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**Abstract**

Institutional responses to changes in the higher education environment have caused movements in the roles and identities of administrative managers in UK universities. These shifts have highlighted the problem for individuals of balancing traditional public service considerations of administration with institutional innovation and development. Administrative managers find themselves not only acting as independent arbiters, giving impartial advice on the basis of professional expertise, but also becoming involved in political judgements about institutional futures. They increasingly undertake an interpretive function between the various communities of the university and its external partners. As the boundaries of the university have become more permeable, administrative and academic management have inter-digitated, and hybrid roles have developed. In undertaking increasingly complex functions, therefore, administrative managers play a critical role in linking the academic and executive arms of governance in the university. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)