gender balance among professional staff in Australian higher education is 67% female and 33% male (Australian Government Department of Education, 2024), so the fact that 77% of LDs in this study identified as female suggests that this is a field that women may feel comfortable in. Similarly, the ratio for ADs indicates a higher representation of women than might be expected statistically. This suggests that aspects of the work of EdAdvisors, and particularly LDs and ADs, may have a service orientation and a focus on emotional labour.

If AD and LD roles are taken to have more of a pedagogical orientation, this gender balance also suggests that pedagogical roles may be regarded as more female-oriented, and the technology-oriented role of ET as more male-oriented. The proportion of men in ET roles in this study is significant, reversing the common higher education gender balance found in professional roles. While one study indicated that male academics in higher education rated their digital competence

slightly more highly than their female colleagues (Vergara et al., 2023), little else was found in the literature indicating that women are underrepresented in the education technology field.

These demographic factors indicate some distinct qualities of EdAdvisor roles found in participants in this study:

Academic developers: More likely female, more likely academic

Educational technologists: More likely male, more likely professional

Learning designers: More likely female, more likely professional

While these characteristics will not always apply to people in EdAdvisor roles, they provide a helpful starting point for developing general definitions for EdAdvisor roles.

An Accidental Profession

An EdAdvisor role is generally not one that people aspire to from childhood. In the responses from interviewees in this study, there is more of a sense of people stumbling into this field after working in other areas of higher education, or elsewhere in the education or technology sectors, and finding that the EdAdvisor position aligns well with their skills and interests. My own experience of entering this field involved seeing a job advertisement for a role that I had never heard of which combined my interests in education, media production and web technology without the need to regularly teach students.

Of the 16 interviewees in this study, only one became an EdAdvisor directly from their initial university studies. After finishing his undergraduate degree in multimedia, ET Paul completed a post-graduate qualification in learning design which led to learning design work in his institution (Section 5.5.1). Qualifications for EdAdvisor roles in Australian higher education are almost entirely offered at a post-graduate level and focus on the field of learning design. There has been a substantial amount of research into these kinds of qualifications in recent years, with an emphasis on the skills and competencies they should develop in new LDs (Abblitt et al., 2023; Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021; MacCallum & Brown, 2022). A Bachelor-level qualification in

Learning Design is being offered by Monash University in 2025 (Monash University, 2024), the first undergraduate qualification of this kind in Australia. No qualifications to become an academic developer or educational technologist were found in Australia, and the only references to qualifications for these roles in the literature were a South African post-graduate course for ADs (Skead, 2018) and a Graduate Diploma in Instructional Design and Technology offered in Australia in 1989 (Strain & Inglis, 1990). Generally speaking, people don't study to become an EdAdvisor, they study to hone their skills as an EdAdvisor.

For the remaining 15 interviewees, most of the ADs had previously worked as academics, and the ETs and LDs generally came to the field from teaching in other sectors of education or working in technology or media production (Section 5.5.1). Several EdAdvisors noted that they had moved between different EdAdvisor roles. The diverse professional backgrounds of EdAdvisors were also noted widely in the literature (Fraser, 1999; Mori et al., 2022; Slade et al., 2019). Multiple entry paths to the EdAdvisor field mean that people bring a range of experience to this work, and their understanding of good practice in higher education teaching and learning may be informed by their experience in different academic disciplines or teaching contexts such as schools or vocational education (Green & Little, 2016; Pretero et al., 2023). Interviewees noted that finding a *second career* as an EdAdvisor enables them to focus more closely on the areas of learning and teaching which interest them most (Section 6.2.1) and may contribute to their longevity in this field. This longevity is suggested by the fact that two-thirds of survey respondents were 45 or old (Section 5.2.2). This is not always the case, as for some academics an EdAdvisor role may serve more as a convenient temporary position in a university while they attempt to find a conventional academic position in a competitive employment market. Whitchurch and Law (2010) refer to these people as third space tourists. While third space tourists can also bring useful insights, it is likely that the EdAdvisors whose values and purpose most closely align with their practice make the greatest contributions to learning and teaching through their long-term personal investment in this work.

In the next section, I will examine shared and distinct purposes of EdAdvisors in all three roles to build understanding of why these roles are important and what they contribute to higher education.

8.2.2 Overall EdAdvisor Purpose

In his discussion of practices, Schatzki (1996) describes the *teleoaffective structures* which underpin them (Section 2.2.2). These are multifaceted, “embracing ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods” (p. 89) and they help us to understand why EdAdvisors are needed in Australian higher education and some of the ways that EdAdvisors’ values shape their practices. This section explores the purposes of EdAdvisors, both common and distinct to the three roles.

Supporting Learning and Teaching Practices

A primary purpose of EdAdvisors in higher education is to *support learning and teaching practices*. This was a central theme in responses from all interviewees in discussion of their purpose (Section 6.2), and supporting learning and teaching practice was a key part of many interviewees’ personal motivations for becoming EdAdvisors (Section 5.5.1). This purpose was also reported widely in literature about ADs (Ling et al., 2013; Sturm, 2022; Wright & Zou, 2023), LDs (Altena et al., 2019; D’Souza et al., 2022; Tay et al., 2022; Zeivots et al., 2023), and ETs (Han et al., 2023; Shurville et al., 2009; Watermeyer et al., 2022).

Given the differences between EdAdvisor roles, EdAdvisors work to achieve this overarching goal of supporting learning and teaching practices in many different ways. Interviewees discussed additional purposes of building capability, bringing change and enforcing compliance as some of the main ways that they support the overarching goal (Section 6.2.2). Many of these aligned with findings from a question in the survey about purpose (Section 6.2.1) which highlighted important differences between roles in terms of their priorities. These differences will be explored further in upcoming sections about the three EdAdvisor roles.

One sometimes misunderstood aspect of EdAdvisors' purpose in supporting learning and teaching practices relates to EdAdvisors' views about who their activities are most intended to benefit. Two options in the survey question about purpose which addressed this were *Improving student learning experience* and *Supporting teaching staff* (Section 6.2.1). Responses highlighted that notably more of the ADs and LDs in this study selected *Improving the student learning experience* as part of their purpose than selected *Supporting teaching staff*. When changes are recommended to learning and teaching practices to improve the student learning experience, it is possible that these changes, such as rescheduling or redesigning clashing assignments or updating course information, may involve additional tasks for academics. EdAdvisors' decision making in these situations draws on their own values and beliefs (teleoaffective structures) about the most important educational outcomes and this added work may be regarded as an acceptable trade-off for a better learning experience. Overarching discussion in the literature about the way educational values and beliefs influence EdAdvisors commonly focus on ways that EdAdvisors seek positive results for all stakeholders (Dennen & Jones, 2022; Stefaniak et al., 2024; Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024). This sentiment was neatly captured by one interviewee in this study, who noted that "I think I'm doing something for the students and not hurting the teachers. And that's probably my main operation" (AD Rosella). In recognising the teleoaffective structures which influence EdAdvisor practices, the purposes of EdAdvisors and their values become clearer.

Building Capability

Building the capability of academics in learning and teaching practice was a purpose which was discussed by almost all interviewees (Section 6.2.2) and at least half of EdAdvisors in all roles selected it as part of their purpose in the survey (Section 6.2.1). This is reflected in the high proportions of EdAdvisors in all roles who selected activities in the *Building capability* practice bundle (5.3.1) as part of their regular practice. Building capability serves several important functions. Empowering academics to do more in their teaching fosters greater ownership of their practice and

can engage them in better approaches to learning and teaching (Hoyt & Oviatt, 2013). In addition to this empowerment, interviewees noted that the small number of EdAdvisors in most institutions (compared to academics) often means that it is unsustainable for EdAdvisors to undertake regular work in course design and development or in the use of the LMS that academics are capable of doing themselves (Section 6.2.2). The areas of capability being built varied depending on the role of the EdAdvisor (Section 5.3.3), with ADs having a broad pedagogical focus (Groen et al., 2023; Mori, 2024), ETs working to enable appropriate use of education technologies (Han et al., 2023), and LDs supporting both of these areas (Tay et al., 2022).

Although EdAdvisors in all roles in this study noted that building capability was part of their purpose (Section 6.2.1), this was not always how EdAdvisor roles were represented in the literature. The contribution of ADs to building capability was extensively discussed in the literature and was considered a central purpose of this role (Groen et al., 2023; Mori, 2024; Puhr, 2024). Most discussions about the purpose of ETs did not address their work to build capability (Ruggiero & Boehm, 2015; Shurville et al., 2009). Learning designers were sometimes reported to contribute to building capability by researchers (Altena et al., 2019; Bisset, 2018; D'Souza, 2022) but it is noteworthy that descriptions of training programs to develop LDs themselves often excluded this as a skillset to develop in this training. While it is clear that building capability is an important part of the work of all EdAdvisors, the omission of its discussion in a large proportion of literature about LDs and ETs may suggest that the contributions that EdAdvisors in those roles make to this practice are undervalued or poorly understood in higher education and within their institutions. Given the importance of academics' teaching capability as a *saying* of good learning and teaching practice, more consideration of ETs' and LDs' work to build this capability could be valuable.

Bringing Change

Bringing change is an ambiguous term, but this theme was discussed by three-quarters of interviewees as a key purpose in their roles (Section 6.2.2). More nuance was found in the survey

results, where more than half of the respondents in each role selected *Driving innovation and change* as part of their purpose, but there was a significant difference between the proportion of ETs (79%) who selected *Supporting innovation and change* and the proportion of ADs (30%). This difference suggests that ADs may prefer to view themselves more as leaders than followers in terms of their purpose.

Bringing change differs from building capability in that the former more often involves EdAdvisors doing things for academics than enabling academics to do those things themselves (Altena & Theobald, 2022; Macfarlan & Hook, 2022). These changes include projects focused on large scale, often institutional level transformations, including implementing a new learning management system (Wade et al., 2024) or supporting a large-scale online course rebuilding project (Macfarlan & Hook, 2022). Interviewees in this study reported enjoying the opportunity to contribute through these kinds of major change-bringing initiatives (Section 6.2.2), but in spite of the fact that 83% of ETs reported that *Ensuring and enhancing the quality of education technology* was part of their purpose, the contributions of educational technologists in particular in these initiatives were often absent or downplayed in the literature (Chugh et al., 2023; Laufa et al., 2023; Pechenkina & Branigan, 2018), possibly because ETs are rarely involved in research. Given that EdAdvisors have noted the importance of their work being seen in fostering good relationships with academics (Section 6.5.2) and leaders (Section 6.5.3), a lack of recognition in the literature of their contributions to bringing change represents an impediment to their institutional status and visibility.

Ensuring Compliance

EdAdvisors' purpose of ensuring academics' compliance with institutional standards and policies was discussed by many of the interviewees (10 of 16) (Section 6.2.2). Two items in the survey question about purpose were also informative about this area of their practices (Section 6.2.1). In the survey, more than half of EdAdvisors in each role selected at least one of *Ensuring and*

enhancing the quality of learning and teaching practice and *Ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching resources* as part of their purpose.

While the importance of, and approaches to, quality management of teaching in higher education have been extensively discussed in the literature (Gratz & Looney, 2020; Shaw et al., 2023; Winslett, 2016), less attention has been paid to its implementation by EdAdvisors. The power dynamics underpinning this area of EdAdvisor work, where EdAdvisors carry the authority of the institution (to some extent), means that these activities can create an oppositional relationship between EdAdvisors and academics. This can influence views held by academics of EdAdvisors interfering with academic freedom and acting as authority figures or “teaching police” (Davis & Bailey, 2022, p. 19) and can be found in literature critical of EdAdvisors (Daddow et al., 2023; Macfarlane, 2024; Raffoul et al., 2021). As a result, interviewees in this study reported their colleagues in quality standards areas being referred to as “the Gestapo” and some interviewees preferred to reframe *ensuring compliance* in terms of guiding or informing academic practice (Section 6.2.2).

An underreported aspect of the purpose of EdAdvisors in terms of ensuring compliance is the ways that it can relate to aspects of higher education which are not as closely tied to learning and teaching. This is particularly the case with educational technologists, who identified *Education technology governance* and *Supporting wider institutional needs* at close to double the proportion of academic developers or learning designers. This focus on stakeholders other than academics and students highlights an important difference between ETs and ADs and LDs.

As with the issue examined previously about whether more EdAdvisors believe their purpose is about improving the learning experience of students or supporting teaching staff (Section 6.2.1), this aspect of EdAdvisor work highlights the multifaceted nature of the purpose of EdAdvisors and of the variety of the stakeholders that they work to support. In the same way that practices must be prioritised in accordance with the *timespace* available to them, EdAdvisors are often required to

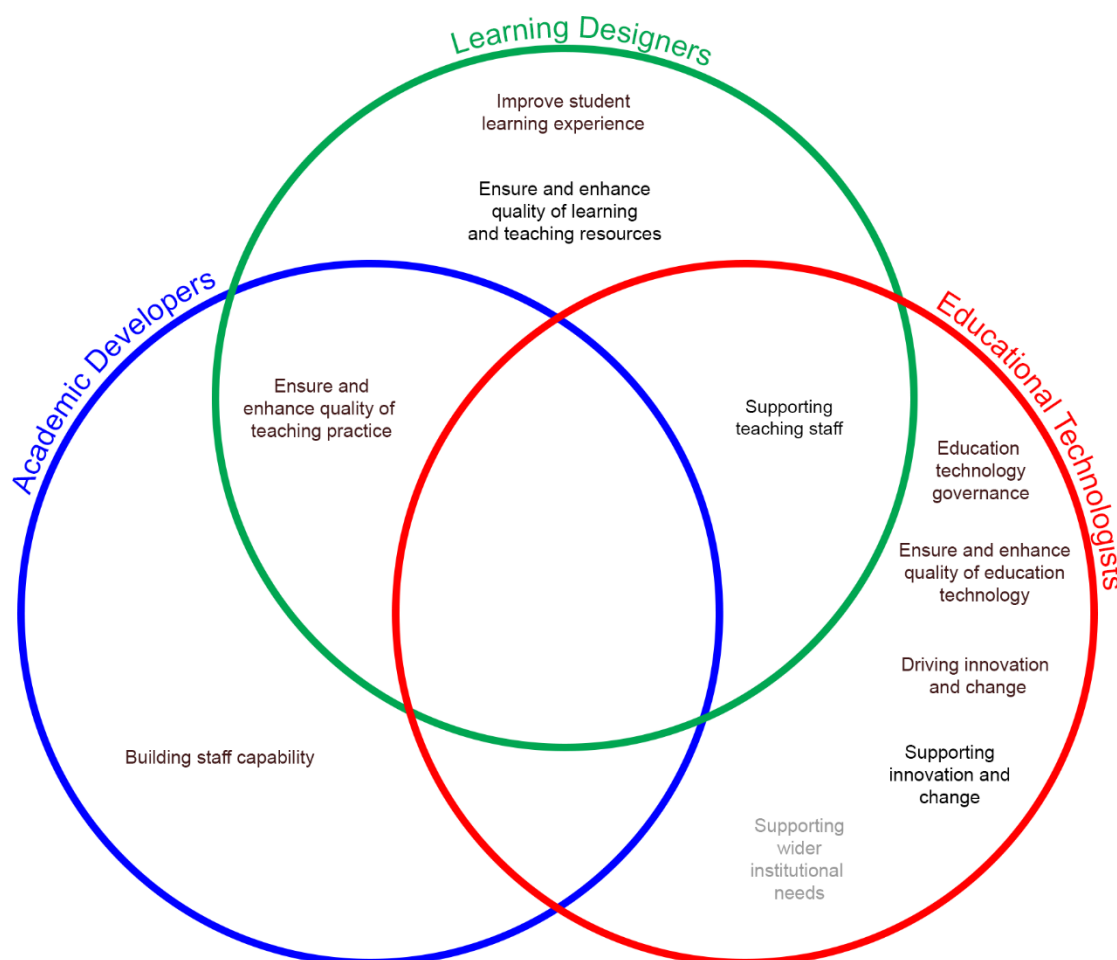
prioritise the needs of the institution, leaders, students or academics depending on their purpose in a given context.

Distribution of Purpose across EdAdvisor Roles

Similar to the representation of practices and practice bundles associated with EdAdvisor roles found in Figure 3.1 (Section 3.7) and Figure 5.5 (Section 5.3.2), it can be helpful to visualise the associations between EdAdvisor roles and their common purposes (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1

Associations Between EdAdvisor Roles and Purpose



Several aspects of these associations between EdAdvisor roles and purposes stand out. ADs in this study appear to hold a relatively singular view of their purpose, tied to staff capability around teaching and learning practice. LDs have purposes with overlap with both ADs and ETs (*Supporting and teaching staff* and *Ensure and enhance quality of teaching practice*), and ETs reported a wider range of different purposes than ADs and LDs combined, chiefly relating to education technology.

8.2.3 Describing EdAdvisor Roles

Understanding EdAdvisor roles is a vital part of the first research question of this study: *Who are EdAdvisors in Australian higher education?* The liminality of EdAdvisor roles means that there can be no singular, all-encompassing definition for them which is applicable in every context because their individual practices can vary greatly. It is, however, possible to describe these roles in terms of their most common purposes, and the practice bundles and knowledge that EdAdvisors employ to meet those purposes. My findings relating to practice bundles in Chapter 5 (Sections 5.3.1 – 5.3.3) highlight differences between the areas of activity of the three EdAdvisor roles and these are summarised in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1

Practice Bundles by EdAdvisor Role

Practice Bundles	AD	ET	LD
Build capability	All		
Build learning resources/activities		ETs	LDs
Design teaching and learning	ADs		LDs
Nurture learning and teaching culture	ADs		
Facilitate education technologies		ETs	LDs
Quality management of teaching	All		
Relationships and care work	All		
Research	ADs		
Technical support		ETs	
Organisational	All		

Note: All (yellow) ADs (blue) ETs (orange) LDs (green)

This table highlights that EdAdvisors share a number of practice bundles but also undertake unique combinations of others which helps to distinguish EdAdvisors in one role from those in other roles. This section provides a set of characteristics which helps to distinguish EdAdvisor roles and is intended to enable somebody unclear about them to say, for example, that if an EdAdvisor holds an academic position and largely focuses on building the pedagogic capability of academics, they are most likely an academic developer. In addition to exploring the general purposes of each role and their associated practices, characteristics including demography, institutional status, experience, qualifications, entry to the field and pedagogical-technological orientation provide the richest possible description which still allows for local variations in practice and priorities. It is important to note that the responsibilities of EdAdvisors from university to university — and even from department to department within these institutions — can vary and the inclusion of a practice bundle or purpose in the description does not mean that it is always applicable.

8.2.4 Academic Developers

Of the three EdAdvisor roles in this study, the findings of this study and the literature both suggest that academic developers have the highest standing among academics in Australian higher education (Barrow & Grant, 2012; Dean et al., 2019; Gosling, 1996; Land, 2001; Wardak et al., 2023). Discussion of their work in this study (Section 6.3.2) and the literature (Brew & Boud, 1996; Gregory & Salmon, 2013; Myllykoski-Laine et al., 2024; Ryan et al., 2003) is replete with examples of productive and meaningful collaborations with academics, and their contributions to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning set them apart from ETs and LDs. Much of this may be attributed to the strongly pedagogical focus of their work and their tendency to hold academic positions and/or come from academia. This section describes these key practices and characteristics of the academic developer role.

Identity as an Academic Developer

The majority of academic developers in this study are women (73%) and a narrow majority in this study hold academic positions (55%). This reflects the AD demography discussed in the research (Fraser, 1999; Green & Little, 2016). In spite of the fact that academic development is well represented in research literature, with respected publications dedicated to the field such as the *International Journal for Academic Development*, my findings suggest that in practice this may be the most liminal of the three EdAdvisor roles. Findings reported in section 5.2.1 show that ADs identify with their role to a lesser degree than ETs or LDs do, and their actual position titles are also less often aligned with this role.

This liminality of the AD role, in tandem with a comparatively high proportion of academics undertaking AD work but using more conventional position titles (for example “Lecturer - Learning Futures”), offers insights into why being known as an academic developer may not be as important for people in this role as it is for other types of EdAdvisors. Explorations of identity as an academic developer in the literature were frequently personal and introspective, considering insider/outsider status as academics or professional staff or transitioning from academic to AD (Fyffe, 2018; Kensington-Miller et al., 2015; Kinash & Wood, 2013).

Purpose

Several responses to the question about purpose from AD survey participants offer insights into the attitudes of academic developers to their work (Section 6.2.1). A high proportion of ADs (70%) identified *ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching practice* as part of their purpose but fewer than one-quarter (24%) selected *ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching resources*, indicating that they perceive clear boundaries around their work. *Building staff capability* was the only other purpose that a high proportion of ADs selected (79%), emphasising this clarity of purpose. This emphasis on fostering good teaching practices in academics by building capability was widely noted in the literature (Groen et al., 2023; Mori, 2024; Puhr, 2024).

Survey results also highlighted that very few ADs viewed working with education technology as part of their purpose and only around one-third reported that their purpose involved supporting teaching staff, wider institutional needs or innovation and change (Section 6.2.1).

Academic Developer Practices

The work of academic developers tends to be more pedagogically oriented than that of other EdAdvisors and includes enabling and enhancing in-person and online learning and teaching practices (Section 5.3.1). Their responsibilities can extend beyond learning and teaching to helping to develop the whole academic as an educator, scholar and researcher (Section 5.3.1) and their elevated status in higher education can also see them taking a leading role in working to nurture a culture in higher education which is more conducive to good learning and teaching practice (Section 5.3.1).

Build Capability

Inherent in the term *Academic developer* is the idea that ADs develop academics. High proportions of ADs reported undertaking activities in the *Building capability* practice bundle, including *Deliver training to academic staff* (88%), *Deliver workshops to academic staff* (94%), *Design academic staff training* (85%) and *Design academic staff workshops* (88%) (Section 5.3.1). Notably fewer reported engaging in *Support resource development (e.g. how-to guides)* (61%), which may be explained by a concern expressed in Aitchison et al. (2020) that this specific activity takes them away from personal contact with academics. As noted above, this idea of building capability in academics being a central purpose for ADs is commonly found in the literature (Aitchison, 2020; Godbold et al., 2022; Ling et al., 2013; Sturm, 2022). This includes consideration of the different approaches taken, both formal through delivering teaching-related qualifications (Brennan et al., 2022; Deaker et al., 2016) and less formal through consultations and peer review of teaching (Aitchison et al., 2020; Harvey & Solomonides, 2014).

Design Teaching and Learning

The activities in the *Design teaching and learning* practice bundle are closely associated with both ADs and LDs, but the significantly higher proportion of ADs undertaking *Curriculum design* (88%) than LDs (67%) serves to differentiate the two roles (Section 5.3.1). The importance of this aspect of EdAdvisor work is reinforced in the finding that 94% of ADs reported using knowledge of *Curriculum structures* while 65% of LDs do. The contribution of ADs to curriculum design was touched on in research literature (Bone et al., 2023; Dempster et al., 2012; Strydom, 2023) but not in great depth and some authors noted that ADs in their work considered that this kind of activity diverted them from the work in capability building (Aitchison et al., 2016).

Quality Management of Teaching

This facet of EdAdvisor work is chiefly focused on interacting with individual academics to evaluate and guide their teaching practices, alongside ensuring their adherence to institutional policies and standards. While the activities of ETs and LDs touch on this, the results show that it is predominately the concern of ADs (Section 5.3.1). Significantly more academic developers reported undertaking *Evaluate teaching practice* (91%) and *Advising on pedagogy* (97%) than did LDs (56% and 81% respectively). Unlike the longer-term collaborations involved in *Designing teaching and learning*, activities in *Quality management of teaching* tend to be more short-term and reactive, involving one-to-one consultations about areas for improvement in teaching. They may also involve academics being involuntarily sent by their managers to be advised by ADs when they fall below institutional teaching standards. This mandated engagement was noted by participants as a major source of friction with academics (Section 6.2). The contribution of ADs to evaluating the quality of teaching in institutions was discussed to a limited extent in the literature (Davis & Bailey, 2022; Deaker et al., 2016; Fraser & Ling; 2014), and, while the benefits of this work were understood, similar themes about its potential negative impacts on relationships between ADs and academics were also noted. These may reflect the less voluntary nature of these interactions with ADs for

academics and highlights the sometimes delicate nature of the power relationships between EdAdvisors and academics.

Research

The involvement of ADs in *Academic research* is one of their distinguishing characteristics among EdAdvisors, with 94% of AD survey respondents saying this is an activity that they regularly engage in (Section 5.3.1). Given that 55% of survey respondents identifying as ADs reported holding academic positions, this indicates that a substantial proportion of the 45% of professional staff ADs in the survey also undertake academic research. This suggests that, while conducting academic research in higher education is conventionally restricted to academic staff, it may be more closely associated with the function and purpose of the AD role overall than with its academic or professional classification.

The proportion of ADs undertaking academic research in the study is significantly higher than that reported by ETs (21%) or LDs (33%). This difference is reinforced by the high proportion of ADs (85%) reporting that they use knowledge of *Academic research methodology*. Again, this is significantly higher than ETs (4%) or LDs (28%). AD interviewees explicitly noted the positive contribution that being an active researcher made to being seen as an equal by the academics that they worked with (Section 7.2.5). This was a theme also found in the literature, where the contribution of ADs to work on SoTL was noted (Bath & Smith, 2004; Godbold et al., 2021; Hicks, 1997; Stensaker, 2018) and this work is associated directly with strengthened relationships with academics, as shared experiences build mutual understanding (Dean & Geertseema, 2023; Fraser & Ling, 2014; Stitt-Bergh, 2023).

Nurture Learning and Teaching Culture

Another notable aspect of the work of academic developers in higher education to support learning and teaching practices relates to activities generally undertaken within Teaching and Learning Centres to *Nurture learning and teaching culture*. While activities supporting this weren't

included in the survey, involvement in activities such as organising learning and teaching festivals and running teaching awards were discussed by some ADs (2 of 6 interviewees) as part of their practice (Section 6.2.1). Discussion of the value of this work to shift attitudes in a higher education culture which often prizes research over teaching (Shaw et al., 2023) was found widely in research, with authors noting that ADs also contributed to greater use of quality frameworks (Mayper, 2022; Patfield et al., 2022) and supporting teaching innovations grants (Wright, 2023).

These various aspects of AD practice demonstrate that ADs address their aim of supporting learning and teaching practices in higher education with a diverse and sophisticated set of approaches.

Key Characteristics of ADs: Pedagogical Focus

The practices of academic developers in this study are pedagogically focused. This was clearly displayed in the map of practice bundles by pedagogy-technology spectrum in section 5.3.3. So too are the areas of knowledge that they most reported using - *Pedagogical theory* (100%), *Assessment design principles* (97%), *Curriculum structures* (94%), *Institutional policies (Teaching/Assessment)* (94%), and *Good practice in face-to-face learning and teaching* (88%). While pedagogy and technology in higher education are largely entangled (Fawns, 2022) and technology is increasingly difficult to escape in any field, the day-to-day work of many academic developers tends to have less to do with technology than does that of ETs or LDs, offering a clear point of distinction between these roles.

The pedagogical focus of the AD is also reflected in the fact that, of the respondents in this study, they had the highest proportion (85%) to hold a qualification in the field of education. Similarly, the proportion of ADs (58%) in this study who reported holding Advance HE/HEA fellowship accreditation was higher than LDs (30%) or ETs (21%). While this may also reflect the requirement for these schemes to be supported and assessed by fellowship holders who generally work in the kind of CTL units led by ADs (Beckmann, 2018) it nevertheless demonstrates a

commitment to the pedagogical side of EdAdvisor work. These findings align with literature about ADs which also notes their contributions to the more pedagogical aspects of learning and teaching, both in building capability (Beckmann, 2018; Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009; Wardak et al., 2023) and in the quality management of teaching (Davis & Bailey, 2022; Deaker et al., 2016). The fact that ADs are more likely to hold academic positions also suggests that pedagogically oriented activities may be viewed as more academic than professional in nature in Australian higher education. The requirement that academics teach the formal courses provided by CTLs such as Graduate Certificates in Higher Education further supports this idea (Lee et al., 2010).

Key Characteristics of ADs: The Importance of Being Academic

The tendency of the academic developer role to be associated with the academic domain in universities, rather than the professional/administrative, is another distinguishing characteristic of this role. A significantly higher proportion of ADs in this study held academic-classified positions (55%) than those working as ETs (8%) or LDs (6%). There is not extensive empirical data about the academic-professional proportions of ADs in Australian higher education, however a large international study by Green and Little (2016) reported 66% of ADs were academic or academic/administrative with 59% holding a doctorate.

The importance of academic developers being academics was a recurring theme in the literature (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Harland & Staniforth, 2003; Sturm, 2022) because it was regarded as important that ADs have experience which allowed them to relate to the academics that they advise. Several authors (Keppell, 2007; Sturm, 2022) raised concerns about the increase in numbers of professional ADs for this reason. The lack of research about the experiences of ADs in professional positions, coupled with the fact that only one of the six ADs interviewed in this study (a former academic) held a professional position and did not discuss the impact of this classification, makes it difficult to know what impact a professional classification has on ADs as practitioners in Australia.

Holding an academic position was widely considered to be beneficial to ADs in both the findings of this study (Section 7.3.3) and in the literature (Godbold et al., 2022; Kensington-Miller et al., 2015). Most importantly, an academic classification was regarded as making it easier for ADs to quickly build connections and relationships with academics through perceptions of them having greater understanding of academics' needs and practices (Leece & Jacquet, 2017, McDonald et al., 2022). While it is unclear whether or how shared disciplinary backgrounds contribute to these connections, the shared experience of undertaking scholarly research and higher education teaching were viewed by most AD interviewees as valuable in building the trust necessary for good relationships (Section 7.3.3).

Synthesis

Academic developers were introduced to Australian higher education in the 1960s to research higher education and pedagogy and to build the teaching capabilities of academics (Hicks, 1997; Lee et al., 2010). While the focus of this role has expanded over time to include the quality management of teaching, supporting curriculum design, and nurturing learning and teaching culture (Section 6.2.1), the pedagogical orientation of this role and the emphasis on building capability continue to be key characteristics of ADs. Unlike the ETs and LDs in this study, ADs are more likely to hold academic positions (Section 5.2.3), which possibly reflects the need for research skills in this role, and many ADs come to the role having previously worked in other academic positions (Section 5.5.1). Holding an academic position is regarded by some ADs as making it easier to build relationships of trust with the academics that they work with, as there is a sense that they have greater understanding of the work and needs of academics (Section 6.3.2). This elevated status as academics may possibly also explain why ADs in this study did not identify as strongly with AD roles as ETs and LDs did with their own, and why ADs' position titles — for example, Lecturer (Academic Development) or Lecturer (Learning Innovation) — were less likely to align with the AD role than ET or LD position titles were with their roles (Section 5.2.1). Overall, academic developers play an

important part in supporting learning and teaching practices in higher education through their pedagogical expertise and ability to build relationships of trust with academics built on mutual understanding.

8.2.5 Educational Technologists

Of the three EdAdvisor roles, ETs have been examined the least in EdAdvisor research. Nonetheless, they play a notable contribution to ensuring that the education technology ecosystem used to support learning and teaching practice in the modern university is fit for purpose, well supported and able to be used by educators and EdAdvisors alike. While their work is more technologically oriented, ETs differ from regular IT staff in terms of the ETs' understanding of the ways that learning and teaching can be enhanced with education technology. This section examines the findings of this study and relevant literature which clarifies these qualities of educational technologists.

Identity as an Educational Technologist

Educational technologists in this study largely hold professionally classified positions. Unlike most professional staff roles in Australian higher education, in this study more men (67%) than women (29%) work as ETs (Section 5.2.2). In terms of their professional identity, the 24 ETs in this study can be located between ADs and LDs in terms of their identification with their role. Position titles for educational technologists varied widely, with 39% of ET survey respondents having position titles aligning with this role while 61% had position titles which were ambiguous or did not align. Interviewees largely did not discuss their professional identity, but several noted that they had previously worked as educators (Section 5.5.1) and that they valued being able to support learning and teaching practices for the academics they worked with (Section 6.3). Several interviewees in AD and LD roles noted that they had worked as ETs previously (Section 5.5.1).

The identity of educational technologists was rarely examined in research, possibly due to the dearth of ETs contributing to research about their own field. Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010) offered some insights into the lived experience of ETs, in work describing ET practitioners in academic roles. Given that few ETs hold academic positions however, it may not be reflective of most professional ET experiences.

Purpose

Survey responses in this study highlight that ETs report serving a notably different purpose in higher education to ADs (Section 6.2.1). Unsurprisingly, significantly higher proportions of ETs selected purposes pertaining to education technologies (*Education technology governance* 67% and *Ensuring and enhancing the quality of education technology* 83%) as well as *driving* (71%) or *supporting* (79%) *innovation and change*. While innovation and change in higher education could apply equally to pedagogical change initiatives, in practice it more commonly relates to technological change (Kane & Dahlvig, 2022; Palmer & Holt, 2014; Pechenkina & Branigan, 2018; Selwyn, 2013), which is likely why this is viewed as a key purpose by ETs. Another notable difference from ADs was the high proportion of ETs who reported *Supporting teaching staff* (79%) as part of their purpose compared to ADs (36%). This may indicate different types of relationships between ETs and academics and ADs and academics if the word *supporting* was considered to imply a subservient position that ADs were less likely to identify with.

Educational Technologist Practices

Educational technologists are predominately associated with the education technologies that they evaluate, implement and support in Australian higher education (Section 5.3.1). Their work necessitates that they also understand how these tools can and should be used effectively in learning and teaching (Section 5.4.1), but this aspect of the role can be overlooked both by EdAdvisor colleagues and researchers. This section examines the findings of this study and relevant literature which explores the practices of educational technologists.

Facilitate Education Technologies

The term *educational technologist* denotes their direct relationship with education technologies. Significantly higher proportions of ETs reported that they undertake *Education technology procurement (79%)* and *Work with vendors (71%)* compared with ADs or LDs (Section 5.3.1). Other related activities in the *Facilitate education technologies* practice bundle such as *Evaluate education technology* or *Implement education technology* are shared with LDs (Section 5.3.1), who also reported undertaking these activities, but higher proportions of ETs reported undertaking both of these activities. The work of ETs in this bundle is informed by their knowledge of *Current and emerging education technologies (92%)* as well as *Institutional policies (Privacy/Security) (83%)* (Section 5.4.1) and contributes to their purpose of *supporting learning and teaching practices* by providing resources to support those practices. This supports the idea that ETs commonly act as the business or service owner of institutional systems, meaning that while university IT departments take responsibility for operations, educational technologist units play a key role in making decisions about product selection, functionality and implementation (Dickerson, 2024; Shurville et al., 2010).

The literature about the work of educational technologists is often less detailed. Research directly related to ETs from Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010), Selwyn (2014), Ritzhaupt et al. (2018), Han et al. (2023) and Dickerson (2024) broadly identified the facilitation of education technologies as a defining part of their practice. However broader research about the implementation of education technologies often either only superficially reported their contributions (Pechenkina & Branigan, 2018) or associated it more with university IT departments (Chugh et al., 2023; Deacon et al., 2022) or with learning designers (Pingo et al., 2024). This highlights limitations in current scholarship about education technology implementation initiatives and in scholarly understanding of the contributions of educational technologists in this work.

Technical Support

Another more widely agreed aspect of the educational technologist role is their involvement in providing *Technical support*. This was reported as a regular activity by 88% of ET survey respondents, a significantly higher proportion than LDs (50%) or ADs (6%) (Section 5.3.1). ETs also reported that they *Use LMS - course administration* in large numbers (75%) but the difference with LDs (54%) was less notable. While ETs regard the support of education technologies as a key part of their job, several noted that they were often also called on to provide support for non-education technologies, which they felt led to them being viewed more as general IT support by diminishing their understanding of the use of technology for learning and teaching. This downplaying of the pedagogical expertise of the ET role by academics was also observed in the literature by Shurville et al. (2009) who described it as “somewhat demeaning” (p. 212). This suggests that while ETs have a technological focus in their work, they value their ability to contribute to learning and teaching in their practice.

Build Capability

ETs responding to the survey noted their contribution to *building the capability* of academics primarily through *delivering training* and *building support resources* (Section 5.3.1). Researchers have sometimes framed this capability building as focusing more on supporting the technical use of education technologies (Selwyn, 2013; Tay et al. 2022), than on the pedagogical applications of the tools, but the fact that one of the two most commonly reported areas of knowledge used by ETs was *Good use of education technologies in learning and teaching* (92%) suggests that it is more nuanced. In addition to providing advice about how to use the tools they support, educational technologists described offering guidance on broader pedagogical strategies for incorporating technology more effectively into teaching (Section 6.2.2).

Build Learning Resources/Activities

The contribution that ETs make to *building learning resources/activities*, frequently in collaboration with LDs (Section 5.3.1), is largely not one that has been explored in depth in the literature. Close to two-thirds of ETs surveyed reported regularly undertaking activities in this bundle, including *Audio/video production* (67%) and *Multimedia/web development* (63%) (Section 5.3.1) and several of the ET interviewees noted that they had backgrounds in media production and web development which equipped them well for these tasks (Section 5.5.1). Media and multimedia production skills were identified in large trans-national studies about the competencies of ETs by researchers including Ritzhaupt et al. (2010), Iqdami and Branch (2016) and Inkaew and Nasongkha (2020) but these tended to focus on long lists of competencies rather than offering deep insights into common practices. It is common for EdAdvisor units to have a media production team undertaking these activities who often hold roles at lower pay grades, and, in the absence of a clearly understood role identity in the EdAdvisor framework for media production staff, there may be value in considering them to be entry-level or specialist ETs.

Key Characteristics of ETs: Technological Focus

In contrast to ADs, the educational technologist role has more of a technological orientation. There are several activities in the *Facilitate education technologies* practice bundle which are clearly the domain of the ET — *Education technology procurement, Work with vendors and Technical support* — and their most commonly used areas of knowledge also have a technological focus (Section 5.4.1). The division between technology and pedagogy is not as stark for ETs though as it is for ADs, as many ETs reported regularly engaging in pedagogical-technological (*Design digital learning environments* 91.7%) and pedagogical activities (*Deliver training to academic staff* 79.2%) (Section 5.3.3). This helps us to understand what separates ETs from people working in university IT departments — their focus on the appropriate educational application of technology — which requires a sound understanding of learning and teaching practice and principles. ET interviewees

noted that this nuance wasn't always understood by academic or even other EdAdvisors, with some interviewees discussing their experiences of being excluded from discussions among academics about education technologies (Section 7.4.1). While ET practitioner researchers such as Shurville et al. (2008, 2009, 2010) were conscious of this wider understanding, this was not commonly found in other literature (Dron, 2012) and reflects a common and problematic view of ETs which downplays their potential contributions of pedagogical knowledge to enhancing learning and teaching.

Synthesis

Educational technologists in this study are mostly professional staff (Section 5.2.3) working in central areas (Section 5.6.2) and, unusually for professional staff in higher education, more likely to be male (Section 5.2.2). ETs ensure that appropriate education technologies are available to support learning and teaching practice, and that educators know how and why to use them (Han et al., 2023; Shurville et al., 2009). While aspects of their work with technologies overlap with conventional university IT staff, ETs' specialist expertise in technology-enhanced learning and teaching practice add valuable insights about the affordances and best use of education technologies to their work, which supports their purpose of *Ensuring and enabling the quality of education technology* (Section 6.2.1). This expertise is often derived from their prior experience working either as educators or in IT or media production (Section 5.5.1).

ETs' work also positions them to be important contributors to innovation and change in higher education (Section 6.2.1), as many institutional change initiatives have an education technology component (Kane & Dahlvig, 2022; Palmer & Holt, 2014; Selwyn, 2013). Less well understood or reported aspects of the practice of educational technologists include their contributions to building the capabilities of academics in the appropriate use of educational technologies, as well as work that they undertake (often with LDs) in building learning resources and activities (Section 6.2.1). Despite their important contributions to putting in place key material-economic arrangements necessary to enable teaching and learning practices, ETs are often absent

from or poorly understood in research literature (Kala & Ladha, 2023; Simpson et al., 2021) in comparison to ADs and LDs. This absence may be due to their general classification as professional staff, although learning designers are also usually professional and feature widely in the literature; so, it may relate more to the technological focus of the ETs' work and the ways that technological practices are valued culturally in higher education by academics and EdAdvisors in comparison to more pedagogical practices (Section 7.4.1).

8.2.6 Learning Designers

Learning designers are the largest of the three EdAdvisor role groups in this study, making up nearly half (49%) of the sample (Section 5.2.1) and also having a notable presence in the wider EdAdvisor community and research (Allen, 1996; Altena et al., 2019; Bisset, 2018; Kumar & Ritzhaupt, 2017). In many ways the LD role is the most clearly understood (Section 6.4.1) and the LD position title is the most consistently used (Section 5.2.1).

Identity as a Learning Designer

Learning designers in this study were predominately women (77%) and held a professionally classified position (94%). These characteristics reflect recent findings about LDs (Slade et al., 2019) and wider understanding of the demography of professional staff in Australian higher education (Croucher, 2023). The 54 LD survey respondents reported the highest level of identification with their role (Section 5.2.1). This may relate to the fact that a significantly higher proportion of LDs' position titles aligned directly to the learning designer role (79%) than was the case with ADs (33%) or ETs (39%) (Section 5.2.1). Exploration of the professional identity of learning designers in the literature has tended to focus primarily on their practices and knowledge (Altena et al., 2019; Pingo et al., 2024; Ritzhaupt & Kumar, 2015; Slade et al., 2019) rather than other aspects such as their values or the intrinsic motivations and purpose underpinning their practice. These values,

motivations, and purposes, their *teleoaffective structures* (Section 2.2.2), offer valuable insights into the learning designer role.

Purpose

The most notable response from LDs in this study to the survey question about their purpose was that *Improving student learning experience* was selected by significantly more LDs (93%) than by ADs (55%) or ETs (63%). This was also the highest proportion of any role that selected any purpose. It highlights the student-centred mindset of LDs in this study and strongly suggests that the motivators of their next most-highly selected purposes, *Ensure and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching practice* (72%) and *Ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching resources* (76%) are also about concern for students. LDs also reported *Supporting teaching staff* (63%) as part of their purpose, but the student learning experience is their clear priority.

Learning Designer Practices

Three main bundles of practice characterise the learning designer role and highlight the seamless ways in which pedagogy and technology intermingle in their work. *Design teaching and learning* and *Build learning resources/activities* are central to this role (Section 5.3.1) and involve LDs supporting learning and teaching practices by directly providing resources, but also by *Building capability* (Section 6.2) as they advise academics in collaborative design work. The results show that LDs may also *Build capability* in academics through training and other professional development activities or resources, depending on their institutional context.

Design Teaching and Learning

Almost all LD respondents identified *Learning resource design* (96%) and *Learning activity design* (94%) from the *Design teaching and learning* practice bundle as regular activities, a significantly higher proportion than reported by ETs or ADs (Section 5.3.1). A high proportion of LDs also reported regularly undertaking *Assessment design* (85%), an activity shared with ADs (88%). These activities marry the technological and pedagogical elements of a lot of learning and teaching

activity in Australian higher education institutions and results show that they draw on the learning designer's knowledge of *Good practice in online learning and teaching* (100%), *Good practice in blended learning and teaching* (98%), and *Learning design models and principles* (98%) (Section 5.4.1). Significantly higher proportions of LDs reported using these particular areas of knowledge than ADs or LDs.

Unsurprisingly, this reflects the prevailing view in literature that designing teaching and learning is a central practice of learning designers (Altena et al., 2019; Bennett et al., 2016; Zeivots et al., 2023). Learning design as a field is well established, with dedicated scholarly journals, and while a small minority of researchers might posit that it is more valuable to develop learning design skills directly in academics than to have LDs do the work (Bennett et al., 2016), learning designers are widely understood to play a key role in this field (Altena et al., 2019; Bisset, 2018; Zeivots et al., 2023).

Build Learning Resources/Activities

Another important aspect of the work of learning designers relates to the creation of learning resources or activities, most commonly placed in an academic's LMS unit (Section 5.3.1). This activity is examined separately in this study to the design of these activities, assessment and resources because while design usually involves in-depth pedagogically-oriented collaboration with an academic, creation can be undertaken individually by the LD and involve more use of the LMS or multimedia/web technologies, informed by the preceding design discussions. High proportions of LDs in this study reported undertaking *Use LMS - build activities* (85%) and *Use LMS - add content* (81%) but it is also noteworthy that lower proportions reported engaging in *Audio/video production* (52%) or *Multimedia/web development* (59%) (Section 5.3.1). Some LD interviewees questioned whether these kinds of activities represented the best use of their time or skill (Section 7.4.1).

This attitude may indicate why this kind of activity is discussed less frequently in research about learning designers, appearing more in work attempting to map the overall competencies of

LDs (Kumar & Ritzhaupt, 2017; Ritzhaupt et al., 2021) than work about the more pedagogical activities relating to the design of teaching and learning. Altena et al. (2019) noted it as last of the five main activities that they associated with LDs (*Asset production and technical support*), but it was clearly differentiated from the first of these activities *Course and curriculum design*. Understanding that learning designers are commonly called upon to undertake what they might consider to be more technological work, alongside the more pedagogical work of designing learning activities and resources, highlights the way that this role occupies a large part of the pedagogical-technological spectrum.

Build Capability

Learning designers responding to the survey reported that they regularly undertake activities in the *Build capability* practice bundle, including *Deliver training to academic staff* (83%), *Deliver workshops to academic staff* (83%) and *Support resource development (e.g. how-to-guides)* (87%) (Section 5.3.1). This aspect of their work is often overlooked in research about learning designers (Bennett et al., 2016; Pingo et al., 2024), although it is found more in research undertaken by learning designers themselves (Altena et al., 2019; Bisset, 2018; D'Souza, 2022). This may be because many researchers have focused more on the learning design outputs of LDs than on LDs as practitioners, but much recent work related to skills and professional development frameworks for learning designers (Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Pingo et al., 2024; Ryall & Abblitt, 2023) also did not include this aspect of LD practice. One possible implication of this gap between research and practice might be that the skills tied to *building capability* may not be adequately considered when professional development is designed for them or in the recruitment of learning designers.

Facilitate Education Technologies

The involvement of learning designers in activities in the *Facilitate education technologies* bundle reflects the deep integration of technology into their overall practice (Section 5.3.1). While high proportions of LDs reported undertaking several activities in this bundle, including *Design*

digital learning environments (e.g. LMS template) (96%), there were no significant differences found between LDs and ETs. LD interviewees were frequently aware of being perceived as *tech support* (Section 7.4.1) as much as they were as having pedagogical expertise and largely accepted that, as a result, in practice their role was at times some kind of mixture between learning designer and educational technologist. This facet of the learning designer experience was noted by Australian HE researchers (Abblitt et al., 2023; Tay et al., 2022), with Pingo et al. (2024) identifying *Innovation and technology governance* and *Education technology capabilities* as two of eight necessary competencies for learning designers. Other Australian researchers focused more on LDs' pedagogical activities and knowledge than those related to education technologies (Gilmore & Nguyen, 2024; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021; MacCallum & Brown, 2022). This suggests that different understandings of the work, priorities, and skills of learning designers in different Australian higher education institutions by leaders influence the extent to which LDs are expected to understand education technologies.

Key Characteristics of LDs: Learning Designer as All-Rounder

While academic developers are mostly concerned with pedagogical activities and educational technologists frequently focus on those in the technological realm, the activities of learning designers traverse almost the entire pedagogical-technological spectrum (Section 5.3.3). Their work overlaps with ADs at the pedagogical end of the pedagogy-technology spectrum and with ETs at the technological end. In spite of the variety of studies exploring the practices and skills of learning designers (Hinze et al., 2022; Ritzhaupt & Kumar, 2015; Slade et al., 2019; Sugar & Moore, 2015), they are rarely, if ever, compared to ADs or ETs, meaning that this characteristic of the role is rarely examined.

Synthesis

The learning designer role is the most clearly defined and best understood of the three EdAdvisor roles in this study (Section 6.4.1). This is reflected in the significantly higher alignment of LD position titles with the LD role in this study compared to ETs and ADs, as well as LDs in this study reporting significantly higher identification with their role than ADs or ETs did (Section 5.2.1).

Learning designers in this study were predominately women (Section 5.2.2) holding professional positions (Section 5.2.3) in central and faculty-based EdAdvisor units (Section 5.6.2).

LDs represent the largest group in this study, and while there is a lack of research into their numbers in the workforce (Abblitt et al., 2023; Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021), my experience in the sector and with the TELevisors Network indicates that they are also the most commonly employed EdAdvisors in Australian higher education. This may be related to the *all-rounder* nature of this role, with their practice including activities across the pedagogy-technology spectrum (Section 5.3.3). The work of LDs has a strong focus on *designing teaching and learning* and *building learning activities (including assessments) and resources* and is often informed by their prior experience teaching in schools, vocational education or universities (Section 5.5.1). This past experience undoubtedly informs their work in *building capability* among academics as well, although this aspect of their work is frequently underreported in the literature (Allen, 1996; Altena et al., 2019; Bisset, 2018; D'Souza, 2022). All of these practices align with the widely held student-centred purpose of LDs in this study to *improve student learning experience* (Section 6.2.1).

8.2.7 EdAdvisor Practices Overall

Exploring the practices of ADs, ETs and LDs in terms of practice bundles has illustrated the different approaches that they take in their work to support learning and teaching practices. Two additional practice bundles, *Organisational* and *Relationship and care work* (Section 5.3.1) contain activities which are common to all of these roles but are nonetheless useful to note in developing a richer understanding of EdAdvisors.

Organisational

The commonality of *troubleshooting* and *problem solving* as a regular activity for all EdAdvisor roles highlights both the creative and reactive nature of EdAdvisor work (Section 5.3.1). The fact that significantly higher proportions of ADs and LDs reported undertaking *Project management* and *Driving change* than ETs suggests that ETs may not commonly be given the same levels of responsibility as their colleagues. The contribution that EdAdvisors make to driving or supporting change is explored in the literature, chiefly focussing on ADs (Davis & Bailey, 2022; Debowski, 2014; Hicks, 2005; Holt et al., 2004) and LDs to a lesser extent (Henderson et al., 2022; Kirsch & Luo, 2023). Discussion of the involvement of ETs in change initiatives was largely in the context of their involvement in education technology implementations (Graham et al., 2023). It is noteworthy, given the contradictory findings relating to their practices, that while the literature focused on the contributions of ADs and LDs, in the survey responses about purpose, more ETs selected *Driving innovation and change* (71%) or *Supporting innovation and change* (79%) than ADs or LDs (Section 6.2.1).

Relationships and Care Work

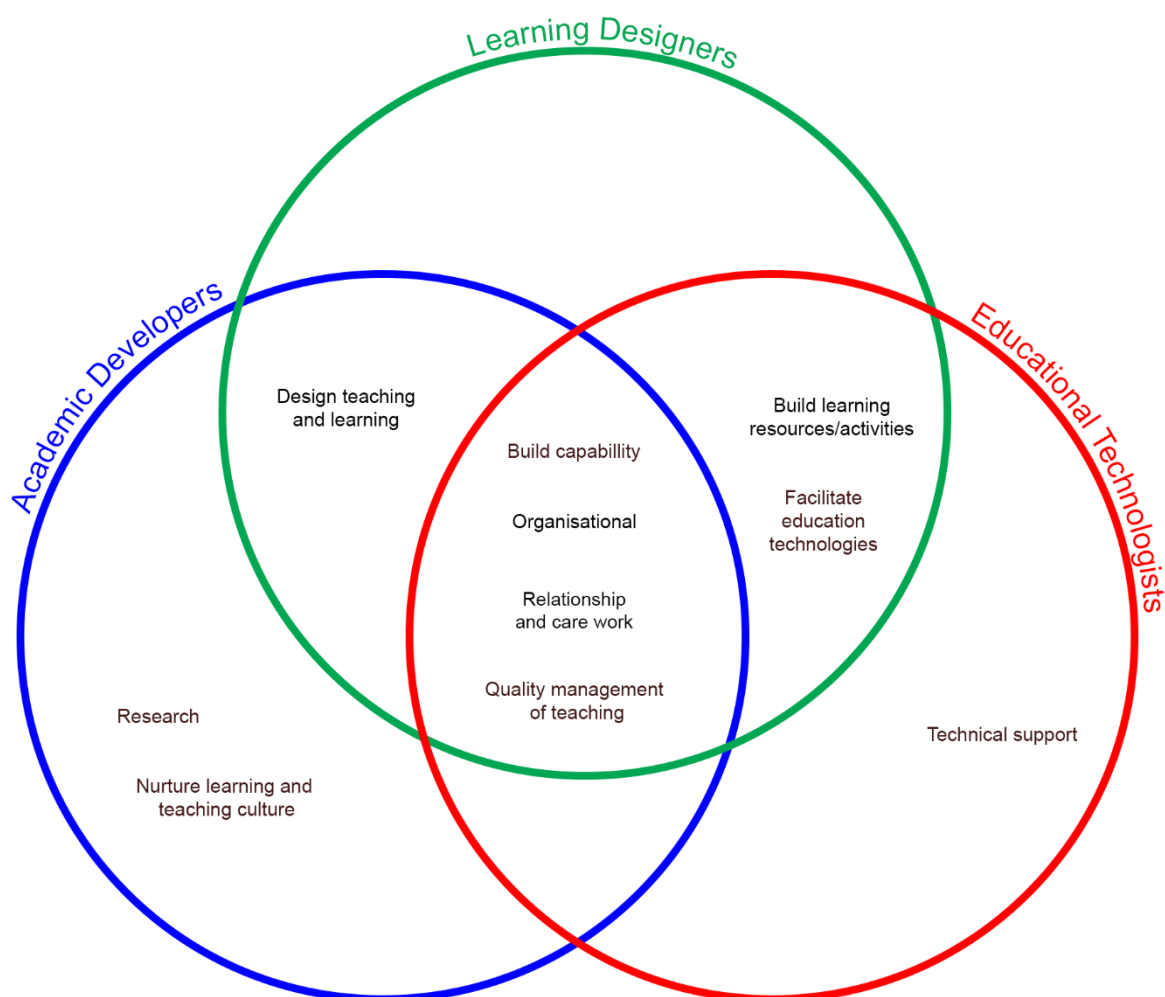
The vital importance of relationships was a recurring theme in interviews with EdAdvisors in all roles (Section 6.3), which was expected given the collaborative nature of much of EdAdvisor work (Veles et al., 2023) and the power imbalances sometimes encountered between academic and professional staff (D'Souza et al., 2022; McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Mueller, 2021). High proportions of ADs (97%) and LDs (94%) reported *Relationship building* as a regular activity, a significant difference to ETs (75%) (Section 5.3.1). This may reflect the types of interactions that EdAdvisors in these roles have with academics, with ADs and LDs being more likely to work on longer-term collaborations while ETs have more one-off interactions with the academics they support (Section 6.3.2).

Distribution of Practice Bundles Across EdAdvisor Roles

I have previously mapped the distribution of practices for EdAdvisor roles in the literature review (Figure 3.1) and Findings chapters (Figure 5.5) and conclude this section with a final version informed by both (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2

Associations Between EdAdvisor Roles and Practice Bundles



Build capability has been a common practice bundle for all roles in both the literature practice bundles map (Section 3.7) and the findings practice bundles map (Section 5.3.2). The *Organisational* and *Relationships and care work* were not identified in the literature map but are retained here as common activities for all roles from the findings map. *Quality management of teaching* was identified as an AD practice in the literature (Deaker et al., 2016; Fraser & Ling, 2014) but the findings relating to practice bundles (Section 5.3.1) demonstrate that all roles undertake some practices within this bundle.

Technical support is unique to ETs across all three maps. *Research* is unique to ADs across all three maps and *Nurture learning and teaching culture* is maintained as unique to ADs based on the literature map.

The categorisation of a broad set of practices as *Design learning resources/activities*, a bundle unique to LDs, in the literature practice bundles map (Section 3.7), was shown to lack nuance in the findings as different practices in this bundle had different qualities. As a result, it was split in two. *Design teaching and learning* took some practices from the initial bundle and is shared by ADs and LDs. *Build learning resources/activities* took the remaining practices from the initial bundle and is shared by LDs and ETs. As a result, no practice bundles are unique to LDs, highlighting the many overlaps between their practices and those of ADs and ETs. Practices in the *Facilitate education technologies* practice bundle which were initially in the literature practice map, considered unique to ETs were shown to be undertaken by both ETs and LDs (Section 5.3.1) and are now represented as shared by ETs and LDs.

This final practice bundle map illustrates that many practices overlap between EdAdvisor roles, and these overlaps offer useful insights into the way that the pedagogical-technological orientation of EdAdvisor roles influences the practices shared by these roles. The differences between the first two practice bundle maps (Figure 3.1 and Figure 5.5) and this final version illustrate that a more complete picture of EdAdvisor practice is able to be formed by merging the findings of this study and those in the literature. The difference also highlights the impact of

considering EdAdvisor practices in bundles, which better illustrate overlaps in practice between roles, than the approaches commonly applied in literature of focusing on individual practices as they apply to specific roles. The development of these practice bundles, using elements from disparate areas of practice theory, also represents a contribution to theory.

8.2.8 EdAdvisors' Third Space Positionality

Interviewees were presented with descriptions of the four categories of higher education third space practitioners developed by Whitchurch (2008) (Section 2.4.2) and asked to discuss how they related to the way they saw their own place in their institution (Section 6.4.1). These categories were bounded professional, cross-boundary professional, unbounded professional and blended professional and they describe the ways that third space practitioners work in and across the academic and professional domains. While interviewees recognised that their work traversed conventional academic and professional boundaries, positioning them as third space practitioners, no alignment between specific EdAdvisor roles and any of these categories was found in their responses (13 of 16 interviewees), with many interviewees suggesting that they identified with several of the categories (cross-boundary and blended) and aspired to be unbounded. One questioned whether the categories better reflected skills than job positions. These responses indicate the value and the limitations of higher education Third Space theory: while the categories identified in Third Space theory are useful in scoping EdAdvisors' practices and describing their working relationships with stakeholders, they may not serve to distinguish one EdAdvisor role from another or reflect how EdAdvisors view their work.

8.3 EdAdvisors' Contribution to Learning and Teaching Practices

Having described the three EdAdvisor roles, their purposes, and their practices, it is now useful to consider how EdAdvisors have impact in the work that they do. This brings us to the second research question in this study - *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?* While EdAdvisors share *good learning and teaching* as a common purpose (Section 6.2.2), they use

their specialist skills and knowledge to achieve this in different ways (Section 5.3). Ultimately, when interviewees reported that they had had a positive impact on learning and teaching, they discussed it in terms of *Bringing change* (13 of 16 interviewees) (Section 6.3). Depending on the role, this could include building capability leading to changes in academics' teaching practices, making changes to the education technology ecosystem supporting teaching practices, or supporting changes in the design of learning resources and activities. Much of the work that EdAdvisors do in *bringing change* involves working with stakeholders across the university in situations where EdAdvisors have little if any formal authority to direct people to take actions. This is likely why a second major theme was also raised in the discussion of EdAdvisor impact by many participants, which was the importance of *Building relationships* (12 of 16 interviewees) in the process of bringing change. These findings and relevant literature will inform this section as part of answering research question 3.

8.3.1 Bringing Change

Some notable differences between roles are found in survey results relating to *bringing change*. While high proportions of ADs (91%) and LDs (89%) reported *Driving change* as one of their regular activities (compared to 67% of ETs) (Section 5.3.1), only around half of ADs (55%) or LDs (57%) identified *driving innovation and change* as part of the purpose of their role (Section 6.2.1). Significantly more ETs (79%) selected *supporting innovation and change* as part of their purpose than did ADs (30%) or LDs (54%). In exploring the ways that EdAdvisors contribute to bringing change, I will therefore explore each role separately.

Academic Developers

Many of the activities most closely associated with ADs (*Curriculum design, Nurturing learning and teaching culture, Research*) (Section 5.3.1) indicate that people in this role have a high-level focus on supporting or enabling long-term pedagogical change. This reflects the common consensus in the literature that the primary focus of ADs is on improving learning and teaching

practices and quality (Holt et al., 2011; Mori et al., 2024; Myllykoski-Laine et al., 2024; Stevens et al., 2024). While a high proportion of ADs reported *Driving change* (91%) as a regular activity (Section 5.3.1), notably fewer selected *driving innovation and change* (55%) (Section 6.5.1) as part of their purpose. This may simply reflect change being a frequent outcome of the work of ADs while not explicitly part of their purpose. It may also be that, as survey respondents were asked to select three purposes from a list of 10, other purposes in the list were more relevant in their specific context.

Around two-thirds (66%) of ADs broadly agreed that they can make a meaningful contribution to decisions about educational practices in their institution but somewhat fewer (43%) felt the same way about education technology decisions. Despite this difference, many of the AD interviewees discussed the importance of education technology in their work as much as they did pedagogy, describing their contribution to the selection of technology and their concerns about the ways that academics saw the role of technology in education (Section 7.3.1). The involvement of ADs in contributing to change on the more technological side of EdAdvisor work is rarely explored in research literature, but in many institutions recently ADs in academic positions have been at the forefront of the development of strategies for dealing with the emergence of Generative AI (for example Doherty et al., 2024; Ryall & Abblitt, 2023). Vital outputs such as the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) report on Assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence drew almost entirely on contributions from academic developers and education-focused academics (Lodge et al., 2023).

Educational Technologists

Activities closely associated with ETs, such as *Work with vendors* and *Education technology procurement* would suggest that ETs are able to have a substantial impact on learning and teaching practice as a result of the affordances of tools implemented in their work on the institutional education technology ecosystem (Section 5.3.1). Two-thirds of ETs reported *Driving change* as a regular activity in their work, significantly fewer than the proportions of ADs or LDs who reported

this. Many ETs reported either *driving or supporting innovation and change* as part of their purpose (Section 6.2.1), however, unlike ADs or LDs. This may be linked to a high proportion of the ETs in this study working in central units (75%) (Section 5.6.2) where most major institutional change initiatives begin (Graham et al., 2023). An increasing number of change initiatives in higher education relating to learning and teaching have an education technology focus (Palmer & Holt, 2014; Pechenkina & Branigan, 2018), requiring the involvement of ETs. In spite of this focus, fewer than half the educational technologists surveyed broadly agreed that they could make a meaningful contribution to decisions about educational practice (46%), and 58% felt the same way about education technology decisions. Given the technological focus of their work, the former is unsurprising, but as the EdAdvisors most frequently involved in many aspects of evaluating and implementing education technologies, the latter might suggest relatively low levels of empowerment among ETs. Equally, it could indicate that this kind of decision-making is limited to a small group of senior ETs. This is reflected in discussion from ET interviewees about change focused more on their efforts to mitigate what they saw as poor decisions from managers (Section 6.3.3) or from the IT department about implementing education technologies (Section 7.6.4) than on contributing their own knowledge to decision-making. This perceived lack of power wasn't generally discussed in the literature: instead, researchers like Selwyn (2013) have claimed that ETs had too much influence over these decisions at the expense of pedagogy. This suggests that there are important questions to ask about an apparent difference in views of influence and expertise between groups of educational stakeholders, and how this might come about due to different understandings of the practicalities of education technology ecosystems in higher education and of the work of ETs (Goodyear, 2023).

Learning Designers

Learning designers in this study largely held a more positive view of their ability to bring change through their work than ADs or ETs. Two-thirds (68%) of learning designers surveyed broadly agreed that they can meaningfully contribute to decision-making around both education

technologies and educational practices (Section 6.3.1). A high proportion reported that they regularly undertake *Driving change* (89%) in their work (Section 5.3.1), although, as with ADs, fewer regarded this as a main part of their purpose (57%) (Section 6.2.1). LD interviewees discussing their ability to contribute to change in their institutions were similarly positive (Section 6.3). This contrasts with the general absence of discussion of the contribution of LDs to meaningful change in the literature. While some researchers noted the presence of learning designers in large learning design change projects (Altena & Theobald, 2022; Macfarlan & Hook, 2022), discussion of their contributions to change were more often in the context of describing the large multi-disciplinary teams involved (Furutomo, 2022; Makwambeni et al., 2023; Matthews, 2019). It may be that, as professional staff, LDs are less likely to author the literature describing their work, sharing their unique perspectives, or it could be that the contributions that they make to change are harder to articulate in research.

One final additional factor impacting the contributions of EdAdvisors to bringing change was identified which was universally relevant, regardless of role: the impact of their leaders on their work.

Leaders as Enablers and Inhibitors of Change

Institutional leaders were described by interviewees in this study as playing a pivotal role in influencing the extent to which EdAdvisors were able to drive or bring change in their respective roles (Section 6.3.3). Leaders who were regarded as beneficial for change by interviewees were described as providing a clear vision of the changes that they wanted to see and demonstrating trust in the EdAdvisors' ideas to enable this. Conversely, leaders who inhibited EdAdvisors' ability to bring change were described as poor communicators who displayed little trust in the EdAdvisors working for them (Section 6.3.3) and who interviewees viewed as having a poor understanding either of good TELT practice or of the actual work that EdAdvisors do (Section 6.5.3). While the decisions of institutional leaders can directly influence the ways that EdAdvisors work to bring change in learning

and teaching, they are rarely discussed in the literature. Broader discussions about challenges with institutional educational strategies (Gratz & Looney, 2020; Shaw et al., 2023; Winslett, 2016) and managerialism in higher education (Ginsberg, 2011; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2022; Raffoul et al., 2021; Sims, 2020) are more common, but these tend not to focus on specific initiatives. This may be because researchers prefer to focus on the outcomes of such initiatives but studies taking this kind of overarching view could potentially contribute new insights to understandings of change in higher education.

One rarely asked question about change, given that senior leaders of learning and teaching set the priorities of their institutions, is: why is such emphasis placed on innovation and change in the work of EdAdvisors and EdAdvisor units by leaders in comparison to support of existing practice? The answer may be found in the rapidly changing technological environment in which we find ourselves, where in the last five years higher education firstly had to hastily shift all teaching to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Bellaby et al., 2020; D'Souza et al., 2022; Reyna, 2022) and then had to reconsider approaches to assessment in response to the emergence of Generative AI technologies (Lodge et al. 2023; MacCallum et al., 2023).). Many interviewees (11 of 16) noted that one unexpected benefit emerging from the pandemic for EdAdvisors was that it made their activities and expertise more visible, shifting attitudes among some academics to people in these roles (Section 7.5). Answers may also be found in concerns about managerialism in the modern neoliberal university, where expectations of continuous growth in productivity combine with perceptions that change is the most visible metric of management activity (Daddow et al., 2023; Ginsberg, 2011; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2022). Interviewees (6 of 16) discussed the importance of demonstrating their value to leaders by showing the *benefits* of their work. Finally, a general ambivalence to learning and teaching practice in parts of higher education in Australia (Brew et al., 2017; Chalmers, 2011; Khan et al., 2018; Meadows et al., 2024), exacerbated by the lack of mandated teacher training for academics, may lead some institutional leaders to believe that

EdAdvisors can contribute to changing these attitudes and enhancing teaching practices (Daddow et al., 2023; Hayes & Jandrić, 2021; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2022; Raffoul et al., 2021).

Synthesis

Views of participants in this study about the ability of EdAdvisors to bring change varies noticeably between roles, both in practice and in the literature. The general tenor of these views was that ADs regard themselves able to directly shape educational practices and, to a lesser extent, technologies, a view which is reflected in literature. Learning designers believe that they contribute meaningfully to change, while ETs are more circumspect about their own contributions, but the contribution of both of these roles to change is either under- or misreported in research. Leaders were widely considered to substantially influence the extent to which EdAdvisors are able to bring change in their work, depending on the leader's understanding of TELT practices and of the work that EdAdvisors do, and the clarity of the leader's vision and communication.

8.3.2 Building Relationships

On the surface, EdAdvisors' work on *building relationships* may be viewed as less impactful than their contributions to *bringing change* in their *support of learning and teaching practices* because it is often less visible. But the complexity of much EdAdvisor work results in a need for effective collaboration with EdAdvisors and stakeholders across many parts of the university (Section 6.3.4). Additionally, institutional power imbalances between EdAdvisors and academics (Section 7.3.3) can mean that EdAdvisors' ability to persuade academics of the value of new approaches to teaching relies heavily on their ability to build relationships of trust with academics (Section 6.3.2). While some interactions between EdAdvisors and academics may not be by choice, where academics are compelled to work with EdAdvisors (Section 6.3.2), the most effective change outcomes were widely viewed to come from voluntary collaboration built on mutual trust and respect (Section 6.3).

Understanding of practices and purpose, and particularly mutual understanding, between EdAdvisors and stakeholders is an essential part of building trust. The findings in this study consistently demonstrate that it is possible for an EdAdvisor's work to be valued more than it is understood (Section 6.5). There was a direct and significant correlation between survey respondents' perceptions of their work being understood and valued across all roles and with all stakeholders (Section 6.5.1). Several interviewees noted the improvements in relationships with all stakeholders when the stakeholder saw the benefits of the work that the EdAdvisor had undertaken for them (Section 6.5). For this reason, questions about EdAdvisors' views of their work being understood and valued underpin this study.

Relationships Between EdAdvisors

EdAdvisors spend more time working with other EdAdvisors than with any other stakeholder group (Section 6.3.4). Professional relationships within and particularly across EdAdvisor roles have rarely been examined in research about third space practitioners. In survey responses about their work being understood or valued by the stakeholders they work with, the highest proportion of EdAdvisors in all roles agreed that EdAdvisors in other roles in their team understood and valued their work, closely followed by EdAdvisors in other roles in other teams (Section 6.5.1). High proportions of survey respondents in each role also reported understanding EdAdvisors in other roles, with no significant differences (Section 6.4.1). This was reinforced by comments from interviewees who noted the importance of *regular contact* (7 of 16 interviewees), and that *role purpose is clear* (9 of 16 interviewees) (Section 6.4.2). The fact that many EdAdvisors have moved between roles, and therefore they have experience of working in the roles of EdAdvisor colleagues was also noted by interviewees as a major factor in their understanding of these roles and their purposes (Section 5.5.1). Good relationships between EdAdvisors in different roles or teams were also noted by interviewees to be supported by having a *complementary purpose* (7 of 16 interviewees) and a *collaborative culture* (7 of 16 interviewees) (Section 6.3.4). Poor relationships

were largely attributed to *institutional politics* (10 of 16 interviewees), and *disagreements about approaches* (5 of 16 interviewees).

Discussion with interviewees also provided some insights into the nature of relationships between specific EdAdvisor roles. While ADs largely felt that their relationships with LDs were positive and collaborative, some LDs described feeling that some ADs gatekept certain activities, such as curriculum design, which created in these LDs a sense that some ADs saw LDs as competitors (Section 6.3.4). There was little discussion about relationships between ADs and ETs, suggesting that these roles interact less often. Relationships between ETs and LDs were generally marked by a respectful recognition of the complementary differences between the roles (Section 6.3.4). These mostly positive relationships between EdAdvisor roles indicate the widespread understanding of the benefits of collaboration in harnessing their diverse skills and knowledge. It is only where practices or priorities overlap or conflict that these relationships can become more strained. This was reported mostly in discussion about interactions between faculty-based and centrally located EdAdvisors, both in these findings (Section 7.6.3) and also in literature which addressed these relationships (Gray, 2015; Han et al., 2023; Veles et al., 2023). In both of these cases, the competing priorities of the EdAdvisors' respective units (central or faculty) were commonly identified as challenges to good relationships, generally best overcome by working to build mutual trust and effective communication (Section 7.6.3).

Relationships with Academics

The relationships that EdAdvisors have with academics are essential for EdAdvisors to achieve much of their purpose in Australian higher education. EdAdvisors' broad agreement that their work was understood or valued by academics was lower overall than it was for their work being understood and valued by EdAdvisors, with no significant differences on this agreement found between EdAdvisor roles (Section 6.5.1). Several aspects of relationships which contribute to building understanding of EdAdvisors among academics were identified in interviews. These

included maintaining *persistent relationships* (11 of 16 interviewees) with *regular contact* between EdAdvisors and academics (10 of 16 interviewees), and these relationships being *voluntary* (4 of 16 interviewees) rather than *imposed* on academics (8 of 16 interviewees) (Sections 6.3.2 & 6.5.2). Also noted in the literature was the importance of academics having confidence that EdAdvisors understand their needs and their practices (Andrews & Lemons, 2015; Myllykoski-Laine et al., 2024; Quinn, 2012), which was not widely discussed by study participants. This most likely reflects the fact that much of the literature recorded the views of academics, while EdAdvisor interviewees in this study were asked about their experiences and may have been reluctant to speculate on the views of academics.

Another key aspect of building relationships was the extent to which EdAdvisors, and particularly their work, was valued by academics. The views of interviewees discussing this issue (10 of 16) aligned closely with literature (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2016; Mueller, 2021) indicating that academics were believed to value the work of EdAdvisors when they saw the benefits of the relationship to their own work (Section 6.5.2). Interviewees also noted the importance of academics being *open-minded* (10 of 16 interviewees) about the ideas that EdAdvisors shared with them (Section 6.3.2). When these arrangements were in place, interviewees reported relationships grounded in *trust and respect* (12 of 16 interviewees) from academics, which were also regarded as beneficial in the literature (D'Souza et al., 2022; Little & Green, 2022; Whitchurch, 2010). When interviewees reported that they and their work was not understood and valued, they instead discussed *resistance* to their support (13 of 16 interviewees), and a *lack of respect* (10 of 16 interviewees) from the academics that they worked with (Section 6.3.2).

Relationships with Leaders

Given the contribution that regular contact has been shown to make to relationship building, it is not surprising that the lowest proportion of study participants agreed that their work was understood by senior leaders with decision-making power about learning and teaching in their

institution (Section 6.5.1). This reflects the busyness of people in these types of leadership roles and the corresponding lack of time available to spend working directly with EdAdvisors. There was no significant difference between roles for this view of leader understanding. Interviewees again attributed *visibility* (5 of 16 interviewees) and leaders *seeing their benefits* (6 of 16 interviewees) to leaders understanding and valuing the work of EdAdvisors (Section 6.5.3). When interviewees discussed being well understood and valued by leaders, they highlighted the leader *championing and protecting the team* (11 of 16 interviewees), *showing trust* (9 of 16 interviewees) and *providing vision* (7 of 16 interviewees) (Section 6.3.3). Interviewees' discussion of their relationships with leaders did not distinguish between relationships with senior leaders of learning and teaching at an institutional level, such as Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Education) and those at faculty level, such as Associate Deans of Education. It is feasible however that institutional leaders may have wider responsibilities and less time to engage with EdAdvisors than faculty leaders would.

Conversely, interviewees' discussion of poor understanding and valuing by leaders differed from that reported previously with other EdAdvisors or academics. Interviewees suggested that leaders' *poor understanding of TELT* (9 of 16 interviewees) and *poor understanding of EdAdvisor work on the ground* (5 of 16 interviewees) played a key part in these issues (Section 6.5.3). This was manifested in what interviewees considered to be *bad decisions* (10 of 16 interviewees), *poor communication* (9 of 16 interviewees) and *a lack of support and trust* (7 of 16 interviewees) (Section 6.5.3). While there is little discussion in the literature about the nature of EdAdvisors' relationships or interactions with institutional leaders, other aspects of literature about these leaders offer insights into factors influencing these relationships. Some of the concerns identified in the literature about the quality of some institutional learning and teaching strategies (Huang et al., 2021; King & Boyatt, 2015; Pechenkina & Liu, 2018; Winslett, 2016) reflect opinions voiced by some interviewees that the leaders who understand and value them less may not have a deep understanding of good TELT practices or the work that EdAdvisors do (Section 6.5.3). Institutional restructures, resulting in regular changes in the leadership of EdAdvisor units, were also widely discussed by interviewees and

in the literature (Fraser & Ryan, 2012; Palmer et al., 2010; White, 2020; Woelert & Stensaker, 2024) and could act to disrupt relationships by reducing opportunities for EdAdvisors to have contact with leaders and academics or for leaders to appreciate the benefits of EdAdvisors' work. General implications of the findings in this study suggest that trust and respect is very much a two-way street and that EdAdvisors' relationships with senior leaders can be strongly influenced by their perceptions of the expertise and experience of the leader and by the time they are able to spend with that person.

Synthesis

While EdAdvisors support learning and teaching in a variety of ways, many of their contributions to these practices involve bringing change. Whether this is change in an academic's understanding of good teaching practice, or the provision of pedagogically sound learning resources or education technologies, change is a constant. This change commonly requires positive collaborations with academics built on trust, respect and, ideally, mutual understanding, and, as such, much of EdAdvisors' hidden work revolves around building relationships. This study addresses RQ2: *How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?* through examining the changes that EdAdvisors bring and the centrality of relationship building to bringing change.

While EdAdvisors in all roles report the importance of being able to draw on their knowledge of relationship building, negotiation and conflict resolution, and collaboration (Section 5.4.1) as they undertake activities in the relationship and care work practice bundle (Section 5.3.1), their ability to build relationships depends on a complex range of factors, some beyond their control. These factors are examined further in the next section.

8.4 Inhibitors and Enablers of EdAdvisors' work

Factors influencing EdAdvisors' efficacy and impact in their work are examined in this section in answering the penultimate question of this study — RQ3: *What are the enablers and inhibitors of EdAdvisors' work?* The three categories of practice arrangements identified by Kemmis

et al. (2014) (social-political, cultural-discursive, and material-economic) provide a framework to examine the factors which inhibit and enable EdAdvisors' practices and their overarching purpose of supporting learning and teaching.

8.5 Social-Political Arrangements

Social-political arrangements describe the ways that relationships between people involved in a practice contribute to the effectiveness of that practice (Kemmis et al., 2014) (Section 2.2.3). In terms of the relationships between academics, leaders and EdAdvisors, these arrangements include the factors which shape how well the roles of EdAdvisors are understood (role clarity) and trusted (credibility), and, crucially, their institutional status (academic-professional divide).

8.5.1 Role Clarity

Nearly half of survey respondents in all roles in this study identified the *lack of clarity around EdAdvisor roles* as inhibiting their impact on learning and teaching (Section 7.1), and half of survey respondents identified *clarifying and standardising EdAdvisor roles* (Section 7.2) as a potential enabler. These were the second-most frequently selected inhibitors and enablers by all EdAdvisors, and while half of respondents did not select them, they nonetheless highlight that role clarity is widely regarded as important by EdAdvisors. Understanding of EdAdvisor roles influences whether stakeholders know what support is available to them, who provides this support, and provides confidence that these EdAdvisors have the expertise that they need (Dean et al., 2019; Fraser & Ling, 2014). This section discusses the findings pertaining to the clarity of EdAdvisor roles, including how they are understood and the impact of position titles on this understanding.

Understanding of EdAdvisor Roles

The importance of understanding the roles, purpose and practices of EdAdvisors has already been examined in Section 8.3.2 in terms of the contribution that it makes to relationship building. Understanding is also central to EdAdvisors' credibility among academics, as it offers academics

confidence that the EdAdvisor working with them has the expertise to support their practice. For this reason, it is explored further in this section. High proportions of the participants in this study reported that they were confident in their understanding of their role and those of other EdAdvisors (Section 6.4.1). This is most likely attributable to EdAdvisors often working in units with EdAdvisors in other roles (Section 5.6.2) as well as there being fluidity between these roles which means that many EdAdvisors have worked in other EdAdvisor roles (Section 5.5.1). EdAdvisors' views about whether their work was understood by academics and leaders (Section 6.5.1), however indicate that these roles may not be as clear to those stakeholders. Interviewees noted that this understanding was often dependent on the amount of time that academics and leaders spent with EdAdvisors (Section 6.5.2).

Understanding of the three EdAdvisor roles discussed in this study is relatively consistent across the literature (Sections 3.4, 3.5, 3.6), with some minor exceptions in terms of the extent to which ETs undertake learning design activities (Dickerson, 2024; McAvinia, 2006; Watermeyer et al., 2022). Most of the literature does not set out to provide comprehensive definitions of EdAdvisor roles: instead, it commonly examines an aspect of the EdAdvisor's practice and the ways that it contributes to goals tied to supporting learning and teaching practices (Beckmann, 2018; Deaker et al., 2016; Godbold et al., 2022; Graham et al., 2023; Shurville et al., 2008; Zeivots et al., 2023). A subsection of EdAdvisor research has sought to document the activities and competencies associated with roles (Aitchison et al., 2020; Gilmore & Nguyen, 2024; Green & Little, 2016; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021; Hinze et al., 2022; Ritzhaupt & Kumar, 2015), to inform the design of professional development for EdAdvisors. The understanding that institutional leaders or academics (excluding those who research EdAdvisors) have of EdAdvisor roles is less often discussed in the literature, although attitudes towards and understanding of professional staff in general are more widely explored (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Caldwell, 2024). In general, it is common for academics to develop understanding of EdAdvisors as a result of working with them. This reflects observations by

interviewees that having regular contact with academics is a key part of building relationships and developing trust with academics (Section 6.3.2).

Part of understanding an EdAdvisor role is understanding how it differs from other EdAdvisor roles and how it is similar. While aspects of the practice and purpose of the three EdAdvisor roles are generally consistent between institutions and countries, the notable overlaps between EdAdvisors' practices identified in this study (Section 5.3.1), as well as overlaps in knowledge areas (Section 5.4.1) and purposes (Section 6.2) mean that the distinctions are not always clearcut. These overlaps may blur the definitional boundaries between EdAdvisor roles when roles are understood in terms of these characteristics. Additionally, interviewees reported that EdAdvisors in the same roles may serve different purposes (12 of 16 interviewees) depending on whether they are working in central or faculty-based units, which again could reduce the clarity of these roles (Section 7.6.3). The value of these overlaps between EdAdvisor roles may ultimately be greater than any confusion that they may cause about the nature of the roles, so changing or standardising these roles is undesirable. Another aspect of EdAdvisor roles which affects the understanding of these roles is more easily addressed however: that of position titles.

Position Titles

Although survey respondents self-identified as one of three EdAdvisor roles (Section 5.2.1), they also held one of 60 distinct position titles (Appendix F). While many of these position titles were only slightly different to the academic developer, educational technologist and learning designer roles used in this study (for example educational designer instead of learning designer), this lack of consistency in nomenclature illustrates a simple way that the lack of clarity around EdAdvisor roles is manifested. One noteworthy result from the findings relating to position titles was that while there were substantial variations between position titles and roles overall, a significantly higher proportion of LDs (79%) in this study held position titles which aligned with their role than was the case for ETs

(39%) or ADs (33%). LDs in this study also reported identifying with their role more than ADs or ETs did (Section 5.2.1).

The problems of the inconsistent use of EdAdvisor position titles have been long discussed in the literature (Geis & Klaasen, 1972; Mitchell et al., 2017; Simpson, 2025) but little progress has been made on finding consensus on uniform terminology for these titles. Melling's work (2019) made it clear that position titles which weren't meaningful negatively impacted higher education staff and made them feel that their work wasn't "understood, recognised or valued" (p. 50). Reasons offered for these inconsistencies in EdAdvisor position titles varied, with interviewees noting that sometimes institutional politics dictated where certain position titles could be used (Section 6.3.4) while Simpson (2025) suggested that position titles may also be used to denote seniority (such as educational designers being senior to learning designers) or simply reflect the personal tastes of the leaders who assign them. In other potential scenarios, Simpson noted that titles may be selected strategically, so that a leader looking to cut costs may be less likely to fire one of three education innovation designers than they would one of 35 education designers. Unclear or inconsistent EdAdvisor position titles were not always regarded as problematic by study participants — for example, one interviewee preferred the ambiguity that her title provided as it allowed her greater scope to engage in a wider range of projects (Section 6.5.4). This highlights an important contradiction in the issue of EdAdvisor role clarity: being better understood through concise role definitions can contribute to better relationships, but role ambiguity can offer EdAdvisors greater variety of activities.

8.5.2 EdAdvisor Credibility

When considering factors which influence the social-political arrangements that underpin the work of EdAdvisors with their stakeholders, credibility was reported to play an important role in building trust (Section 6.5.4). While this broadly involves demonstrating expertise in academic practice (Little & Green, 2022), different approaches are needed to demonstrate credibility to

different stakeholders. These can include showing shared understanding of higher education teaching practices and needs, and professionalisation or accreditation of EdAdvisors (Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Mori et al., 2022).

Relevant Experience and Understanding of Higher Education Teaching

A recurring theme in discussions with all of the AD interviewees in this study was the value of *Shared understanding* with academics (Section 7.2.5). This understanding was described as showing that the ADs “understand what they [academics] do and what the role is and what the tensions are” (AD Nicolas). This shared understanding included having prior experience as a university lecturer (Section 5.5.1) as well as in academic research. While shared understanding was most commonly tied to holding an academic position or having past higher education teaching experience, some interviewees in professional positions noted that their own non-university research had also created opportunities to demonstrate shared understanding with academics (Section 7.1.5). It is worth noting that when survey respondents were asked to select factors that inhibited their impact on learning and teaching, only around one-third of EdAdvisors in any role selected *Perceptions that EdAdvisors don’t understand academics* (Section 7.1.1). The widely held view of academics in the literature however was that EdAdvisors need to understand scholarly culture and practice (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Keppell, 2007; Leece & Jacquet, 2017; Sutherland-Harris et al., 2025) and that EdAdvisors holding professional positions (Keppell, 2007) or not using sufficiently scholarly language (Leece & Jacquet, 2017) do not necessarily have sufficient understanding of academics and their practices. This disparity between the views of EdAdvisors and academics about whether EdAdvisors understand academics sufficiently highlights the need to build EdAdvisors’ credibility by developing this kind of knowledge.

Given the centrality of qualifications to the operation of universities, one might assume that holding any qualification would be regarded as representing some degree of expertise in a field. High proportions of EdAdvisors in this study reported holding qualifications in education (ADs 85%, ETs

54%, LDs 81%) (Section 5.4.2), notably more than the literature indicates that academics in Australian higher education hold. For example, Bexley et al. (2011) reported that 23.7% of academics held a teaching qualification, with 51.5% having undertaken a short course about university teaching. Unlike any other part of the education sector in Australia, there are no formal requirements for higher education lecturers to hold teaching qualifications (Beckmann, 2018; Department of Education Australia, 2024). Despite this gap in qualifications in education, the literature indicated that EdAdvisors' qualifications in education tend not to contribute to perceptions of their educational expertise held by academics or leaders (Andrews & Lemons, 2015; Myllykoski-Laine et al., 2024; Quinn, 2012).

Professionalisation / Accreditation

A second theme pertaining to EdAdvisor credibility is that of professionalisation and/or accreditation of these roles. This could take a number of forms, including the establishment of a professional association with standardised descriptions of roles, oversight of qualifications for entry to the field, and adherence to professional values (Ryttberg & Geschwind, 2019). Survey respondents in this study held different views about the value of this, with significantly more ETs (75%) than ADs (33%) identifying *Professional accreditation for EdAdvisors* as an action which could enable them to have greater impact in their work; LDs were found in the middle, on 57% (Section 7.2). One possible explanation for this difference in perception between roles could be that many ADs already enjoy a higher level of credibility with academics as a result of their own academic classification and did not perceive value in being more explicitly identified as a third space practitioner. This explanation is supported by discussion of AD interviewees of being accepted more quickly by the academics that they work with due to their academic roles (Section 6.3.2), which could potentially be reduced if they instead presented themselves as a third space practitioner. Issues of professionalisation and accreditation were also discussed widely by interviewees (12 of 16) (Section 6.5.4), who arrived at a broad consensus that it would be likely to add to the professional

credibility of people in these roles, even if the form this would take may not yet be clear. Discussion of professionalisation in the literature echoed these sentiments that formalising EdAdvisor roles could bolster their credibility as a profession (Gilmore & Nguyen, 2023; Mori et al., 2022; Wagner, 2021). Other than a sizable body of recent literature focusing on the development of qualifications for LDs (Abblitt et al., 2023; Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2021; Strain & Inglis, 1990), however, few tangible suggestions were provided about the form that professionalisation or accreditation might take. Little and Green (2022) proposed a credibility framework for educational developers, composed of benevolence, integrity, ability, credentials, academic activities and academic mindsets. This framework indicated that the best way for EdAdvisors to demonstrate credibility to academics is to hold an academic position.

8.5.3 Academic-Professional Divide

The final factor in the social-political arrangements category is the divide between academic and professional staff in higher education. This divide was reported by study participants to influence many aspects of the work of EdAdvisors in both academic and professional positions (Section 7.3) and literature indicates that it directly affects their collaborative working relationships with the academics that they support (Caldwell, 2022; Veles et al., 2023; Wohlmuther, 2008).

The Academic-Professional Divide as an Inhibitor of the Work of EdAdvisors

When survey respondents in this study were asked to identify inhibitors of their work, nearly twice as many professional EdAdvisors (69%) selected the *academic-professional staff divide* as did academic EdAdvisors (35%) (Section 7.3.1). This significant difference in these views highlights the divergent experiences of EdAdvisors in academic and professional positions and suggests that academic EdAdvisors are less negatively impacted by the divide. It is worth noting that the discussion among interviewees of *the academic-professional divide* related to the relationships

between EdAdvisors and academics, and that very few EdAdvisors (2 of 6 ADs, 1 of 4 LDs) discussed any *academic-professional divide between EdAdvisors* (Section 7.3.3).

The most common theme among interviewees discussing how the divide inhibits their work was that it creates a *hierarchy* between academics and professional staff (12 of 16 interviewees) (Section 7.3.3). While only two of the five academic interviewees discussed this hierarchy, 10 of 11 of the professional interviewees raised it, again highlighting the differences in views about the impact of the divide between academic and professional staff. Interviewee responses offer some insights into the practical impacts of the divide on EdAdvisors in professional positions. Of the 10 of 16 interviewees noting a *lack of respect* (Section 6.3.2) in discussion of poor relationships with academics, seven of the 10 worked as ETs or LDs in professional positions. While the *lack of respect* was not reported exclusively by professional EdAdvisors, it was more common among them and presented an immediate barrier to building relationships with academics. Discussion in the literature about respect and the academic-professional divide commonly related to academics not acknowledging the specialist expertise of the professionals working with them (Bossu et al., 2020; Veles et al., 2023) but it also included broader questioning of the value of the contributions that professional staff make to the university.

Interviewees noted that the academic-professional hierarchy means that holding a professional position in an Australian university can also have material impacts, ranging from employment agreements stating that professional staff offices are not required to have windows, to having fewer opportunities to attend conferences for professional development (Section 7.3.3). While all interviewees in this study discussed their entry to EdAdvisor careers (Section 5.5.1), fewer discussed their career options as professional staff. Those who discussed their career options noted that there were fewer opportunities to progress for professional staff (Section 7.3.3) and that any work to accredit EdAdvisors should include building new career progression structures (Section 6.5.4). This echoed discussion in the literature about the need to consider new employment categories for third space practitioners to overcome the limitations of the academic-professional

dichotomy (Baré et al., 2021; Graham 2014; Veles et al., 2023). Survey results also showed a significant difference between how well ADs are paid in comparison to ETs and LDs (Section 5.6.1), with ADs in this study, who are more likely to hold academic positions, being better compensated overall. In establishing a hierarchy between staff, the academic-professional divide can inhibit the work of EdAdvisors by diminishing their credibility and status in higher education institutions.

Trust and Shared Understanding as an Enabler of the Work of EdAdvisors

For academic EdAdvisors, holding an academic position was regarded as a valuable enabler of their work. As previously noted, interviewees reported that EdAdvisors in academic positions were able to build trust with academics because of their *shared understandings* of academic practices which came from their past academic work (Section 7.3.3). This *shared understanding* was discussed by all six ADs but only one of six ETs and two of the four LDs. One professional EdAdvisor discussed the ways that their own engagement in research had enhanced their relationships with academics, but this experience was not widely reflected among other professional EdAdvisors. The value of trust built on shared understanding in relationships between EdAdvisors and academics was also a common theme in the literature, where the general consensus was that academic EdAdvisors are more trusted by academics because of the shared understanding (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Keppell, 2007; Leece & Jacquet, 2017; Sutherland-Harris et al., 2025). One possible indicator of the trust that academics have for EdAdvisors is that significantly more professional EdAdvisors (41%) than academic EdAdvisors (17%) selected *Perceptions of EdAdvisors as tools of management* as an inhibitor of their work. Academics considering academic EdAdvisors to have *shared understandings* of their work may also believe that academic EdAdvisors share common values and prioritise the academics' needs over the priorities of central management (Section 7.6.3).

Holding an academic position was not the only way for EdAdvisors to build relationships of trust with academics however, and both academic and professional EdAdvisors (12 of 16 interviewees) discussed developing *trust and respect* as part of their good relationships with

academics (Section 6.3.2). This was emphasised in a wide range of literature describing positive collaborative working relationships between academics and EdAdvisors in both classifications (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2018; Han et al., 2023; Mueller et al., 2022; Veles et al., 2023). These positive relationships were commonly developed as a result of the EdAdvisors and academics collaborating on projects for prolonged periods of time and identifying shared values.

Contextual Factors and The Academic-Professional Divide

Despite the differences associated with the academic-professional divide, academic and professional EdAdvisors did not report having significantly different views of their work being understood or valued by other EdAdvisors, senior leaders or academics — with the single exception of significantly fewer academic EdAdvisors (57%) reporting that academics value their work than did professional EdAdvisors (71%) (Section 6.5.1). This result is counter-intuitive given the findings that academic EdAdvisors enjoy elevated status with academics, but one possible explanation found in the literature is that some academics value the discipline of education less than they do other scholarly disciplines (Khan et al., 2018; Meadows et al., 2024; Wardak et al., 2024), and this may shape their views of academic EdAdvisors who practise the education discipline. It could alternately relate to the type of work that academic EdAdvisors do with academics, particularly when that work involves the less well-received compliance-enforcing elements of their work on the *quality management of teaching* (Section 5.3.1).

The impact of contextual factors such as these on the academic-professional divide deserves greater attention. In an in-depth examination of the divide in a New Zealand higher education institution, Wohlmuther (2008) reported that the divide was viewed least as a concern by academic leaders and faculty-based professional staff and viewed most as a concern by central academic support staff and central professional services staff. In the findings of this study, however, no significant difference was found between the number of central participants in this study who identified the academic-professional divide as an inhibitor (Section 7.6.1) and those who were

faculty-based. This contrast between Wohlmuther's findings and those in this study may reflect cultural differences between higher education in Australia and New Zealand or different approaches taken to data collection. It should be noted that three-fifths of respondents in either central or faculty areas selected the academic-professional divide as an inhibitor of their work, the highest proportions of any of the inhibitors for EdAdvisors working in central or faculty-based units.

Another small but noteworthy difference between EdAdvisors in this study was that significantly more ETs and LDs reported that their direct manager held a professional position than ADs did, indicating that ADs are more likely to have an academic managing them (Section 5.6.1). This may relate to university policies around reporting lines for academic and professional staff. A small group of interviewees (5 of 16) observed that the nature of hierarchies between academics and professional staff varied depending on *local culture* in institutions (Section 7.3.3), commenting that they had found it to be more prevalent in research-intensive Group of Eight universities than other institutions with less focus on research.

Engagement in Academic Research

A noteworthy exception to the issue of the academic-professional divide for EdAdvisors may be found in their practice of undertaking academic research. While only 8% of ETs and 6% of LDs in this study reported holding academic positions, 33% of ETs and 21% of LDs reported undertaking academic research as a regular part of their practice. If we assume that all ETs and LDs in academic positions in this study undertake research, this suggests that an additional 25% and 15% respectively in professional positions in this study do the same. Coupled with approximately 40% of professional staff ADs in this study who reported undertaking academic research, higher education conventions that academic research is only conducted by academic staff would appear to be more flexible when it comes to EdAdvisors. This may reflect the tendency of third space roles to traverse traditional academic-professional boundaries (Whitchurch, 2008); however, it could equally indicate an imperfect understanding of academic research as a practice by study participants.

It is important to remember that neither academics nor EdAdvisors are monoliths, all holding the same values, views, priorities and experiences. Good collaborative working relationships between people in these groups rely on building trust that comes from clarity of purpose and identity, establishing credibility, and providing confidence that EdAdvisors understand the practices and needs of academics. These social-political arrangements underpin the practices of EdAdvisors and educators.

8.6 Cultural-Discursive Arrangements

Cultural-discursive arrangements in Australian higher education provide important contextual insights into the factors influencing how and why learning and teaching practice is valued and undertaken. These arrangements include understanding of good pedagogical practice but also range across wider questions of the purpose of higher education and what is needed to ensure that universities work effectively as organisations. When the stakeholders who work with EdAdvisors hold differing views of what should be prioritised in the university, EdAdvisors' values and purpose can be called into question, affecting their relationships with the academics that they support and the EdAdvisors' efficacy.

8.6.1 Attitudes to Learning and Teaching

This section explores the ways that attitudes towards learning and teaching in higher education impact the ability of EdAdvisors to affect change. It examines whether a hierarchy exists between the pedagogical and technological activities and purposes of different EdAdvisor roles, and the effect that this can have on their contributions to learning and teaching practices.

Teaching Versus Research/Discipline Practice

Interviewees in all roles discussed the impact that *attitudes to learning and teaching* (9 of 16 interviewees) on their efficacy (Section 7.5). While many interviewees reported working with academics who cared deeply about the learning experiences of their students, others noted that

some academics were satisfied with focusing on their disciplinary knowledge and research and regarded “the knowing how to teach bit as unimportant” (ET Barbara) (Section 6.3.2). While the literature provides many examples of academics and EdAdvisors enthusiastically collaborating to provide students with better learning experiences (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2018; Bugden & Mok, 2023; Han et al., 2023; Thornley & Schwenger, 2023), it also reports important reasons why some academics can focus less on the learning and teaching aspect of their scholarly practice. These chiefly revolve around career progression opportunities being closely tied to research performance. While there is growing awareness in higher education of the need to raise the status of educational practice, the lower standing of learning and teaching in comparison to that of research currently acts as an inhibitor of academics’ meaningful engagement with EdAdvisors to support learning and teaching practices (McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Whitchurch 2023).

The Role of Leaders in Shaping Attitudes

Senior leaders in learning and teaching in higher education such as Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Education) and Associate Deans (Education) hold a substantial amount of responsibility for shaping attitudes towards learning and teaching through the strategic initiatives they drive and the standards they develop. This contribution of leaders was widely discussed in interviews, with interviewees valuing the contribution that good leaders make to attitudes about learning and teaching when they *Provide vision* (Section 6.3.3) (7 of 16 interviewees) through their strategic initiatives. Interviewees also valued the willingness of leaders to *trust* EdAdvisors (9 of 16 interviewees) to find the most effective ways to implement their initiatives. These kinds of initiatives are discussed widely in the literature and include establishing teaching innovators communities of practice, supporting creative risk-taking in teaching, and rethinking the criteria considered in academic promotions (Meadows et al., 2024; Winslett, 2016).

Conversely, interviewees also described the challenges they faced when leaders drove learning and teaching initiatives which EdAdvisors believed involved *bad decisions* (Section 6.3.3) (10

of 16 interviewees) and demonstrated either a *poor understanding of TELT practice* (9 of 16 interviewees) or *poor understanding of EdAdvisors' work on the ground* (5 of 16 interviewees). A substantial body of literature echoed these concerns from the perspective of academics, who reacted negatively to such initiatives due to perceived encroachments on academic freedom, and questions about whether the approaches were appropriate for their disciplinary context and whether initiatives were focused more on cutting costs than improving teaching (Daddow et al., 2023; Ginsberg, 2011; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2022; Raffoul et al., 2021). Institutional leaders carry a great responsibility for the strategic direction of learning and teaching practice in universities, and the initiatives which EdAdvisors support to enable this strategic direction can greatly shape attitudes to learning and teaching among academics. These attitudes, in turn, influence the collaborative working relationships between academics and EdAdvisors which directly impact EdAdvisors' ability to contribute to learning and teaching practices.

Pedagogical-Technological Hierarchy among EdAdvisors

One aspect of attitudes around learning and teaching which is less widely examined in the literature, but which emerged repeatedly in the findings relates to the ways that pedagogically and technologically oriented role, activities, and knowledge are valued in higher education. The work of ADs has previously been shown to be largely pedagogically focused (Section 5.3.3), while that of ETs is more technological and LDs' work combines the pedagogical and the technological. In discussing the pedagogical-technological nature of EdAdvisor practices (Section 7.4.1), interviewees raised issues including that *technological activities are less respected* (8 of 16 interviewees), and LDs particularly (3 of 4 interviewees) complained of being regarded more as *technical support* by academics than as EdAdvisors able to support learning and teaching practice. Literature about Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) typically supports the idea that pedagogical knowledge can be more valued in higher education than technological knowledge, which may relate to SoTL research being more widely undertaken in higher education than research into the

technological aspects of educational technologies (Chick, 2024; Schönwetter, 2025; Simmons et al., 2021).

Several interviewees discussing differences between pedagogical and technological practices in their roles observed that technologically oriented practices were sometimes not as well respected as pedagogically oriented practices (Section 7.3). In responses to the survey, half of ETs (50%) and LDs (48%) selected *division between technology and pedagogy focused roles* as an inhibitor of their work, while only one quarter of ADs (24%) selected this (Section 7.1). Together, these findings suggest that pedagogical practices and knowledge may be more valued in higher education, and that this may be a source of friction amongst some EdAdvisors. If the technologically oriented work of EdAdvisors such as ETs and LDs is less valued by some people in higher education, this could reduce the credibility of ETs and LDs, making it harder for them to build trust with academics. This difference in the way that pedagogical and technological practice is valued may also have material impacts on some EdAdvisors. Interviewees in ET roles reported being paid less than LDs despite undertaking work that they believed was at a similar level of complexity (Section 7.4.1). While no significant difference was found in the survey results between ETs and LDs relating to distribution across the pay scale (Section 5.6.1), significant differences were found between both ADs and ETs and ADs and LDs, with ADs earning more in both instances.

Fawns' (2022) idea of *entangled pedagogy*, where technology and pedagogy are inextricably connected in contemporary teaching, resonated with interviewees in this study and was the most discussed theme (11 of 16 interviewees) in relation to pedagogy and technology. It was discussed more by ETs (4 of 6 interviewees) and LDs (4 of 4 interviewees) than ADs (3 of 6 interviewees), but the broad consensus was that, while there are different aspects of EdAdvisor work which are more technological or pedagogical, the practices of EdAdvisors in all roles increasingly involve both.

Attitudes toward learning and teaching in higher education influence EdAdvisors' practice and ability to contribute to learning and teaching practice in several ways. These attitudes can shape the nature and quality of the institutional educational strategies and initiatives that EdAdvisors are

tasked with delivering as well as academics' understanding of teaching and learning practices, the *sayings* of these practices, which guide how well academics value and choose to engage with EdAdvisors and with the initiatives. The focus of the EdAdvisors' activities, whether pedagogical, technological or covering both areas, can also further affect the extent to which academics trust EdAdvisors to support their teaching practices.

8.6.2 Relationships Between Central and Faculty Areas of the University

Significantly more EdAdvisors in this study reported working in centrally based units (62%) than faculty-based units (29%). Remaining respondents reported working in *other* types of units, generally a combination of central and faculty-based (Section 5.6.2). Within their institutions, a majority of survey respondents noted that there was a mixture of faculty and central teams (71%), a significantly higher proportion than those working in institutions where there were only central units (22%) or only faculty units (2%). No significant differences were found between EdAdvisors working in central or faculty-based units in terms of their reported ability to contribute to decision-making about educational practices or technologies, or in the extent to which they agreed that their work was understood or valued by their stakeholders (Section 7.6.2). Unlike the significant difference noted in Section 7.3.1 between academic and professional EdAdvisors about whether *Perceptions of EdAdvisors as tools of management* inhibited their work, there was no significant difference on this issue between survey respondents from central or faculty teams (Section 7.6.1). While this may create an impression of relative harmony between central and faculty-based EdAdvisors, discussion from the interviewees identified key points of contention between these groups.

Central-Faculty Tensions

Major themes in responses from interviewees supported the idea that *Central serves the big picture* of the university (11 of 16 interviewees), *Faculty serves local needs* (11 of 16 interviewees) and that *Competing priorities* between these two areas (12 of 16 interviewees) underpin many of

the tensions between EdAdvisors in faculties and central areas (Section 7.6.3). This aligns with much of the discussion of relationships between central and faculty areas of university in the literature (Chugh et al., 2023; Huda et al., 2017, Yerk-Zwickl, 2022), which primarily focused on centrally driven implementations of educational technologies and initiatives to change pedagogical practice. An important difference between previous literature and this study was that much of the literature examined the experiences and views of academics in relation to these changes rather than the views of EdAdvisors. Some of the academic authors' reported views were more representative of their own faculty-based perspectives and centred around their individual needs as practitioners, and so at times did not always address the broader nuances of the operational needs or priorities of central areas of institutions. This sometimes resulted in criticism of the values and intentions of central areas (Deacon et al., 2022; Stiles & York, 2006). Interviewees in this study were more conscious of the differing needs of other areas, and their concerns about interactions between central and faculty-based areas focused more on aspects of the execution of initiatives, such as *imposed and uncollaborative approaches to projects* (8 of 16 interviewees) or, to a lesser degree, *unsustainable practices* (4 of 16 interviewees) within faculties (Section 7.6.3). Interviewees also provided many examples of *good central-faculty relationships* (8 of 16 interviewees) and their characteristics, including respecting contextual knowledge of the institutional purpose of an initiative held by central EdAdvisors and knowledge of the needs of specific academics held by faculty EdAdvisors. This emphasises an important difference between EdAdvisors and some academics, in that the work of EdAdvisors frequently involves collaborations with stakeholders across the university and this can require them to develop a broad understanding of the complicated ways in which these institutions operate overall. The insight to be drawn here is that collaborative approaches which actively involve stakeholders from both central and faculty areas can support EdAdvisor work to support learning and teaching practices.

8.7 Material-Economic Arrangements

The ability of EdAdvisors to contribute to learning and teaching practice is also influenced by material-economic arrangements in the higher education ecosystem such as organisational structures and organisational stability. These factors influence EdAdvisors' ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with each other, as well as the extent to which their work is adequately resourced by their institution. This section examines the nature and impact of these arrangements on the work of EdAdvisors.

8.7.1 Organisational Structures in Higher Education

Significant differences were found between survey respondents in central (48%) and faculty-based (25%) teams who selected *How Edvisor units are structured in the organisation* as an inhibitor (Section 7.6.1), suggesting that some aspect of faculty-based structures may be more effective in supporting the work of EdAdvisors. The closer working relationships between academics and faculty-based EdAdvisors discussed by interviewees (Section 7.6.3), which may result from being physically located more closely to academics, is likely to be an important part of this. The difference between central (42%) and faculty-based (25%) EdAdvisors who selected *Changing the way EdAdvisor units are organised* as an enabler was non-significant but nonetheless echoes the inhibitor result. The main themes discussed by interviewees related to the *Centralised and Decentralised* nature of EdAdvisor units (14 of 16 interviewees) (Section 7.6.4) and the changes in the nature of these structures that occurred regularly as organisational models were adjusted in response to changing institutional requirements (Ellis & Goodyear, 2019). A recurring concern related to being *siloed*, that is, isolated from other parts of the institution. Discussion of *Good structures* (3 of 16 interviewees) and *Bad structures* (6 of 16 interviewees) indicated that comparatively flat organisational structures which minimised hierarchies were felt to be beneficial, although more interviewees described actually working in isolated units with rigid hierarchies.

These challenging models for EdAdvisor units and organisational structures were widely discussed in the literature, particularly *hub* or *hub and spoke* models where a central team exists alongside faculty-based teams which may either be managed by the faculties or be made up of EdAdvisors from the central unit embedded in an office in the faculty building (Ellis et al., 2018; Fraser & Ryan, 2012; Wright et al., 2018). Interviewee AD Acia described the latter of these models as “little islands that nobody talks to”, highlighting potential flaws in this particular approach. Other organisational structures in central or faculty areas involved EdAdvisors in different roles belonging to a single team, often in a teaching and learning centre, where they are physically co-located with each other, or they may work in distinct teams based on their role purpose in separate locations from EdAdvisors in other roles (Hoessler et al., 2023; Lotti et al., 2022; Mihai et al., 2025; Wright, 2023). Findings in this study relating to relationships (Section 8.3.2) have demonstrated the importance of regular contact in building understanding between EdAdvisors as part of a collaborative culture. This reflects the preferred model for learning design units identified by Drysdale (2021) in one of only a few articles found which compared organisational structures for EdAdvisor units in American universities. He found that a centralised model reporting to academic leaders and comprised of EdAdvisors in different roles provided the greatest degree of empowerment and efficacy for enabling EdAdvisors’ work. Whether this would apply in Australian higher education is yet to be examined.

8.7.2 Organisational Stability

Two frequently discussed topics by interviewees in this study related to the *Impact of restructures* (9 of 16 interviewees) and *Change of leader* (7 of 16 interviewees) (Section 7.6.4). Both of these events negatively affected EdAdvisors’ efficacy because they changed the nature of their relationships with EdAdvisor colleagues when they were moved to different units or different parts of the institution, created stress about their employment, and were often tied to changing responsibilities and strategic goals in their institutions. The replacement of leaders also sometimes

resulted in the loss of positive relationships with effective leaders that had been built over time and the transition periods between leaders raised concerns about whether the EdAdvisors would be supported in the same ways that they had been previously. These destabilising changes were sometimes frequent, creating an overall culture of uncertainty which stifled decision-making (Section 7.6.4). These observations mirror common discussion in the literature about restructures and change in these areas of higher education in terms of their frequency and disruptiveness (Fraser & Ryan, 2012; Palmer et al., 2010; Woelert & Stensaker, 2024). Regular changes to, or abandonment of, major learning and teaching initiatives resulting from organisational restructures can undermine work on future initiatives as it leads academics to question the value of committing time to work with EdAdvisors on such projects (Hoppes & Holley, 2014; Huang et al., 2021; Macfarlane, 2024; Madikizela-Madiya, 2018). The causes of organisational instability in higher education are many and varied and extend far beyond the capability of EdAdvisors to resolve. Some authors proposed alternative organisational structures for higher education institutions (Doyle & Brady, 2018; Drysdale, 2021) but, overall, few solutions were suggested. While all of the types of practice arrangements discussed can inhibit or enable EdAdvisors' work, material-economic arrangements can be some of the most challenging for EdAdvisors to navigate as there are sometimes few opportunities to use their expertise to work around these kinds of institutionally controlled factors. Designing effective organisational structures and providing stability to support effective collaboration in educational initiatives is the responsibility of institutional leaders. When this includes meaningful consultation of affected staff, it can have positive impacts on the work and collaborative relationships of EdAdvisors.

8.8 Summary

This chapter has examined the findings of this study in the context of existing research literature using a framework informed by practice theory and practice architectures to address four key questions about EdAdvisors in Australian higher education.

RQ1: Who Are EdAdvisors in Australian Higher Education?

EdAdvisors are skilled education and technology practitioners who work in three main roles to support learning and teaching practices through a variety of activities tied to their specialisation and their location in the higher education institution. EdAdvisors hold positions as academic developers, educational technologists or learning designers and are classified as either academic or professional staff. Academic developers are often found in academic positions where they focus on more pedagogically oriented aspects of university learning and teaching practice by building academics' capability, contributing to curriculum design and scholarly research, undertaking quality management of teaching, and nurturing institutional learning and teaching culture. They commonly come to this role after working as an academic in other areas of higher education, a background which helps build relationships with the academics that they support. Educational technologists are more often professional staff and focus on the use, management, evaluation, and implementation of the education technologies and resources used to support learning and teaching practices. They also contribute to building the capability of academics to use these technologies in pedagogically appropriate ways. Learning designers in this study are most commonly found holding professional positions and working across both the pedagogical and technological domains. LDs contribute to supporting learning and teaching practices by working with academics to design and develop learning activities and resources, as well as building the capabilities of academics to teach online. ETs and LDs often enter their respective positions from other areas of education or technology, bringing diverse experience to their roles. The responsibilities and activities of EdAdvisors in all roles can overlap significantly, as these roles and position titles are often not consistently applied or understood across or within institutions. Many EdAdvisors have also worked in more than one kind of EdAdvisor role, further highlighting the fluidity of these roles.

RQ2: How do EdAdvisors contribute to learning and teaching practices?

While EdAdvisors undertake a variety of practices for different stakeholders, they all primarily work to support learning and teaching practices in their institutions, drawing on their professional expertise and prior experience in pedagogy and technology. Differences between EdAdvisor roles mean that EdAdvisors focus on different facets of this overarching aim, which they achieve by supporting three major purposes: building capability in academics, ensuring compliance with institutional policies and requirements, and bringing change. These purposes are linked to the nature of the individual EdAdvisor roles and also to the EdAdvisors' own beliefs and values, which form teleoaffective structures that underpin and motivate their practices. Learning designers in this study, for example, prioritised improving student learning experience over supporting teaching staff. So, while the LDs' practices largely involve working with academics, they were more likely to consider their contribution to learning and teaching practice to be student-focused.

EdAdvisors' work can be considered in terms of the intended outcomes of their practices. Building capability involves providing formal and informal training, as well as developing support resources to empower academics to teach or use technologies more effectively. This area of activity is a priority for ADs, though it is also undertaken by ETs and LDs. Ensuring compliance involves EdAdvisors supporting the quality standards of their institution for learning and teaching practice. This is a priority for ADs and LDs and can lead to tensions with academics if the academic views this activity as positioning EdAdvisors to serve the interests of the institution over those of the academics. All EdAdvisor roles ultimately contribute to bringing change to learning and teaching practices and this purpose is a vital part of how the contributions of EdAdvisors are measured. The prevalence of education technology initiatives in higher education means that ETs tend to regard bringing change as an important part of their purpose, alongside supporting teaching staff, however LDs and ADs also contribute to bringing change in their work on course design uplift projects and in nurturing learning and teaching culture respectively.

Although bringing change may constitute a substantial part of EdAdvisors' work to support learning and teaching practices, their status in many university hierarchies can mean that they have little authority to effect the change that they are tasked with delivering. Many of the initiatives that EdAdvisors support commonly cross the boundaries of academic and professional domains and involve many different stakeholders. As such, EdAdvisors recognise that relationship building is one of the most important aspects of their practice, and high proportions of EdAdvisors in all roles in this study noted that this is a commonly undertaken activity and a knowledge area widely used by them. They described the importance of regular contact, trust and demonstrating the benefits of their work in building understanding with and being valued by the people they work with as they contribute to learning and teaching practices in their institutions.

RQ3: What are the Inhibitors and Enablers of EdAdvisors' Work?

Many factors in the higher education ecosystem affect the ability of EdAdvisors to serve their purpose of supporting learning and teaching practices. These factors are categorised here using the lens of Kemmis et al.'s (2014) social-political, cultural-discursive, and material-economic practice arrangements. Among the social-political arrangements, which influence the relationships needed for effective collaboration, a lack of understanding of the nature and purpose of EdAdvisor roles can diminish academics' and leaders' confidence that someone in a particular EdAdvisor role is able to help them with specific issues. This is most often exacerbated by the inconsistent use of position titles for people in these roles, as well as overlaps in purpose and practice between roles. Overall, however, EdAdvisors in this study valued this liminality in purpose and practice because the overlaps can contribute to more effective collaboration between EdAdvisors in different roles and offer greater variety in their work than standardised roles might. The extent to which EdAdvisors are understood, and perhaps more importantly are perceived by academics to understand academics' needs and practices, is notably influenced by the academic or professional classification of their position. The hierarchical divide between academic and professional staff was widely noted to affect

the ease with which EdAdvisors were able to build relationships of trust with academics. This was reported as an inhibitor of work by professional EdAdvisors, but academic EdAdvisors noted the value of shared understanding of scholarly practices in bolstering their relationship building. The extent to which the academic-professional divide impacted relationship building was also reported by some study participants to vary depending on the culture of the institution, with suggestions that the divide is starker in research-intensive universities.

Cultural-discursive arrangements reflect the discourse around practices and contribute to the quality and level of engagement from academics and leaders with much of the work that EdAdvisors undertake. Attitudes about the importance of learning and teaching can vary greatly in higher education, depending on the values, interests and priorities of the diverse array of academics and institutional leaders. These attitudes were widely reported by study participants to contribute to the willingness of academics to engage with learning and teaching initiatives supported by EdAdvisors. Clear and thoughtful strategic visions from leaders for learning and teaching were widely discussed as enabling the work of EdAdvisors. Competition between the priorities of university central leadership to make the institution financially viable and those of faculty-based academics to emphasise scholarly research and education as a public good was identified as presenting challenges to the work of EdAdvisors. EdAdvisors from central units, tasked with implementing institutional learning and teaching initiatives, reported that faculty academics sometimes questioned whether the motivations of these activities were financial or educational. These concerns affected academic engagement with these initiatives, inhibiting the EdAdvisors' work and the trust underpinning their relationships with these academics. Study participants reported that these issues weren't insurmountable but required thoughtful and inclusive approaches to collaboration on such projects.

Material-economic arrangements in higher education include the organisational structures within which EdAdvisors are employed. These structures include centres for teaching and learning and whether EdAdvisors in different roles are co-located in a shared space or work more independently. These arrangements can impact the efficacy of EdAdvisors by shaping the ease with

which they can collaborate and communicate with other EdAdvisors on and about learning and teaching initiatives. Well-designed organisational structures described by interviewees encouraged collaboration across EdAdvisor roles and tended to reduce hierarchies. Poor structures however isolated EdAdvisors in silos and made sharing communication challenging. Changes to organisational structures and also in leadership was also a common discussion topic among study participants. Changes in leadership particularly often coincide with changes in strategic direction, meaning that major learning and teaching initiatives may be deprioritised or abandoned. As these kinds of initiatives often involve large investments of time, this kind of instability can demotivate the EdAdvisors who have worked on them and discourage academics from committing to future projects due to concerns about their likely longevity.

This chapter has examined the contributions of the findings of this study to addressing three of the four questions of this research. These questions collectively have informed our understanding of this study's overarching research question *How do diverse Educator Advisor roles function and contribute to Australian higher education?* In the next chapter I will offer a set of recommendations for institutions and EdAdvisors which addresses RQ4: *What approaches can be taken to enhance opportunities for EdAdvisors to contribute to learning and teaching?* and consider further steps for researching these vital questions.

9. Conclusion

This final chapter draws on the discussion to offer recommendations addressing the final research question — *What approaches can be taken to enhance opportunities for EdAdvisors to contribute to learning and teaching?* (Section 9.1). It goes on to outline the contributions of this study to knowledge (Section 9.2), the limitations of the study (Section 9.3), and concludes with directions for further research (Section 9.4).

9.1 Recommendations

The findings of this study have indicated that there are several possible approaches which may be employed to enhance the opportunities that EdAdvisors have to contribute to learning and teaching. These approaches are presented in terms of the practice arrangements which they support.

9.1.1 Social-Political

Undertake Work to Clarify Position Titles for EdAdvisor Roles in the Sector

Half of the EdAdvisors in this study identified *Clarifying and standardising Edvisor roles* as an action which could potentially enable their impact on learning and teaching (Section 7.2). In a profession which is reliant on building relationships (Section 8.3.2), ensuring that EdAdvisor roles are understood is vital. The practices and purpose of EdAdvisor roles differ depending on their contexts (for example, central or faculty-based), meaning that standardising roles may not be possible or desirable (Section 8.2.7). However, working to clarify and standardise the position titles used across Australian higher education for EdAdvisor roles, which are widely used inconsistently between and within institutions (Section 8.5.1), may be more feasible. While this would require significant engagement with many stakeholders across the sector, previous work relating to standardising the

use of terminology for professional staff in Australian higher education (Graham, 2012) has shown that this is possible.

Promote the Contributions of EdAdvisors

Interviewees in this study discussing relationship building noted the value of academics and leaders being aware of the benefits of working with EdAdvisors (Section 8.3.2). If this is not currently being undertaken in universities, identifying opportunities to more actively communicate with academic and other staff about the purpose and value of EdAdvisors working in the institution may be beneficial. Offering secondments in CTLs for academics to undertake SoTL research could also expose them to the practices of EdAdvisors. Opportunities for recognition of EdAdvisors' contributions could also be found by expanding eligibility for institutional learning and teaching awards and innovations funding schemes, wherever EdAdvisors are not currently included. Gaps identified in the literature about the contribution of ETs (Kala & Ladha, 2023; Simpson et al., 2021) and LDs (Altena et al., 2019; Bugden & Mok, 2023) to institutional educational initiatives also present an opportunity for researchers to undertake richer research by being more mindful of the involvement of EdAdvisors in such projects.

Explore Options for Professional Accreditation or Credentialling of EdAdvisors

EdAdvisors in professional positions in this study reported difficulties at times in establishing their credibility as practitioners (Section 8.5.2), which affected their ability to build relationships with some academics and leaders. Exploring options for accreditation of EdAdvisors, for example through a professional association, could serve to enhance their credibility by establishing professional standards and giving the profession official standing. Other options could include institutions supporting wider engagement by EdAdvisors in schemes such as the Advance HE / Higher Education Academy fellowships, which are offered in 28 higher education institutions in Australia (Advance HE, 2024) and are well regarded in the sector (Beckmann, 2018). While 58% of ADs in this study hold one of these fellowships, only 21% of ETs and 30% of LDs reported holding one (Section 5.4.2).

Bolster Professional EdAdvisors' Understanding of Academic Practices

Academic EdAdvisors have reported that their shared understanding of academic practices and needs contributes greatly to their relationship building with academics (Section 8.5.3). Conversely, many examples can be found in the literature of academics expressing concern that professional EdAdvisors lack the understanding of academics' work necessary to effectively support them (Fraser & Ling, 2014; Keppell, 2007; Leece & Jacquet, 2017; Sutherland-Harris et al., 2025). Close to half of the EdAdvisors in this study identified greater EdAdvisor involvement in research as a potential enabler of their work (Section 7.2). The literature indicates that when professional EdAdvisors have collaborated with academics on research (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2018; Gravett & Winstone, 2018; Regan & Graham, 2018), their collaborative working relationships have been strengthened. Institutions, academics and professional EdAdvisors may all benefit from further exploring opportunities for such collaborations. Other actions that professional EdAdvisors might consider to extend their understanding of scholarly practice could include engaging more with scholarly literature to inform problem solving in their own practice, disseminating the findings of these experiences, and exploring opportunities to apply existing scholarship to new contexts.

Foster Stronger Relationships between EdAdvisors and Academics

Participants in this study noted that having regular, voluntary contact with academics was a key element of relationship building (Section 6.3.2). This echoes the literature, which emphasised the value of collaboration (McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Veles, 2022) as well as building relationships through informal interactions outside regular work activities including coffee catchups and shared professional networks (Bayerlein & McGrath, 2016; Grayson & Syska, 2023; Mueller, 2021). More opportunities could be created within institutions for this kind of networking between EdAdvisors and academics to foster mutual understanding and relationship building. Similarly, more opportunities for this kind of cross-role engagement between ADs, ETs and LDs outside of conventional working relationships may also help to mitigate institutional silos (Section 7.6.4).

9.1.2 Cultural-Discursive

Build Greater Understanding of the Value of Both Pedagogically Oriented Practice and Technologically Oriented Practice

EdAdvisors in technologically oriented roles (ETs and LDs) were twice as likely to report the *division between technology and pedagogy focused roles* as an inhibitor of their work as were those in pedagogically oriented roles (ADs) (Section 7.1). Interviewees also discussed the impact of technological activities being less respected on their work (Section 7.4.1). This suggests a need for a shift in attitudes toward technological practices and knowledge in higher education, which may be supported by promoting the kind of more nuanced critical discussion of the relationships between pedagogical and technological practices and their value to learning and teaching found in the work of Fawns (2022) and MacKenzie et al., (2022).

More Nuanced Educational Change Initiatives

A common concern expressed about centrally-driven change initiatives in learning and teaching is that they often use one-size-fits-all approaches which don't always meet the needs of teaching in specific discipline areas (Section 8.6.2). Better consultation and communication could be employed in such initiatives to mitigate views that they can be *imposed and uncollaborative* (Section 7.6.3). Interviewees described collegial and respectful collaborations which drew on the contextual knowledge and expertise of EdAdvisors from central and faculty-based units in positive examples of such projects. Additionally, more consideration could be given to the ways that central and faculty-based EdAdvisors collaborate during these initiatives to maximise the specialised knowledge and experience that each is able to contribute to the work and ensure ongoing support for the change (Chen et al., 2023; Henderson et al., 2022; Macfarlan & Hook, 2022; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

9.1.3 Material-Economic

Implement Mixed Role EdAdvisor Units

Study participants noted the negative impacts of disconnection from other EdAdvisors when they worked in separate silos (Section 7.6.4) and elsewhere noted the contribution that working together made in building mutual understanding of their roles and practices (Section 8.3.2). Drysdale (2021) found that an optimal model for EdAdvisor units was one that was comprised of EdAdvisors in different roles. Co-locating EdAdvisors of different roles in a unit such as a centre for teaching and learning may foster greater understanding and collaboration as a result of their ongoing interaction.

Investigate the Viability of an Additional Employment Category for Third Space Staff in Australian Higher Education

EdAdvisors in professional positions in this study reported limitations in their career paths (Section 7.4.1), which often also restricted their ability to engage in scholarly research and thus build understanding of the practices of academics (Section 8.5.3). Some researchers in the literature have proposed new organisational classifications for third space practitioners, separate to existing academic or professional classifications (Baré et al., 2021; Graham, 2014; Veles et al., 2023). Exploring the feasibility of such classifications could lead to opportunities for professional EdAdvisors (and other third space workers) to engage in teaching and research activities and address issues around career progression.

9.2 Key Contributions to Knowledge

This study has added important new ideas and information to the body of knowledge relating to the field of educator advisors in higher education. It has also provided new insights into theory, research methodology, and practice in that domain.

Research field:

- The study introduces the term EdAdvisors, which represents three roles that collectively work to support and enhance learning and teaching.
- The work explores these three EdAdvisor roles (AD, ET, and LD) in parallel, providing a rare holistic overview of their interrelationships.
- The study also proposes a richer model for describing and differentiating the three EdAdvisor roles, one which incorporates their purpose, practices and capabilities and accommodates contextual variations within roles.

Theory:

- The analysis uses practice bundles to simplify understanding and discussion of EdAdvisor practices and skills, replacing the long lists of practices and capabilities commonly used in research in this field.
- Higher education third space categories of boundedness (Whitchurch, 2008) are shown to appear more relevant for understanding the practices undertaken by EdAdvisors than for categorising the EdAdvisor roles themselves.

Practice and Policy:

- The new model for describing EdAdvisor roles can support sector-level efforts to standardise roles and ensure consistent use of titles within and between institutions, to clarify roles.
- The value of co-locating EdAdvisors with peers in parallel roles is noted for building collaboration and understanding.
- The impact of relationships between central and faculty-based areas of higher education institutions is discussed, relationships which have not widely been examined in research, but which can be important in shaping engagement with learning and teaching initiatives.

9.2.1 Research Field

An important contribution of this study is establishing the idea of EdAdvisors, a collective term for people working with academics and leaders to support and enhance learning and teaching practices in one of three complementary roles — academic developer, educational technologist, and learning designer. The work of EdAdvisors focuses specifically on putting arrangements in place which immediately contribute to academics' teaching activities as well as the learning activities of students. These range across building the capability of academics to teach effectively by expanding their understanding of good pedagogy and the use of technologies, developing learning activities and resources, and ensuring that education technology systems are available and fit for purpose. While EdAdvisors are one part of a wider ecosystem for supporting learning and teaching in higher education, they play an essential role in directly supporting educator activity in the classroom and online. Almost all of the research in this field focuses on the experiences or practices of individual EdAdvisor roles, yet considering the interconnected practices of these roles collectively offers important insights into how learning and teaching practice is supported in higher education by highlighting the diversity of approaches used.

Applying this collective focus to EdAdvisors has also enabled the development of robust descriptions of the three EdAdvisor roles which highlight their shared and distinct purposes, their overlapping practices and areas of expertise, and accommodate contextual differences within roles. For example, there are notable differences in the purposes and practices of an educational technologist who works in a central unit and focuses on large education technology implementations and one who works in a faculty-based unit and focuses more on technical support. For another example, any analysis of a role in context needs to be able to take into account whether an academic developer holds an academic position where scholarly research can be part of their duties or is employed in a professional position where they have fewer opportunities to engage in research. Previous literature describing the roles of ADs, ETs and LDs has often lacked this nuance.

The EdAdvisor role descriptions in this study provide a set of characteristics which enable people to match ambiguously titled or defined EdAdvisor positions with the AD, ET, or LD roles in this study based on common practices and purposes. Given the widely acknowledged challenges posed by the lack of clarity around EdAdvisor roles historically, these role descriptions informing RQ1 represent another substantial contribution to knowledge in this field. The use of practice bundles in these descriptions further contributes to understanding of these roles by categorising practices and skills which have frequently been presented more as lengthy shopping lists of everything that EdAdvisors do and know without connecting them to their purpose. In doing so, this research has also helped to address some gaps in understanding in the literature, such as the involvement of LDs and ETs in building capability and the contributions of ETs to implementing education technologies in higher education.

9.2.2 Theory

This study used Nicolini's suggested approach to practice theory of "deliberately switching between theoretical sensitivities" (Nicolini, 2013, p. 213). In doing so, it focused largely on the way EdAdvisors' teleoaffective structures (Schatzki, 2002) — their values and purpose — guided their practice, and it used the concept of practice bundles (Shove et al., 2012) to categorise the practices of different EdAdvisor roles. In defining these practice bundles, the idea of timespace (Schatzki, 2002) — where and when a practice occurs — provided an additional level of refinement in analysing their component practices. The practice architectures of Kemmis et al. (2014), which describe the factors and conditions which enable practices, provided a valuable framework for analysing and discussing the findings of this study. This approach to the use of elements of practice theory and practice architectures represents a useful contribution to knowledge of this study.

Given the importance of Whitchurch's work on the higher education third space (2008) in discourse around roles and practices in the sector, it was expected that the categories that she had devised to describe third space workers — bounded, blended, cross-boundary and unbounded —

would inform this study's understanding of EdAdvisor roles. While study participants identified as third space practitioners, they did not associate strongly with these categories, leading to the conclusion that these categories may be more beneficial in the examination of EdAdvisor practices in given contexts than in informing description of the roles themselves. Exploring the impact of practice in specific contexts on the third space positionality of EdAdvisors may offer a valuable contribution to this theory.

9.2.3 Methodology

This study contributed to methodology in its use of an abductive approach which enabled the development of research instruments which were informed by literature and my existing knowledge of common practices of EdAdvisors, as well as some of the inhibitors and enablers of practice, but which also enabled study participants to provide unexpected responses. Rather than relying on more inductive approaches commonly used in mixed-methods research, this approach drew on my experiences of working in EdAdvisor roles in the sector over the last 20 years, in addition to the broadened understanding that I have developed in engaging with the TEledvisors Network community.

The approach used in the semi-structured interviews of sharing a PowerPoint slide with the interview questions in the Zoom meetings and then revealing a selection of prompts for interviewees to select from was one that I have not read about in other studies. This proved to be an effective way to encourage additional contributions from interviewees while also respecting their agency in the interview process.

9.2.4 Practice and Policy

Several of the recommendations in this study have the potential to contribute both to enhancing the practice of EdAdvisors and to the development of more effective policies relating to their recruitment and employment. Given the longstanding issues identified with the inconsistent

application of position titles, exploring options to standardise their use in Australian higher education could be a major contribution as this action has the potential to provide a greater sense of professional identity in EdAdvisor roles and simplify recruitment and workforce planning both for EdAdvisors and institutions (Melling, 2019).

Findings about the nature of relationships among EdAdvisors and also between EdAdvisors and academics could inform relationship building by encouraging a deepening of understanding of academic practices in EdAdvisors. This study also provides insights into the advantages and disadvantages of certain organisational structures for employing EdAdvisors which may help to inform decision-making about the nature of EdAdvisor units in institutions.

Finally, discussion of operational challenges of implementing educational initiatives between central and faculty areas in this study could lead to more nuanced approaches which recognise and draw on contextual expertise among central and faculty-based EdAdvisors and more effectively consider the concerns of faculty academics impacted by such changes.

9.3 Limitations

While all possible care was taken to undertake rigorous and trustworthy research in this study, a number of factors must be acknowledged as potential limitations. These are discussed here and some ways to potentially mitigate them in future research are considered in section 9.4.

Sample Selection Predominantly From the ASCILITE TEledvisors Network Community

While membership of the TEledvisors Network is free and easily accessible for ADs, ETs and LDs from Australasia and further afield, early career EdAdvisors may nonetheless be unaware of or less inclined to engage with such professional communities. Only 9% of the overall survey respondents were aged below 35, and only 11 of 109 respondents were employed below a HEW7 level on the pay scale. More targeted efforts might be made in future studies to encourage younger participants outside of the TEledvisors Network community. It is also feasible however, given results

that indicate EdAdvisor roles are often second careers (Section 5.5.1), that this age distribution accurately reflects the community.

Researcher Positionality as an EdAdvisor

My positionality in this research as someone who has worked as an EdAdvisor in various roles for more than 20 years has led to numerous conversations with my supervisory team about how my experiences and views could influence my analysis of the findings. In taking an abductive approach to this research, this experience has helped to inform the research design and analysis, however this has added a need to be mindful of the risks of my positionality influencing any stage of the research process. In working to mitigate this, I maintained a reflective journal during data collection and analysis and the question of my positionality as an EdAdvisor has been a regular topic of discussion in meetings with and feedback from my supervisory team. The fact that the abductive approach is intended to support “producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 167) has also served to mitigate my positionality as an EdAdvisor by fostering my openness to letting the findings shape the direction of the discussion.

Lack of Data From Academics and Leaders

The work of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education is highly interconnected with that of their various stakeholders, particularly academics and institutional leaders. This work is also substantially relationship based, meaning that in focusing solely on the experiences and views of EdAdvisors, only part of the story is being told. This omission of academics’ and leaders’ perspectives does not substantially affect findings relating to EdAdvisors’ own identity and practices, but it does mean that discussion of relationships between EdAdvisors, academics and leaders is one-sided given that EdAdvisors’ understanding of factors which motivate academics and leaders may be incomplete. The decision to centre the experiences and views of EdAdvisors was taken deliberately, both for practical reasons and also to offer an alternative to the prevalence of research centring the

views of academics about EdAdvisors in the literature (Macfarlane, 2011; Selwyn, 2013; Sturm, 2022) . I may undertake further research to address the views and experiences of academics and leaders in regard to similar questions to those in this study.

Lack of Observational or Ethnographic Data

Observational or ethnographic approaches to data collection are common in the social sciences and may have added depth to understanding of EdAdvisors' practices and relationships in the workplace. These were considered in the early stages of this research, however the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the practical challenges of undertaking this study part-time while working full-time meant that this approach was not considered feasible. These types of time-intensive localised approaches to data collection may also not have captured the variability in EdAdvisor roles and practices that was identified using the mixed-methods approach taken in this research of a survey and interviews with members of the broader EdAdvisor community in Australia.

The Sample of Participants in the Study

Two further limitations with the sample of participants in this study are discussed in Section 4.8: a higher representation of learning designers than educational technologists or academic developers, and the potential for survey respondents to miscategorise their own role among the three EdAdvisor roles and. Approaches taken to mitigate these limitations are discussed in that section.

9.4 Further Research

The work undertaken in this study has suggested a number of promising directions for further research to more fully explore the nature and purpose of EdAdvisor roles, their place in and contributions to higher education, and the factors which shape their efficacy.

Research into the attitudes, experiences, and perspectives of institutional leaders of learning and teaching and those of academics who work with (or choose not to work with) EdAdvisors would

complement this study and could contribute greatly to finding approaches to enhancing the efficacy and impact of EdAdvisors in Australian higher education.

Overlaps between different EdAdvisor roles in terms of the practice bundles they engage in offer opportunities to explore how multiple EdAdvisors contribute to different purposes and to find more effective approaches to collaborate in meeting these purposes. This could also involve more observational research undertaken at multiple sites which use different organisational structures.

Research into the relationship between one's identity as an academic and one's identity as an EdAdvisor, particularly in the case of academic developers, may offer insights into lower levels of identification reported with the AD role by study participants and expand understanding of the academic-professional divide in Australian higher education.

Finally, further research could be undertaken to validate the descriptions of EdAdvisor roles developed in this study which could potentially inform wider work in the sector aiming to standardise EdAdvisor position titles.

9.5 Reflection

There is a line in the Apple TV+ program *Severance*, "The work is mysterious and important" (Drake & McArdle, 2022), which has resonated with me over the last few years. It applies equally to EdAdvisors and to this doctoral research. The importance of the work of EdAdvisors is clear, for the myriad reasons discussed in this thesis. Undertaking this research into EdAdvisors has also been important as it has helped to broaden understanding of the work, purpose and contribution of people working in this field.

The work is also mysterious. While the practices, purpose and contributions may be better understood now than they have been in the past, partially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant switch to online learning, many aspects of EdAdvisors' work and roles remain murky to those who don't engage with them directly. Entering the world of scholarly research has certainly felt mysterious at times as well. While I have already thanked people in the acknowledgements

section, it bears repeating that I am incredibly grateful to those who have patiently guided me on my journey into this new land: my supervisors Lina Markauskaite, Peter Goodyear, Jessica Frawley, Danny Liu and Kalervo Gulson, as well as to all of the people who have been welcoming, kind, and generous with their time and advice. I look forward to whatever comes next. Maybe a book about educational technologists. Or a rest. Probably a rest.

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11. Appendices

Appendix A

Ethics Approvals

Approval for this study was granted by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee on 27/02/2020 (Project 2019/895). Modifications to interview and survey questions were subsequently approved on 19/07/2022.



Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 27 February 2020

Prof Peter Goodyear
 School of Education and Social Work Research Operations; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
 Email: peter.goodyear@sydney.edu.au

Dear Peter,

The University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has considered your application. I am pleased to inform you that after consideration of your response, your project has been approved.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Project No.: 2019/895
Project Title: The role and value of 'edvisors' in Australian Higher Education
Authorised Personnel: Goodyear Peter; Markauskaite Lina; Simpson Colin;
Approval Period: 27/02/2020 to 27/02/2024
First Annual Report Due: 27/02/2021

Documents Approved:

Date Uploaded	Version Number	Document Name
12/02/2020	Version 1	Text of email to institution HR requesting data
12/02/2020	Version 1	Data collection exemplar
13/10/2019	Version 1	Participant Information Statement
13/10/2019	Version 1	Recruitment communications
13/10/2019	Version 1	Consent form
13/10/2019	Version 1	Survey
13/10/2019	Version 1	Interview questions

Condition/s of Approval

- Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal.
- An annual progress report must be submitted to the Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and on completion of the project.
- You must report as soon as practicable anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
 - Serious or unexpected adverse events (which should be reported within 72 hours).
 - Unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
- Any changes to the proposal must be approved prior to their implementation (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate *immediate* risk to participants).
- Personnel working on this project must be sufficiently qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or adequately supervised. Changes to personnel must be reported and approved.
- Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, as relevant to this project.

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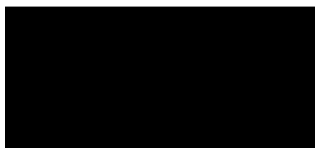


- Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the relevant legislation and University guidelines.
- Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, applicable legal requirements, and with University policies, procedures and governance requirements.
- The Ethics Office may conduct audits on approved projects.
- The Chief Investigator has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research and is responsible for ensuring all others involved will conduct the research in accordance with the above.

This letter constitutes ethical approval only.

Please contact the Ethics Office should you require further information or clarification.

Sincerely,



Associate Professor Mark Arnold
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC 2)

The University of Sydney of Sydney HRECs are constituted and operate in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2007\)](#) and the NHMRC's [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2007\)](#)



**Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 19 July 2022

Prof Kalervo Gulson
School of Education and Social Work Research Operations; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Email: kalervo.gulson@sydney.edu.au

Dear Kalervo,

Your request to modify this project, which was submitted on 13/06/2022, has been considered.

After consideration of your response to the comments raised, this project has been approved to proceed with the proposed amendments.

Protocol Number: 2019/895
Protocol Title: The role and value of 'edvisors' in Australian Higher Education

Annual Report Due: 27/02/2023

Documents Approved:

Date Uploaded	Version Number	Document Name
09/07/2022	Version 4	Interview consent form clean
09/07/2022	Version 4	Interview Questions V4 CLEAN.docx
09/07/2022	Version 4	Main Survey questions V4 CLEAN.docx
09/07/2022	Version 4	PIS clean
09/07/2022	Version 4	Recruitment Communications V4 CLEAN.docx

Please contact the ethics office should you require further information.

Sincerely,



Associate Professor Laura Ginters
Chair
Modification Review Committee Chair (MRC 3)

The University of Sydney of Sydney HRECs are constituted and operate in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(2018\)](#) and the NHMRC's [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#)

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Appendix B

Pilot Survey Questions

Q1 General survey information

This survey is part of a research study (2019/895) about the way that learning and teaching educator advisors (referred to as 'edvisors' in this study) in **Australian Higher Education** work collaboratively with academics and institutional management. The term edvisors is used as an umbrella term for people working as learning designers, education technologists, academic developers and in other similar roles.

The study is being carried out by Colin Simpson, PhD candidate, The University of Sydney. This is taking place under the supervision of Peter Goodyear, Professor of Education; Lina Markauskaite, Professor of Learning Sciences; and Dr Jessica Frawley.

Complete information about this study can be found in the Participant Information Statement

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Colin Simpson by email – csim8899@uni.sydney.edu.au

If you have concerns about the study, please contact the manager, Ethics administration – human.ethics@sydney.edu.au

- Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to be in the study will not affect your relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney now or in the future.
 - You can withdraw from the study at any time.
 - Personal and institutional information about you that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely. Information about you will only be told to others with your permission, except as required by law.
 - The results of this study may be published, but these publications will not contain your name or any identifiable information about me.
-

Q2 Electronic consent: Please select your choice to the two questions below. You may print a copy of this consent for your records Clicking "Yes" indicates that you have read the participant information and agree that:

Q3 You work in an 'advisor' type role

Yes

No

Q4 You consent to take the survey

Yes

No

Q5 Information about you

Q6 Age:

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65+

Q7 Gender identification

Woman

Man

Non-binary / gender diverse

My gender isn't listed. I identify as:

Prefer not to say

Q8 Is your current role:

- Casual by the hour
 - Fixed term contract (Part-time)
 - Fixed term contract (Full-time)
 - Permanent/ongoing (Part-time)
 - Permanent/ongoing (Full-time)
-

Q9 How many institutions are you currently employed by?

- 1
 - 2
 - 3 or more
-

Q10 Which institution is your main current employer?

Q11 What is your current role title in this institution?

Q12 Your current role is classified as:

- Academic
 - Professional
 - Other _____
-

Q13 What pay level is your current role classified as:

- Academic level A
 - Academic level B
 - Academic level C
 - Academic level D
 - Academic level E
-

Q14 What pay level is your current role classified as:

- HEW 1 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 2 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 3 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 4 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 5 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 6 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 7 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 8 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 9 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 10 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
-

Q15 What pay level is your current role classified as:

Q16 Is the organisational team you work for considered to be part of:

- A faculty/college
- A central division
- Other _____

Q17 What is the name of the organisational level unit that you work for? (e.g. Education Innovation Office, Centre for Learning and Teaching etc.)

Q18 Which discipline area is your unit a part of? (e.g. Science, Arts, Law etc.)

Q19 Which part of the central division of your institution is your unit part of? (e.g. IT, Portfolio of Deputy Vice Chancellor Education etc.)

Q20 Is the total length of your current contract:

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- More than 1 year but less than 2 years
- More than 2 years

Q21 How long have you been employed in **your current role**?

- Years _____
- Months _____

Q22 How long have you been employed at **your current institution**?

- Years _____
- Months _____

Q23 Please list your post-secondary qualifications that you believe are relevant to your role (one per line)

Q24
Perceptions of advisors



Q25 In one or two sentences, what do you believe the main purpose and activities of your current role are?

Q26 Select the **most common activities** performed by people in **each** role type (It is ok to select the same skills for multiple roles)

Activity	Role types		
	Academic Developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Advising / consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis / evaluation of educational resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity	Role types		
	Academic Developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Analysis / evaluation of education technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis / evaluation of teaching practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing teaching strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouragement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning activity design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning material development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oral communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stakeholder management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity	Role types		
	Academic Developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Support resource development (e.g. how-to guides)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Troubleshooting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q27 Select the **main types of knowledge** for **each** role type that you believe people in these roles use the most. (It is ok to select the same types of knowledge for multiple roles)

Knowledge area	Roles		
	Academic developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Assessment methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Best use of learning technologies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Knowledge area	Roles		
	Academic developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Blended learning techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom-based technology integration techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cognitive learning theory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current and emerging learning and teaching practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current and emerging learning technologies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current practice in Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Face to face learning and teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formative / summative evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General IT systems and processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Knowledge area	Roles		
	Academic developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Institutional policies (IP / Copyright)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional policies (Privacy / security)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional policies (Teaching / assessment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning design models and principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negotiation and conflict management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online learning and teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pedagogical theory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scholarly practices and culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology affordances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q28 Is your direct manager classified as:

- Academic staff
- Professional staff

Q29 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Q30 Your direct manager understands the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q31 Edvisors in other roles in your institution understand the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q32 Academics in your institution understand the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q33 Managers outside your unit understand the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q34 Your direct manager values the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q35 Edvisors in other roles in your institution value the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q36 Academics in your institution value the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q37 Managers outside your unit value the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q38 Which of these role types do you believe most closely aligns with your role?
(Disregarding actual differences between your title and the listed role)

- Academic Developer
 - Education Technologist
 - Learning Designer
-

Q39 Which professional organisations are you a member of, if any?

- AEEE (Australasian Association for Engineering Education)
 - ACS (Australian Computer Society)
 - Advance Higher Education (Higher Education Academy)
 - AITD (Australian Institute of Training and Development)
 - ALT (Association for Learning Technology UK)
 - ASCILITE (Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education)
 - ASCILITE TELeDvisors Special Interest Group
 - ASCILITE Learning Design Special Interest Group
 - CAUL (Council of Australian University Librarians)
 - CAULLT (Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching)
 - CPSU (Community and Public Sector Union)
 - HERDSA (Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia)
 - HERDSA Academic Development Special Interest Group
 - ICDE (International Council for Open and Distance Education)
 - NTEU (National Tertiary Education Union)
 - ODLAA (Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia)
 - OLC (Online Learning Consortium)
 - Other (please list)
-

Q40 Do you have any specific feedback about the questions or design of this survey?

Q41 Please share anything else that you would like to add.

Q42 Are you willing to be interviewed and/or help provide further information (e.g. permitted institutional information such as strategic plans or organisational charts) relating to this research?

- No
- Interview
- Further information

Q43 Email address for further contact

Appendix C

Final Survey Questions

Q1 General survey information

This survey is part of a research study about the way that learning and teaching educator advisors (referred to as 'edvisors' in this study) in **Australian Higher Education** work collaboratively with academics and institutional management. Completing the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes. The size of some questions means that you may find it easier to complete on a desktop or laptop than a mobile device.

The term edvisors is used as an umbrella term for people working as learning/education designers, education technologists, academic developers and in similar roles. The work of edvisors includes (but is not limited to) supporting educational practice and the use of educational technologies and can include designing and building curriculum, learning resources and activities, evaluating and implementing educational technologies, running professional development workshops and training, and providing advice.

In this survey, I use three main terms to refer to advisor role types. These are Academic Developer, Education Technologist and Learning Designer. Edvisors across these role types may have many different titles (e.g. Education designer instead of Learning designer). This survey is more about your perceptions of these role types and this field than it is about specific titles used in your institution.

Higher Education is defined in this study as any educational institution in Australia that offers qualifications at AQF Level 6 (Associate Degree) or higher.

The study is being carried out by Colin Simpson, PhD candidate, The University of Sydney. This is taking place under the supervision of Kalervo Gulson, Professor of Education; Lina Markauskaite, Professor of Learning Sciences; and Dr Jessica Frawley. (University of Sydney Human Ethics project number 2019/895)

Complete information about this study can be found in the Participant Information Statement. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Colin Simpson by email – csim8899@uni.sydney.edu.au

If you have concerns about the study, please contact the manager, Ethics administration – human.ethics@sydney.edu.au

- Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to be in the study will not affect your relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney now or in the future.
- You can withdraw from the study at any time.
- Personal and institutional information about you that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely. Information about you will only be told to others with your permission, except as required by law.
- The results of this study may be published, but these publications will not contain your name or any identifiable information about you.

Q2 Electronic consent: Please select your response to the two questions below. You may print a copy of this consent for your records. Clicking “Yes” indicates that you have read the participant information and agree that:

Q3 You work or have worked in an ‘advisor’ type role in an Australian Higher Education institution (see above for definitions)

Yes

No

Q4 You consent to take the survey

Yes

No

Q5 Information about you

Q6 Age:

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65+
-

Q7 Gender identification

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary / gender diverse
- My gender isn't listed. I identify as:

- Prefer not to say
-

Q8 Your current role is classified as:

- Academic
- Professional
- Other _____
-

Q9 Is your direct manager classified as:

- Academic staff
- Professional staff
- Other _____
-

Q10 Is your current role:

- Casual
 - Fixed term contract
 - Permanent/ongoing
-

Q11a What pay level is your current role classified as:

- Academic level A
 - Academic level B
 - Academic level C
 - Academic level D
 - Academic level E
-

Q11p What pay level is your current role classified as:

- HEW 1 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 2 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 3 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 4 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 5 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 6 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 7 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 8 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 9 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
 - HEW 10 (Higher Education Worker or local equivalent)
-

Q11o What pay level is your current role classified as:

Q12 Approximately how long have you been employed in **your current role**?

Years _____

Months _____

Q13 Approximately how long have you worked in advisor type roles **in total**? (In any sector, not just Higher Education)

Years _____

Months _____

Q14 Approximately how long have you worked in institutions that offer Higher Education qualifications **in total**?

Years _____

Months _____

Q15 Please list any post-secondary qualifications that you hold that you believe are relevant to your role (one per line)

Q16 Please list any professional accreditations that you hold that you believe are relevant to your role (one per line) (e.g. CMALT, HEA fellow etc.)

Q17 Information about you at work

Q18 What is your current (or most recent) job title in an advisor role?



Q19 Which of these activities do you do most often in your work? (Select up to 3)

- Academic research
- Curriculum design
- Evaluation of education technology
- Evaluation of learning resources
- Evaluation of teaching practice
- Implementation of education technology
- Learning activity design
- Learning resource development
- Technical support
- I don't do any of these activities

Q20 How strongly do you agree with the following statements about these different role types that can be classified as 'advisors'?

Q20A I feel confident in my understanding of the Academic Developer role

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q20E I feel confident in my understanding of the Education Technologist role

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q20L I feel confident in my understanding of the Learning Designer role

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q21 Which of these role types do you believe most closely aligns with your role?
(Disregarding any differences between your title and the listed role type)

- Academic Developer
 - Education Technologist
 - Learning Designer
-

Q22 How strongly do you identify with the [role selected in Q21] role?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

0 = not at all, 100 = absolutely



Q23 **Information about where you work** Please be reminded that any information you provide will be de-identified and you will not be identifiable in any research outputs from your responses.

Q24 Which institution is your main current employer?

- Australian Catholic University
- Australian College of Applied Professions
- Australian College of the Arts (Collarts)
- Australian Institute of Business
- Australian National University
- Avondale University
- Bond University
- Canberra Institute of Technology
- Carnegie Mellon University (Australia)
- Central Queensland University
- Charles Darwin University
- Charles Sturt University
- Curtin University
- Deakin University
- Edith Cowan University
- Federation University
- Flinders University
- Griffith University
- James Cook University
- La Trobe University
- Macquarie University
- Melbourne Polytechnic

- Monash University
- Murdoch University
- Queensland University of Technology
- RMIT University
- Southern Cross University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- Tabor College
- TAFE NSW
- TAFE QLD
- Torrens University Australia
- University of Adelaide
- University of Canberra
- University of Divinity
- University of Melbourne
- University of New England
- University of New South Wales
- University of Newcastle
- University of Notre Dame Australia
- University of Queensland
- University of South Australia
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of the Sunshine Coast
- University of Sydney

- University of Tasmania
 - University of Technology Sydney
 - University of Western Australia
 - University of Wollongong
 - Victoria University
 - Western Sydney University
 - Other _____
-

Q25 Do any of these words appear in the name of your work unit? (Select all that apply)

- Teaching / Learning / Education (or similar)
 - Innovation / Future / Transformation (or similar)
 - Design / Develop / Support (or similar)
 - None of these
-

Q26 Is the organisational unit you work for considered to be part of:

- A faculty/college
 - A central division
 - Other _____
-

Q26F Which discipline area is your unit a part of?

- Arts / Humanities
 - Business / Economics
 - Education
 - Engineering
 - I.T.
 - Law
 - Medicine / Health / Nursing
 - Science
 - Other _____
-

Q26C Which part of the central division of your institution is your unit part of?

- I.T.
 - An education focused area (e.g. Portfolio of the DVCE)
 - H.R / People & Culture
 - Other _____
-

Q27 Which of these best describes the way that advisor units are organised in your institution?

- All advisors are part of a centrally based team and there are no separate faculty/department-based teams
 - Some advisors work in centrally based teams and some advisors work in teams based in faculties/departments and they belong to different teams
 - All advisors work for teams based in faculties/departments and there are no centrally based teams
 - Other _____
-

Q28 Which of these advisor role types work in your team?

- Academic Developer
- Education Technologist
- Learning Designer

Q29 Perceptions of advisor activities, knowledge areas and purpose

Q30 Select the activities that you believe are regularly performed by people in each role type. It is fine to select the same activities for multiple roles. Please select at least 7 for each role (If you aren't sure what someone in a role type does, please share your perceptions anyway as these are still valuable)

Activity	Role		
	Academic Developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Assessment design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver training to academic staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver workshops to academic staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design academic staff training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design academic staff workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design digital learning environments (e.g. LMS template)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design physical learning environments (e.g. teaching space)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity	Role		
	Academic Developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Develop teaching strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate learning resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate teaching practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning activity design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resource design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support use of learning analytics data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-academic research (e.g. market scan of ed tech tools)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio/video production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education technology procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate education technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implement education technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multimedia/web development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support resource development (e.g. how-to guides)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity	Role		
	Academic Developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Technical support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use LMS - course administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use LMS - add content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use LMS - build activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with vendors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advising on education technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advising on pedagogy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driving change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring compliance with policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide emotional support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationship building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Troubleshooting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q31

Select the **main knowledge areas** that you believe are used by people in each role type. It is ok to select the same types of knowledge for multiple roles.

Please select at least 7 for each role

(If you aren't sure what people in a role type know, please share your perceptions anyway as these are equally valuable)

Knowledge area	Roles		
	Academic developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Academic integrity issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment design principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum structures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discipline specific learning and teaching practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equity and accessibility principles for education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good practice in blended learning and teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good practice in face-to-face learning and teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good practice in online learning and teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional policies (IP/Copyright)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional policies (Teaching/assessment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Knowledge area	Roles		
	Academic developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Learning design models and principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pedagogical theory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic research methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academics' work practices and needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current and emerging education technologies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General IT systems and processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good use of education technologies in learning and teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional policies (Privacy/Security)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multimedia/web design principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of multimedia/web tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
User experience (UX) and accessibility principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video production and editing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional structures, systems and processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Knowledge area	Roles		
	Academic developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Negotiation and conflict resolution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality management processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationship building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q32

Select the 3 main purposes that you believe people working in each advisor role have in their day-to-day work. It is ok to select the same purposes for multiple roles.

(If you aren't sure what the main purposes of people in a role type are, please share your perceptions anyway as these are equally valuable)

Purpose	Roles		
	Academic developers	Education Technologists	Learning Designers
Building staff capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driving innovation and change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education technology governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring and enhancing the quality of education technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

and teaching practice			
Ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving student learning experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting innovation and change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting wider institutional needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q33

Perceptions of your work being understood and valued

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Q34 Edvisors in other role in your team or area understand the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
 - Not applicable
-

Q35 Edvisors in other roles in your team or area value the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
 - Not applicable
-

Q36 Edvisors in other roles in other areas in your institution understand the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
 - Not applicable
-

Q37 Edvisors in other roles in other areas in your institution value the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
 - Not applicable
-

Q38 Academics in your institution understand the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q39 Academics in your institution value the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q40 Senior leaders with decision making power about learning and teaching in your institution understand the work you do

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q41 Senior leaders with decision making power about learning and teaching in your institution value the work you do

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q42

Impact, challenges and solutions

To what extent do you agree with these statements?

Q43 I am able to make a contribution that I feel is meaningful when it comes to decisions about educational practices in my institution

- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
-

Q44 I am able to make a contribution that I feel is meaningful when it comes to decisions about educational technologies in my institution

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q45 Which of these factors do you feel can make it challenging for you as an advisor to have an impact on learning and teaching in your institution? (Select all that apply)

- Academic / Professional staff divide
 - Differing qualifications and skills held by advisors in same roles
 - Division between technology and pedagogy focused roles
 - How advisor units are structured in the organisation
 - Lack of clarity around advisor roles
 - Most advisor focused research is not done by advisors
 - Perceptions of advisors as tools of management
 - Perceptions that advisors don't understand academics
-

Q46 Please share any other thoughts you may have on this question

Q47 Which of these actions do you think might help to address the challenges you face as an advisor in having an impact on learning and teaching in your institution? (Select all that apply)

- Changing the way advisor units are organised
- Clarifying and standardising advisor role types
- Greater advisor involvement in research
- Professional accreditation for advisors

Q48 Please share any other thoughts you may have on this question

Q49 Which professional organisations are you a member of, if any?

- ASCILITE TELedvisors Special Interest Group
- ASCILITE Learning Design Special Interest Group
- HERDSA Academic Development Special Interest Group
- Australian Association of Learning Designers
- AAEE (Australasian Association for Engineering Education)
- ACS (Australian Computer Society)
- ACODE
- ADCET
- Advance Higher Education (Higher Education Academy)
- AITD (Australian Institute of Training and Development)
- ALIA (Australian Library and Information Association)
- ALT (Association for Learning Technology UK)
- ANZPHE (Au/NZ Association of Health Profession Educators)
- ASCILITE (Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education)
- ASCILITE Mobile Technology SIG
- CAUL (Council of Australian University Librarians)
- CAULLT (Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching)
- CPSU (Community and Public Sector Union)

- EDUCAUSE
 - eLearning Guild
 - HERDSA (Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia)
 - ICDE (International Council for Open and Distance Education)
 - LCNAU (Languages and Culture Network for Australian Universities)
 - NAEAA (National Association of Enabling Educators Australia)
 - NTEU (National Tertiary Education Union)
 - ODLAA (Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia)
 - OLC (Online Learning Consortium)
 - QLD college of teachers
 - SOLAR (Society of Learning Analytics Research)
 - VIC ICT Network for Women
 - WCET (Wiche Cooperative for Educational Technologies)
 - Other (please list)
-

Q50 Conclusion

Q51 Please share anything else that you would like to add.



Q52 Are you willing to be interviewed about your experiences working as an advisor?

Yes

No



Q53 Would you like to be entered into the random draw for a chance to win 1 of 4 \$50 gift cards?

Yes

No

Q54 Email address for further contact

Appendix D

Interview Questions

Interviewees in this study were asked the following questions in a semi-structured interview. Follow-up questions were asked to elicit additional information based on their responses. The questions were shared on PowerPoint slides in the Zoom meeting in which the interviews took place. If required, additional prompts were displayed, and interviewees were asked if they would like to respond further to any of the prompts.

1) Identity

How would you describe yourself as an edvisor and also in terms of the work you do?

Prompts: Self-identification with a role type, larger role purpose, classification

(academic/professional), practices – activities, practices – knowledge areas, values/beliefs, status in the institution, qualifications, entry to the field, pedagogical/technological focus, project-based work/business as usual

2a/2b) Relationships - Academics

Tell me about a time that you had a positive working experience or relationship with an academic in your institution.

Tell me about a time that you had a challenging working experience or relationship with an academic in your institution.

2c/2d) Relationships - Leaders

Tell me about the positive ways that senior leaders affect your work in your institution.

Tell me about the challenging ways that senior leaders affect your work in your institution.

Prompts: May include leaders making decisions about learning and teaching that affect academics and which you have to implement

2e/2f) Relationships - Advisors in other roles/areas

Tell me about a time that you had a positive working experience or relationship with an advisor in another role in your institution.

Tell me about a time that you had a challenging working experience or relationship with an advisor in another role in your institution.

Prompts: Dependencies – what happens when you rely on someone else to do something before you can do your work? Organisational structures – one team or many, together or separate

3a) Understanding others

How well do you feel you understand the work people do as:

- academic
- leader
- other advisor type – LDs and ADs and ETs

Why do you think this is?

3b) Feeling understood and valued

How well do you feel that your work is understood and valued by:

- academics
- leaders
- other advisor types – LDs and ADs and ETs

Why do you think this is?

4) Impact

Tell me about any other challenges or enablers that you have found to affect your ability to make a meaningful contribution to learning and teaching in your institution.

Prompts: academic/professional status, central/faculty, qualifications, seniority, institutional/discipline/HE culture, understanding of edvisor roles and purpose, tensions between academics and leadership, organisational structures, pedagogy/technology focus, leadership and strategic direction, resourcing, resistance to change... Something else?

5) Solutions

You have told me about challenging situations that can make it difficult for you to contribute to learning and teaching, as well as more positive experiences.

If you were to think about how the working relationships that you experience in the university could be improved, what would you suggest?

Prompts: communication, organisational structure change, accreditation/professionalisation, opportunities to learn more about each other, communities of practice, institutional approaches to change or learning & teaching, something else?

6) Third Space

What is your understanding of the 'third space' in Higher Education?

How do these categories [below] relate to the way you see your place in the institution?

How does it [the third space] affect you and/or your work?

Prompts:

Bounded professionals

- *Work only within the boundaries of a function or organizational location*
- *Characterized by their concern for continuity and the maintenance of processes and standards*
- *Relatively prescribed roles*

Cross-boundary professionals

- *Recognize and actively used boundaries to build strategic advantage and institutional capacity*
- *Capitalize on their knowledge of territories on either side of the boundaries*
- *Likely to interact with the external environment*

Blended professionals

- *Dedicated roles that spanned both professional and academic domains*
- *Likely to have mixed backgrounds and responsibilities*

Unbounded professionals

- *Display disregard for boundaries*
- *Focus on broadly-based big-picture projects across the university*
- *As likely to see their futures outside higher education as within the sector.*

7) Final thoughts

Is there anything that you'd like to say that you haven't had a chance to?

Appendix E

Participant Information Statement



Discipline of Education
School of Education & Social Work
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ABN 15 211 513 464

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR (SUPERVISOR)

Kalervo Gulson
Chief Investigator (Supervisor)
Professor of Education

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 NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

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 Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

The role and value of 'edvisors' in Australian Higher Education

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about the way that learning and teaching educator advisors (called 'edvisors' in this study) in Higher Education work collaboratively with academics and institutional management. The term edvisors is used as an umbrella term for people working as learning designers, education technologists, academic developers and in other similar roles.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are working in this kind of role and you have experience and knowledge about the kind of work edvisors do and how you interact with academics and institutional management. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the study. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- Colin Simpson, PhD candidate, The University of Sydney

Colin Simpson is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Kalervo Gulson, Professor of Education, Lina Markauskaite, Professor of Education, and Dr. Jessica Frawley.

There are no potential or actual conflicts of interest for researchers and/or institutions involved in the project.

There are no financial benefits to the researchers or institution that might arise from the conduct of the research.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

Your involvement in this study will be in three parts.

Firstly, you will complete a short survey about yourself, your work and background as an advisor and some of your perceptions of the role.

Secondly, you will be interviewed about your professional background and work as an advisor, including your understanding of how these kinds of roles are perceived by your peers, academics and institutional managers. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted over a web conferencing system such as Zoom. Audio and video of the interview will be recorded – or just audio if you prefer – to assist in transcribing the interview. You will be given access to the recording and transcript to clarify points or make amendments before the interview data is used in the study.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The interview is expected to take approximately 60 minutes.

(5) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by emailing the organiser of the study, Colin Simpson, at csim8899@uni.sydney.edu.au

You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will then be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

(6) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from your time, we do not expect that there will be any other risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(7) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study. All respondents to the survey can elect to go into a random draw for one of four \$50 gift cards.

The overall goal of this study is to gather data that will lead to better understanding of the work and roles of advisors and their place in Higher Education. It is hoped that over time, this may inform improvements to workplace practices relating to the collaborative relationships that advisors have with academics and institutional managers. As an advisor, in the long-term you could potentially benefit from these changes.

(8) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

The data that we will collect about you will include general demographic information such as age, gender, education and professional background. It will also include your responses on questions relating to the roles, practices and status of advisors. Audio/video recordings of your interview responses will be kept only for the purpose of transcription. These recordings may be shared with third party transcription service providers. Nobody else will have access to your data, except as required by law. Any data that you provide will be de-identified.

You can access your personal data during the study by contacting Colin Simpson via email (csim8899@uni.sydney.edu.au). Your information will be stored securely on a local personal hard drive and on the University of Sydney Research Data Store and your identity/information will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be identified in these publications unless you agree to this using the tick box on the consent form.

The main place this data will be published will be in Colin Simpson's PhD thesis. It may also be used in other publications including journal articles, conference papers or books.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

(9) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(10) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Colin Simpson will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Colin Simpson, PhD candidate, by email csim8899@uni.sydney.edu.au or on 0422 678 449

(11) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the Participant consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a one-page summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(12) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney (Ethics approval 2019/895). As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep

Appendix F

EdAdvisor Role and Position Title Alignment

The role and position title of most of the participants in this study is presented in Table F1, alongside the extent to which the role aligns with the position title. Position titles which may allow a study participant to be identified have been removed.

Table F1

EdAdvisor Role and Position Title Alignment

Role	Position title	Title alignment
Academic Developer	Academic Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Academic Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Educational advisor lead	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Educational Design Lead	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Educational Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Program Director	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Manager Centre for Professional Development	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Academic Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Senior Academic Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Education Design Manager	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Educational Content Developer	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Academic Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Learning designer	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Lecturer, Learning Futures	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Learning and Teaching Consultant (Curriculum)	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Lecturer, Academic Development	Aligned
Academic Developer	Lecturer, Learning Innovation	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Learning Designer	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Curriculum Advisor	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Educational Design Manager	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Learning and Teaching Specialist	Ambiguous

Role	Position title	Title alignment
Academic Developer	Academic Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Senior Academic Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Lecturer - Educational Development	Aligned
Academic Developer	Senior Manager, Learning Design	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Senior Educational Designer	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Senior Lecturer in Higher Education	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	T&L Manager	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Educational Designer	Not aligned
Academic Developer	Educational Developer	Aligned
Academic Developer	Lecturer	Ambiguous
Academic Developer	Digital & Information Literacy Librarian	Ambiguous
Educational Technologist	Learning technologies support Officer	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Learning Technology & Media Coordinator	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Digital Learning Designer	Not aligned
Educational Technologist	(Blackboard LMS) Developer and Trainer	Ambiguous
Educational Technologist	Educational Designer	Not aligned
Educational Technologist	Senior educational technologist	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Educational Technologist	Aligned
Educational Technologist	eLearning Media Support Officer	Ambiguous
Educational Technologist	Learning Designer	Not aligned
Educational Technologist	Education Innovation Designer	Not aligned
Educational Technologist	Educational Technologist	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Educational Technologist	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Digital advisor	Ambiguous
Educational Technologist	Education Support Officer	Ambiguous
Educational Technologist	Enterprise Lead, Learning Platforms and Applications	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Educational Technologies Coordinator	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Learning technologist	Aligned
Educational Technologist	Manager, Exams & eAssessment	Ambiguous
Educational Technologist	Learning Designer	Not aligned
Educational Technologist	eLearning Designer	Not aligned
Educational Technologist	Educational Designer	Not aligned
Educational Technologist	Education Design and Quality Manager	Not aligned

Role	Position title	Title alignment
Learning Designer	Senior Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning and Teaching Consultant	Ambiguous
Learning Designer	Education Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Education Manager	Ambiguous
Learning Designer	Education Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Senior learning designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Online Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Senior Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning design and technology specialist	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Senior Curriculum and Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Digital Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Education Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Systems Administrator	Not aligned
Learning Designer	Digital learning designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Education Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Technologist	Not aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning/educational designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Technologies Developer	Not aligned

Role	Position title	Title alignment
Learning Designer	Senior Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Education Design Coordinator	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer (ePortfolio)	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Senior Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Program Convenor: Online and Blended Learning	Ambiguous
Learning Designer	Technologically Enhanced Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Manager eLearning /eTeaching	Ambiguous
Learning Designer	Director, Online Learning	Ambiguous
Learning Designer	Senior Educational Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Director, Digital Education	Ambiguous
Learning Designer	Senior Curriculum and Learning Designer	Aligned
Learning Designer	Educational Developer	Not aligned

Appendix G

Interview Coding Exemplar

A typical interview coding memo used in this study is presented in Table G1.

Table G1

Exemplar code choices memo: 040423 First pass coding AD Rosella

Code created	Quote	Comments
Edvisor is a problematic name	<p>I'm guessing you're, um, familiar with the term. Edvisor</p> <p>[00:01:13] AD Rosella: I, I am, it's a problematic term.</p> <p>[00:01:16] Colin Simpson: I, I, yeah. Why do you think it's</p> <p>[00:01:18] problematic?</p> <p>[00:01:19] AD Rosella: Uh, because it's not natural language. Like third space is more, sounds, sounds cool. But, it's more understandable because they're both real words.</p>	I love this
Distance education	<p>why do people say, "there's no, no information about the quality of online learning". And so, and someone said, "well, I just sent them the distance education literature for a start", you know, So, yeah, there's a connection</p>	Pre-online learning principles and practice flowed through to online

there.

Curriculum design

But the other, another major part is to work in the curriculum review team. And so, I see courses from proposal stage through to the fleshing out of the old curriculum outline. Sometimes that connection, perhaps with a, with a team about a particular unit (“subject”, we, we say “unit” for “subject”, and we say “course” for “program”, um, the.

I will probably merge some of these

Evaluation of unit
success

So when I say my job stops, when the course or unit is approved. That's really what I mean. Cause we never come back to look at the evaluation at the end. We, we just get, we get presented with, when we come to a course review, we get presented with, these are the problems that we see with the course at the moment, [00:08:00] but we don't get feedback on anything that we said or designed.

Maybe find better wording but essentially being able to determine whether the curriculum design/learning design done by the centre is effective

Appendix H

Study Participants' Institutions and Their Groupings

Many institutions offering higher education qualifications in Australia are part of larger sector-wide organisational groupings. These include Australian Technology Network (ATN); Group of Eight (Go8); Independent Research Universities (IRU); and Regional Universities Network (RUN).

Where a university is not a member of a university grouping, they are classified as Ungrouped. Non-university institutions and organisations which offer Higher Education qualifications are classified as Other HE Providers. Institution groupings for survey participants are presented in Table H1.

Table H1

EdAdvisor Institutions and Groupings

University Grouping	Institution	Participants	Percentage
Unaligned	Australian Catholic University	4	3.6
Go8	Australian National University	3	2.7
RUN	Central Queensland University	2	1.8
Unaligned	Charles Darwin University	1	0.9
RUN	Charles Sturt University	1	0.9
ATN	Curtin University	2	1.8
ATN	Deakin University	4	3.6
Unaligned	Edith Cowan University	3	2.7
RUN	Federation University	1	0.9
IRU	Flinders University	3	2.7
IRU	Griffith University	5	4.5
IRU	James Cook University	2	1.8
IRU	La Trobe University	1	0.9
Go8	Monash University	11	9.9
IRU	Murdoch University	1	0.9
Unaligned	Queensland University of Technology	3	2.7
ATN	RMIT University	1	0.9
RUN	Southern Cross University	1	0.9
Unaligned	Swinburne University of Technology	3	2.7

University Grouping	Institution	Participants	Percentage
Go8	University of Adelaide	3	2.7
Go8	University of Melbourne	4	3.6
RUN	University of New England	2	1.8
Go8	University of New South Wales	5	4.5
ATN	University of Newcastle	4	3.6
Unaligned	University of Notre Dame, Australia	3	2.7
Go8	University of Queensland	4	3.6
ATN	University of South Australia	2	1.8
RUN	University of Southern Queensland	2	1.8
RUN	University of the Sunshine Coast	1	0.9
Go8	University of Sydney	10	9.0
ATN	University of Technology Sydney	4	3.6
IRU	Western Sydney University	2	1.8
Other HE Providers	Australian College of Applied Professions	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Australian Institute of Business	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Canberra Institute of Technology	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Other Australian College of Arts	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Other Endeavour College of Natural Health	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Other ICHM	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Other Keypath Education	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Other TAFE VIC	1	0.9
Other HE Providers	Other University Partnerships Australia	1	0.9
	Listed but prefer to remain anonymous	1	0.9
	Total	111	100

Appendix I

EdAdvisor Activities Significance

Two-sided pairwise Z-tests were undertaken to compare differences between roles reporting undertaking activities (Section 5.3.1). These results are presented in Table I1. Significant results are highlighted in green, and activities with no significant differences are highlighted in grey.

Table I1

Pair-wise Comparison of Differences between Roles reporting performing Activities in Practice Bundles

Practice bundle	Activities	AD/ET <i>p</i>	ET/LD <i>p</i>	AD/LD <i>p</i>
Build learning resources/activities	Audio Video Production	<.001	0.223	0.005
	Multimedia/web development	<.001	0.787	<.001
	Use LMS Add Content	0.172	0.152	0.001
	Use LMS Build activities	0.024	0.062	<.001
	Deliver training to academics	0.373	0.658	0.564
Building capability	Deliver workshops to academics	0.042	0.389	0.149
	Design academic staff training	0.2	0.766	0.238
	Design academic staff workshops	0.107	0.635	0.172
	Support resource development	0.064	0.664	0.004
	Assessment Design	<.001	<.001	0.724
Design teaching and learning	Curriculum Design	<.001	<.001	0.027
	Learning activity design	<.001	<.001	<.001
	Learning resource design	0.132	<.001	<.001
	Advising on educational technology	0.026	0.403	0.054
Facilitate education technologies	Design digital learning environments	<.001	0.392	<.001
	Design physical learning environments	0.516	0.909	0.36

Practice bundle	Activities	AD/ET <i>p</i>	ET/LD <i>p</i>	AD/LD <i>p</i>
Facilitate education technologies	Educational Technology procurement	<.001	<.001	0.542
	Evaluate Educational technology	0.013	0.226	0.077
	Implement educational technology	<.001	0.104	0.004
	Non-academic research (e.g. market scan)	0.001	0.811	<.001
	Work with vendors	<.001	<.001	0.037
	Advising on pedagogy	<.001	<.001	0.035
	Develop teaching strategies	<.001	<.001	0.069
Quality management of teaching	Ensuring compliance with policy	0.677	0.293	0.522
	Evaluate Learning Resources	0.025	<.001	0.25
	Support use of Learning analytics data	0.206	0.419	0.514
	Evaluate Teaching Practice	<.001	<.001	<.001
	Provide emotional support	0.736	0.93	0.758
Relationship and care work	Relationship building	0.013	<.001	0.722
Research	Academic research	<.001	0.264	<.001
Technological	Technical support	<.001	0.002	<.001
	Use LMS Course administration	0.014	0.076	0.307
Workplace	Problem solving	0.167	0.049	0.722
	Project management	0.177	<.001	0.026
	Driving change	0.022	0.018	0.764
	Troubleshooting	0.114	0.315	0.4

Appendix J

EdAdvisor Knowledge Areas Significance

Two-sided pairwise Z-tests were undertaken to compare differences between roles reporting using knowledge areas (Section 5.4.1). These results are presented in Table J1. Significant results are highlighted in green, and knowledge areas with no significant differences are highlighted in grey.

Table J1

Pairwise Comparison of Differences Between Roles Reporting Using Knowledge Areas

Category	Knowledge areas	AD/ET <i>p</i>	ET/LD <i>p</i>	AD/LD <i>p</i>
Pedagogical	Assessment design principles	<.001	<.001	0.053
	Curriculum structures	<.001	<.001	0.002
	Discipline specific L&T practices	<.001	<.001	0.31
	Good practice in face-to-face L&T	<.001	<.001	0.323
	Learning design models	0.002	<.001	0.002
	Pedagogical theory	<.001	<.001	0.109
	Good practice in Blended L&T	0.2	<.001	0.018
Ped/Tech	Good practice in online L&T	0.352	<.001	0.003
	Current and emerging educational technologies	0.009	0.429	0.009
	Good use of educational technologies in L&T	0.074	0.392	0.001
Technological	General IT systems and processes	<.001	<.001	0.061
	Multimedia/web design principles	<.001	0.517	<.001
	Use of multimedia/web tools	<.001	0.335	<.001
	User Experience and accessibility principles	0.014	0.117	<.001
Institutional	Video production and editing	<.001	0.117	<.001
	Academic integrity issues	<.001	0.01	0.089

Category	Knowledge areas	AD/ET <i>p</i>	ET/LD <i>p</i>	AD/LD <i>p</i>
Institutional	Equity and accessibility principles for education	0.024	<.001	0.275
	Institutional policies (IP/Copyright)	0.948	0.562	0.469
	Institutional policies (Privacy/Security)	0.004	0.012	0.455
	Institutional policies (Teaching/Assessment)	<.001	0.016	0.008
	Institutional structures, systems and processes	0.677	0.967	0.585
Scholarly	Academic research methodology	<.001	0.017	<.001
	Academics' work practices and needs	<.001	0.016	<.001
Workplace	Collaboration	0.39	0.498	0.764
	Negotiation	0.489	0.465	0.986
	Project management	0.162	0.018	0.387
	Quality management	0.339	0.021	0.177
	Relationship building	0.208	0.015	0.295