

What can we learn about academic identity from allied care professions? Messages for the social work academy

Joanna Santos-Petiot, Gary Spolander & Trish Hafford-Letchfield

To cite this article: Joanna Santos-Petiot, Gary Spolander & Trish Hafford-Letchfield (11 Mar 2026): What can we learn about academic identity from allied care professions? Messages for the social work academy, *Social Work Education*, DOI: [10.1080/02615479.2026.2641650](https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2026.2641650)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2026.2641650>



© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 11 Mar 2026.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 184



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

What can we learn about academic identity from allied care professions? Messages for the social work academy

Joanna Santos-Petiot ^a, Gary Spolander^{a,b,c} and Trish Hafford-Letchfield ^d

^aSchool of Law and Social Science, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK; ^bCentre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Children, Families and Society, University of Western Cape, South Africa; ^cGlobal Health and Social Care, School of Medicine, University of Keele, Keele, UK; ^dDepartment of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK

ABSTRACT

Academic identity influences disciplinary contributions and professional development of individuals within those disciplines. Little is known about academic identity within the social work discipline. This paper presents the results of a modified systematic international literature review to investigate academic identity in social work, nursing and allied care professions. Papers (138) were initially retrieved for screening, 40 met the final inclusion criteria for review. Limited social work academic identity literature was identified, with only four papers specifically focused on social work. Results highlighted numerous barriers to establishing a distinct academic identity, with a multitude of challenges in transition from practice to academia and its dual identities of practitioner and scholar. The process of academic socialization requires adequate institutional preparation, collegial support, sense of community and relationality, and not least time. We discuss four key themes from this literature (1) temporality and dynamic nature of developing academic identity in the academy, (2) role of professional work culture and communities of practice, (3) legitimacy, visibility and dichotomies of professional, disciplinary and academic knowledge and skills and (4) strategic imperatives for supporting transitions for the helping professions. The implications for social work academic identity development, social work education and social work knowledge are discussed.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 November 2024
Accepted 25 February 2026

KEYWORDS

Academic identity; social work; systematic review; care professions; transitions

Introduction

Professional identity within the care professions supports the distinctiveness of practitioners' professional self and facilitates understanding of their role, which incorporates the values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors that are characteristic of their profession. This is fashioned through experiences of the individual, along with the social, cultural and economic context of the profession. It therefore provides an important academic understanding of the development of professional

CONTACT Joanna Santos-Petiot  j.santos-petiot@rgu.ac.uk  School of Law and Social Science, Robert Gordon University, Riverside Building, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen AB10 7QE, UK

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

members (Barrow, 2023). However, decisions as to why professionals from practice backgrounds move to the academy as a career choice and the importance of this to their academic identity development is not as well understood. Indeed, despite its crucial importance, little is known about academic identity within the discipline of social work. In these discussions we recognize that the professional context and development of social work differs by country, with differences in the use of terminology and professional structures, requiring consideration of how lessons learnt can be applied in diverse practice and academic contexts. This paper emerges from discussions regarding the interlinked challenges including difficulties experienced in academic recruitment, retention within the academy and how these should be addressed. These discussions cannot be entirely disentangled from the wider professional challenges facing the professional workforce, student recruitment, early-stage practitioners, long-term development, workforce retention, research and the contribution of higher education to the discipline. An indication of these challenges is that European Employment Services [EURES] (2024) highlights that for social work and counseling professionals, shortages exist in nine European countries. While the focus of this paper is on identity formation of academic social workers, this cannot be separated from the context of the profession's social reproduction through the academy, front-line practice and supervision. Thus, consideration must be given to recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced social work academics, and the difficulties of embedding social work research in the academy, not least of which being that almost all social work academics are expected to have practiced before work in the academy. Despite this, little is known about social work academic identity formation. Consequently, we sought to systematically review literature relevant to the development of social work academic identity.

Contextualizing global social work

Social work education is intrinsically linked to the fortunes of both higher education and the profession, with the policy of neoliberalism and austerity having a profound impact through managerialism and marketization in the sector (Morley et al., 2017). The funding of higher education institutions (HEIs) and the structure of social work education programs in each country is dependent on the funding and regulatory models of each of those nations, along with validation, employer and service user input. Marketization has brought additional challenges to social work education through increased institutional funding instability, research commercialization and focus on student experience (Cleary, 2018). Alongside these challenges are rising concerns regarding student and staff mental health, with reduced diversity in those able to afford higher education, misalignments with policy, along with institutional and governance support concerns (Busch, 2023). Furthermore, the profession continues to struggle with issues of recruitment and retention (Holmes et al., 2013; Moriarty et al., 2018), with United Kingdom (UK) literature exploring these challenges particularly for practice (Hafford-Letchfield, 2007).

Academic identity

Academic identity frames and provides important scholarly input into social work's knowledge and identity (Daly et al., 2023; Trevithick, 2008), but this also raises questions about who decides the nature and extent of this professional knowledge and debates regarding the nature of identity. Within a UK context, this challenges notions of whether this knowledge is defined and inculcated by the academy, the profession or social work regulators or employers, such as local authorities undertaking statutory work. Given the importance of professional identity in social work (Forenza & Eckert, 2018) it is surprising that its place within the academy receives little or no attention. Within social work literature, professional identity is largely framed as one underpinned by the core values of the profession, involving a professional socialization process, and a strong sense of belonging and emotional ties to the role (Moorhead et al., 2025). So too, the identity of social work professionals is underpinned by professional structures including regulatory bodies, professional knowledge, skills and expertise (Moorhead et al., 2025). As practitioners removed from frontline practice and working in the increasingly marketized academic setting, the identity of social work academics may be influenced by different professional structures and socialization processes. Indeed, Marques et al. (2024) highlight that the introduction of private-sector principles like performance metrics leads to a shift in values from academic autonomy to managerialism, resulting in identity tensions for academics.

These notions of identity, knowledge and professional leadership, lie at the core of contemporary debates which have included criticisms of social work education and the preparation of social workers for practice (Walls, 2011). Included in this discourse and allied to the challenges of identity is the claim that there is significant separation between the theory taught in social work HEIs and the skills necessary in practice, resulting in students struggling to breach this divide (Barretti, 2004) with resulting negative impacts on their professional development. For others (see Moorhead et al., 2016) more competency-based education has been critiqued for promoting the use of checklists of skills and behavior, resulting in a perceived reduction in the complexity of social work practice through minimizing the significance of critical thinking, ethical reasoning and traversing complicated human settings. Resulting in others (see Wilson, 2013), questioning whether social work education is adequately facilitating the development of professional identity, and that this results in inadequate identification of the professional role and a lack of confidence to address complex ethical and practical challenges. This debate therefore highlights the concern that the development of social work academic identity has been so under researched.

Contemporary social work practice within the academy

Consideration of how academic identity is formed and maintained in the academy cannot be separated from the ongoing contemporary context of growing managerialism and marketization of Higher Education globally. Busch (2023) argues that neoliberal ideology has hijacked higher education, leading to declining research quality, worse education for students, and less freedom for academics. He argues that the shift toward a market-oriented model has compromised the core missions

and values of universities, including critical thinking and public engagement. Furthermore, Williamson (2024) highlights that where social work sits in arts and humanities academic departments (as they may also sit with health and education), they are especially vulnerable to financial precarity as they face cuts in many institutions due to unprofitability, which contributes to funding challenges for these disciplines. The marketization of higher education and the pressures of neoliberalism have significantly impacted the well-being of university staff more generally (Kassem & Mitsakis, 2023). Social work within the academy is not immune to these pressures and in a survey of 78 UK social work academics (Cleary, 2018), highlighted concerns about marketization, the impacts on student admissions, assessment and decision making regarding failing students, with a feeling of being caught between competing agenda and priority.

Given the contemporary challenges for the profession, we sought to undertake a review of the international literature to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the factors that influence academic identity development in the care professions?
- (2) What can we learn from nursing and allied care professions about academic identity in social work?
- (3) What is driving or hindering research activity in the care professions?
- (4) What factors influence the decision to pursue PhD study and how is it valued and perceived?
- (5) What are the benefits of practice knowledge and expertise in teaching in the care professions and how does it influence the professions' academic identity?

Methodology

A review of the qualitative literature (Grant & Booth, 2009) relating to academic identity development in social work, nursing and allied health disciplines was conducted. The strategy combined systematic review techniques with narrative analysis to synthesize key findings from the body of literature that explored the nature of academic identity formation and including other reviews (Jahan et al., 2016).

An initial pilot attempted to locate literature relevant to academic identity in social work, but there were insufficient publications to conduct a systematic literature review. Consequently, the team sought to widen the review to include nursing and allied care professions in respect of how that literature might inform social work. For the review, the selected professions included nursing, midwifery, teaching, psychology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and paramedic practice. Medicine was excluded as an allied care profession.

In conducting database searches to locate studies in social work and the allied care professions formerly listed, the review team established necessary search criteria, inclusion and exclusion criteria for screening, as well as creating a suitable data extraction template to allow relevant findings, recommendations and implications of the included papers to be identified.

Ethics

No ethical approval was required due to the use of secondary data already in the public domain.

Search criteria

A preliminary search was conducted on the 28th of September 2023 in WebofScience, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SocINDEX, CINAHL Complete databases. This search sought to scope the literature related to academic identity development and/or maintenance in general. The search was conducted in a non-discipline specific way, though the selected databases were largely relevant to health and social care. Using the search terms: ('Academic Identity' OR 'Academic Self') AND ('develop*' or 'maintain*') and limiters of date range 1980–2023 and English language publications, 1892 results were identified, including the removal of duplicates. Of these results, it became clear that much of the papers discussed academic identity in disciplines which were not relatively young practice-based caring professions, comparable to social work, as well as discussing academic identity at a stage prior to that of higher education, such as in school. Therefore, the review team refined the search criteria, the target disciplines as well as the date range for the database searches, to ensure results were generated which were readily comparable and applicable to social work as a discipline. A new search was therefore completed in the aforementioned databases.

Final searches were thusly completed on the 9th of October 2023 in WebofScience, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SocINDEX, CINAHL Complete databases using search terms: ('Academic Identity') AND ('develop*' OR 'maintain*') AND ('Higher Education' OR 'Post Compulsory Education' OR 'Further Education') AND ('social work' OR 'allied health professions' OR 'nursing'). Limiters of date range 2000–2023, peer-reviewed sources and English language were applied. This search generated a total of 136 results, which were imported into the Covidence database. Once these results were imported, 33 duplicates were removed, leaving 103 papers for screening.

Screening

Covidence software was used as a systematic review team management tool with PRISMA guidelines at each stage (www.covidence.org). Screening of the search results was conducted in two waves. The first wave, undertaken by two reviewers, included title and abstract screening, for appropriateness and relevance, resulting in 45 studies

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

| Inclusion | Exclusion |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peer reviewed source ● Based on original research ● Addresses Academic Professional Identity (including the transition from profession to academia) ● Includes relevant care professions, such as: Social Work, Nursing and Allied Professions ● Relevant Literature Reviews ● Primary and secondary research including systematic literature reviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion papers which are not theoretical |

remaining. Review inclusion or exclusion criteria were agreed by the review team prior to papers being full-text screened. In the second wave of screening, the 45 studies were assessed according to the Inclusion Criteria (see [Table 1](#): inclusion and exclusion criteria).

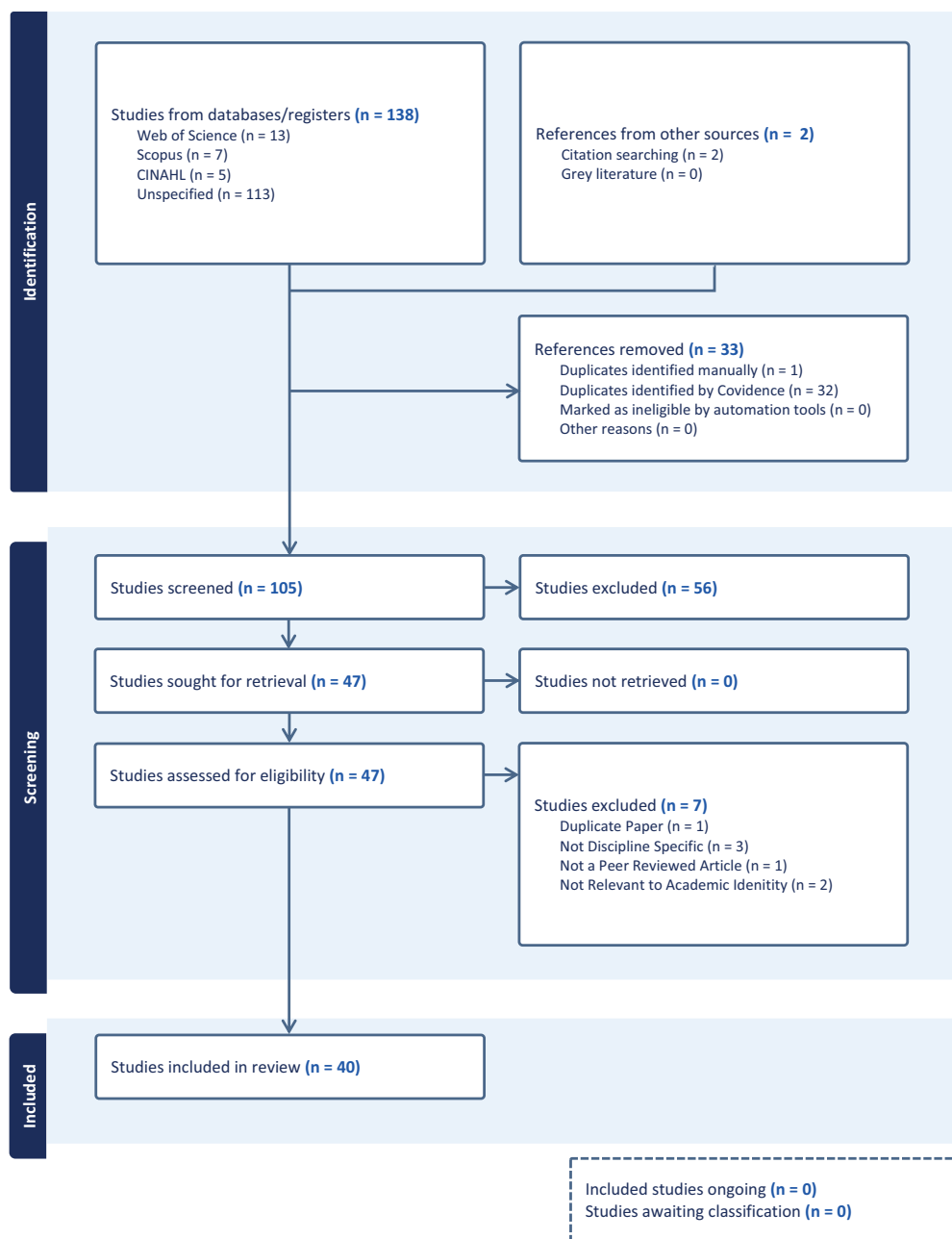


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart.

At least two reviewers reviewed and reached consensus on inclusion or exclusion of the remaining full texts. Eight papers were excluded at this stage, leaving 38 papers which met the inclusion criteria for the study. Following reference list searching, an additional two papers were included in the review due to meeting the criteria and being social work specific in focus, bringing the total number of included papers to 40. The PRISMA Flowchart contained in [Figure 1](#) demonstrates the process of literature screening, as well as the reasons for exclusion of papers.

A data extraction template addressed each of the five research questions. This process was completed separately by two reviewers, with a third reviewer comparing the extracted data, re-reading the paper and agreeing a consensus of the extracted data.

Results

Of the 40 disciplinary papers identified as meeting the inclusion criteria for the review, 29 were nursing related, four were teacher-educator related, four were midwifery related, one was paramedic practice related, one was physiotherapy related, one was law related and four were social work related. Of the papers included in the review, the majority were reporting qualitative empirical research, text and opinion or reflective pieces. Most of the papers were UK or Australia based, with a minority of papers also based in Canada, the USA and Ireland.

Our aim was to identify and discuss important topics using a less formal approach so as to get to the narratives on academic identities in the included papers. Selecting and appraising the data from included papers was initially tabulated, then coded and themed. These steps gave rise to four key themes (see [Table 2](#) for a summary) within which there was some blurring and cross-connection of thematic ideas and concepts.

Theme 1: the temporality and dynamic nature of developing academic identity in the academy

This theme addressed the range of factors (cognitive, psychological, and sociological) and the complexities involved in recognizing and reconciling where to locate one's professional skills and knowledge when acquiring and expressing identity in academic settings. This also highlighted the importance of time in identity formation (many papers referred to periods of 1.5–3 years) (Hurst, 2010; Wyllie et al., 2016), with stages in the process of transition to develop a sense of belonging and ownership of new identities.

Transition points were described by some as a process of 'crossing over' (Lee et al., 2022). This cross over involved the idea that individuals are leaving their clinical world entirely or engaging with 'two intercepting spheres,' within which they must work hard to bridge gaps in bi-directional ways. These transition points imply that whilst aiming toward a finish line, the journey is not linear. Not all professionals are willing to make the cognitive, psychological, and sociological adjustments and returned to practice (Wyllie et al., 2016). For physiotherapy academics, fear of lacking credibility can give rise to negative emotions, specifically imposter syndrome and anxiety (Hurst, 2010). Clinical-educator transitions therefore had multiple conceptualizations in the way they described the duality of identity during their transition. Role congruence was considered challenging to achieve, resulting in



Table 2. Thematic table.

| Theme | Description | Relevant codes |
|--|--|--|
| 1. The temporality and dynamic nature of developing academic identity in the academy | Acquiring and expressing an identity in academia involves time and often a staged transitional process. This involves addressing a range of cognitive, psychological and sociological factors to recognise and reconcile where to locate one's own skills and knowledge and develop a sense of belonging and ownership. | <p>Challenges of transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Phases of time (1–3 years) – Emotional content – Multiple and conflicting identities – Isolation, sense of belonging, loss of clinical attachment – Ambiguity, conflict and bridging of identities – Ability/willingness to adapt (cognitive, psychological, sociological) – Recognising prior role as factors for preparedness – Imposter syndrome – Coping strategies – Benefits of mentoring – Contrasting work cultures – Role clarity – Being in no-persons land – Self-centric vs team centric – Performativity – Professional values and actualisation – Unspoken rules and norms in the academy – Benefits of mentoring – Connection to practice cultures – Maintaining professional registration – Communities of practice (virtual/international) – Professional reflexivity – Navigating and developing resilience – Autonomy and power – Relationality (safe relational spaces and community) – Horizontal and vertical networking – Developing agency/taking control |
| 2. Role of professional work culture and communities of practice | This describes the strengths and opportunities of existing professional identity in supporting transition and to address inevitable ambiguities, conflicts, and uncertainties. Strong values, reflective and reflexive practice and the cultural learning from practice are translated into informal learning and networking that bridge different identities. | |

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued).

| Theme | Description | Relevant codes |
|---|---|--|
| 3. Legitimacy, visibility and dichotomies of professional, disciplinary and academic knowledge and skills | This is impacted by external and internal discourses on what constitutes an academic in the helping professions. It describes the hierarchies and complexities involved in scholarship and the mechanisms that shape research, scholarship and teaching essential to academic identity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wider discourse on valuing professional/clinical knowledge – Absence of theoretical positioning – Pedagogic strengths – Academic expectations and scholarship – Balancing teaching and scholarship workload – Potential of teaching as scholarship – Role of research degrees, status and motivation for post-graduate research – Hierarchies of knowledge and epistemologies – Credibility and knowledge capital – ‘Playing the game’ – Taking responsibility for developing own trajectory – Role of supervisor/mentors in mediating transfer of knowledge and skills – Complexities in developing research portfolios – Different forms of capital and academic gaze |

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued).

| Theme | Description | Relevant codes |
|---|--|--|
| 4. The strategic imperatives for supporting transitions within workforce development for the helping professions. | Debates on developing and owning academic identity sit in a wider culture in which the neoliberal academy needs to be active in enabling and promoting contribution. This theme analyzes the support activity required and the wider benefits in doing so. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transition through partnership. – Developing vision in relation to helping professions contribution – Relationships with students – Role modelling – Authenticity in learning – Faculty Recruitment and Retention – Supporting organisational development from the academy – Interdisciplinary research – Inclusive research communities – Role of research degrees – Visibility of disciplinary knowledge – Neoliberal cultures and performance management – Structured processes and programmes that enable and support – Professional bodies and registration requirements |

an initial clinging to clinical roots, until the new identity as an academic felt better developed and engendered less anxiety and uncertainty (Hurst, 2010).

One of the four papers that included social work authorship (Almond, 2023; Galloway & Jones, 2012; Norton et al., 2011; Seymour, 2006) reflected on the often unplanned and serendipitous moves to academia from practice and described a fusion of identities in the transition to and from academia. Others, such as Seymour (2006, p. 467), reflected on the notion of still ‘continuing to think “like” a social worker’ while ‘moving into a space that is dominated by a different kind of knowing,’ attesting that this results in ‘a place of pain and profound (self-)doubt’ for practitioner-academics. Almond’s (2023) phenomenological qualitative study of transitional experiences of six social work practitioners working in higher education highlighted the diversity of routes for many into academia, with many starting first with casual employment. Though not all social work teaching staff necessarily hold a doctoral or research degree, career progression via completion of a PhD was considered to make the transition from practice to academia a more natural part of career development (Barrow & Xu, 2023). For those not pursuing a PhD degree, seniority in a practice role was another factor which was considered to forge a route into academia (Barrow & Xu, 2023). It was clear that this might not have always been an intentional transition. Many facilitators and barriers to clinician-educator transitions were identified at personal, interpersonal, and organizational levels. Personal facilitators included: passion, ability to embrace change, accepting opportunities, interpersonal competence, and agency. The fear of new roles hindered clinician-educator transitions including culture shock (Andrew et al., 2009). Lack of commitment to education, and a dominant commitment to their primary clinical roles seemed to negatively impact transitions. At the organizational level, academic identity making was also described as a chaotic mix of purposive and reactive identifications (Xu & Grant, 2020) which cannot be planned for rationally, and was markedly experienced by doctoral students wishing to move to academia. Confidence was a significant asset for entering a new work culture which often felt removed from the clinical environment and culture which itself contributed to a lack of confidence to participate at the beginning of the transition.

Theme 2: role of professional work culture and communities of practice

This theme explored the strengths and opportunities of existing professional identity in supporting transition and to address inevitable ambiguities, conflicts, and uncertainties in the process. Examples included the importance of strong values, reflective and reflexive practice, and the cultural learning from professional or clinical practice which were translated through opportunities for informal learning and networking to bridge different identities that are held within academia.

Practitioners making the transition from clinical practice to academia described the culture shock of moving from a practice-based team where connection and community were strong, to that of a competitive, self-centric academic environment where most were focused on their own work (Barrow & Xu, 2023; Lee et al., 2022). Findings emphasize the relational nature of academic identity development (Harmon et al., 2022; Wyllie et al., 2016), though this relationality was often lacking within the self-centric and neoliberal university culture (Barrow & Xu, 2022). Informal learning and peer support were therefore the most valued mechanisms of support, more so than a formally structured

mentoring process (Hurst, 2010; Wyllie et al., 2016). Mentoring and buddying both provided an antidote to perceived isolating academic environments (Lee et al., 2022; Almond, 2023), to support day-to-day work, resilience, and survival (Wyllie et al., 2016). For social work, inter-disciplinary relationships were essential to achieving a greater appreciation and understanding of practice-based expertise by both HEI employers and by nonsocial work colleagues (Almond, 2023).

Communities of practice were identified as a supporting factor for socialization and coping (Hurst, 2010). Wyllie et al. (2016) highlighted 'intentional cultivation of community' and 'finding solid ground' as fostering a sense of belonging and support as central for an authentic scholarly community. Others (see Andrew et al., 2009) identified the importance of international communities of practice to stimulate a sense of belonging and professional teaching identity via discussion, knowledge exchange and sharing of professional narratives as well as facilitating research collaboration and networks, academic and professional development and shared insights in academic identity formation.

Confidence in developing a pedagogy for higher education and contributing to established communities of practice were key indicators of successfully making the shift to becoming an academic for physiotherapists (Hurst, 2010). Others (for instance, Evans et al. (2010)) referred to practices that enabled thinking and feeling one's way into a professional identity. These were facilitated by engaging in 'learning conversations' and hearing 'war stories'; voicing (articulating) developing understandings to others, being stretched through opportunities to work at a different level. Harmon et al. (2022) proposed that for early career nurse academics, the use and adaption of social capital and habitus, could inform the construction of leadership skills, particularly transformational leadership styles through creative inquiry that grappled with past, present and future paradigms.

For some (see Norton et al., 2011), a participatory action project emphasized the highly relational and strengths-focused teaching styles of social work academics while still being academically challenging and directive. Academic identity was established through the supported setting and peer collegiality which mitigated competitive cultures in academic settings. Deliberate collaboration provided a space to shift from venting to problem-solving and offered a forum for new faculty starters who were feeling isolated and worried about teaching.

Theme 3: legitimacy, visibility and dichotomies of professional, disciplinary, and academic knowledge and skills

This theme described the hierarchies and complexities involved in academic scholarship and what constituted an academic in the helping professions. Nursing was a care discipline whose academic position was found to be commonly contested (Andrew & Robb, 2011; McNamara et al., 2012). Contention often linked to the newness of the discipline, having been born from a vocation rather than the academy, as well as debates around the quality of nursing research and the lack of original theoretical and ontological position (Barrow, 2023). Unsurprisingly, these debates contributed challenges for nurse educators in feeling comfortable in their academic identity, while the place of their discipline within the academy itself was still under scrutiny (Ebert et al., 2020). This sense of scrutiny potentially also contributes to nurse academics choosing to identify as

holding a dual identity or identifying more strongly with their practice roots than their academic ones at the initial stages of their transition (Ross et al., 2013).

Papers referred to the impact of external and internal discourses and the mechanisms that shape research, scholarship and teaching as essential to academic identity. There were three categories of being a nurse/teacher/educator, for example, where perspectives on research in those roles could be unclear (Lopes et al., 2014). In some circumstances, academic identity could be too narrowly defined and restricted to a traditional discipline, while there was a need to integrate disciplinary epistemologies to support a shift in worldview and support meeting the demands and imperatives of academic practice (Galloway & Jones, 2012). Others, see Barrow and Xu (2023) proposed that the cultural and professional roots of teacher-educator academics from practitioner backgrounds may facilitate boundary-crossing engagement, enabling these academics to enjoy and benefit from developing their academic identity. Within this debate, Seymour (2006) highlighted the perceived gap between ‘doing’ and ‘knowing’ in social work—or more accurately, the ‘talking about knowing,’ a disjuncture of greater breadth and significance than expected or prepared for of which teaching appears to be the most obvious example (p.460). Further, Seymour refers to the status of (academic) knowing and the production of knowledge, as distinct from the applied realm of ‘doing’ and in which she articulates the dilemma of ‘how to infuse the disengaged, “objective,” knowledge of university with the blood and guts of “real life?”’ (p.461).

For Evans et al. (2010) ‘putting knowledge to work’ occurred with the integration of disciplinary knowledge and work knowledge, which itself was the result of both structured learning or curriculum and teaching, alongside the use of assessment of learning. They highlighted the dual challenge for using knowledge as a resource to develop professional and academic identity simultaneously by using both curriculum and workplace knowledge as ‘benches’ for general principles and to academic requirements (Evans et al., 2010). ‘Perceived confidence and contributory factors’ were viewed as providing confidence in pedagogical knowledge and the ability to lead teaching and contribute to academic conversations with less anxiety. Role expectations and research focus contributed to a reluctance to engage in educational research (Hurst, 2010). Some studies reported how academic expectations to participate in research were unexpected and troublesome for some, leading to feelings of confusion, conflict, and loss (Almond, 2023; Lee et al., 2022).

One solution proposed was the use of active horizontal and vertical networks to support research and scholarship collaborations (Harmon et al., 2022). Other initiatives included protected time for new educators to meet with experienced educators, who had successfully transitioned, to discuss challenges with teaching, in their new roles and identities, and specifically the cultural differences, for example, a more individualized culture (Lee et al., 2022). While the academic adaptation could be difficult, it could support in navigating the complex space and learning how a university works and how this might challenge previous stereotypes of academics (Barrow & Xu, 2023).

Undertaking funded research was stressful especially when combined with high teaching workloads, although the use of the maintenance of individual portfolios in nursing was viewed as useful to those growing their academic career, forming a personal contract and helping them achieve their career goals (Almond, 2023; Wyllie et al., 2016). Reviewed papers also provided a range of perspectives on factors

that would support their development, including the importance of a good learning environment in the nursing discipline, contextualizing contributions, demonstrating care and the provision of good role models for students (Lopes et al., 2014). Barrow (2023) noted that nursing academics founded relative ease in adopting teaching roles but not research roles. This epistemological impediment has been due to the lack of structure or 'regime of truth' (Barrow, 2023). This includes what some have noted as a history of anti-intellectualism between those trained within the National Health Service as opposed to academic qualifications based in Higher Education (Andrew et al., 2009). Indeed, in social work, concerns about anti-intellectualism might arguably be reflected in the introduction of fast-track and apprenticeship social work training programs in the UK, with some local authorities preferring this time-efficient form of social work training over traditional university-based degrees (Hanley, 2022; Scourfield et al., 2021). Furthermore, tensions have arisen between institutional research goals to establish research scholarship profiles, and the realities of nurse academics priorities which can impact on the development of academic identity. Lopes et al. (2014) also observed the role of power relations within the academy, along with historical and biographical features of the professions that enter the academy and the importance of research. Nurse educators for example consider education as their primary responsibility and do not define themselves as researchers and unlike teaching, find this a challenging aspect of their identities (Lopes et al., 2014). Consequently, there are continuing debates that question the validity of nursing as a discipline within UK Higher Education, meaning that for Andrew et al. (2009), nurses were not considered to be contributing on equal terms with other academics to the development of professional knowledge. Those that wished to be research active valued doctoral study opportunities and the creation of new research projects, courses, and advanced scholarship, albeit they highlighted the impact of institutional constraints on their research development (Lopes et al., 2014). Prioritising associated theoretical knowledge and value caused incongruence in identity which gave rise to a rupture in how they viewed themselves, with an identity of being a teacher first being contested in this setting, especially in relation to individualized behaviors that characterize academia (Barrow & Xu, 2023). Andrew et al. (2009) view nursing academia as continuing to struggle to articulate its unique aspirational scholarly agenda, with no ideal blueprint. For social work academics, the competitive environment/culture was described as having increased (mostly tacit) pressure to undertake research activities, doctoral study, or to submit papers for publication, despite having little research knowledge or experience' (Almond, 2023, p. 277).

In considering the recruitment and retention of academic staff in disciplines such as nursing and midwifery, Attenborough and Abbott (2019) suggest that institutions appreciate nursing and midwifery as academic subjects, with clinical credibility being required in several domains, including clinical practice, research, academic skills, and competence. Routine professional processes, for example revalidation, enable academics to connect with clinical colleagues, as well as to remind the academic institution, of the importance of professional registration for the delivery of these programmes. Gendered hierarchies of knowledge (Seymour, 2006) were often reflected in the nature of the helping professions, such that it normalized masculine and white academic discourse and authority.

Theme 4: the strategic imperatives for supporting transitions within workforce development for the helping professions

This theme analyzed the required academic institutional support necessary to capitalize on the benefits of developing and maintaining unrecognized academic identity in the helping professions. Almond's (2023) work acknowledged the importance given by participants to supportive mechanisms such as induction or performance development review along with developmental opportunities, that were planned rather than accidental (p.276). These experiences stress the importance of formal strategies that transcend individual's immediate work experiences to acknowledge the wider culture of the neoliberal academy, implying a more active stance that enables and promotes their contribution.

In considering their personal experience in law and social work Galloway & Jones, (2012) note changing HEI contexts and a growing importance of teaching in the organizational and national policy agenda. They argue that although HEIs might assume that a 'combined' identity is standard (as seen in typical university promotion criteria), their own experiences show otherwise, facing both active resistance and passive avoidance in developing academic lives and identities. This encompasses the notion of 'fusion epistemology' which enables academics to see and understand the world through integrating multiple dimensions, meeting the demands and imperatives of contemporary practice. The worldview resulting from this 'fusion epistemology' allows academics to build their academic identity by integrating both discipline-based epistemology (traditional scholarly knowledge and methods) and educational epistemology (knowledge and approaches from the scholarship of teaching and learning) (Galloway & Jones, 2012).

Recruitment and retention were areas of concern in clinical practice and academic settings (Attenborough & Abbott, 2019). Institutions need to implement strategies that retain experienced nursing faculty, to ensure future leadership vital to survival of the profession (Tufano et al., 2023). Evans et al. (2010) views multi-faceted partnerships between educational institutions, care organizations and workplaces through 'industry educators' and brokers, as having the potential to increase and embed knowledge into and across programmes, workplace practices and engage learners, so as to enable compatibility between employers, professional body and course requirements. Barrow and Xu's (2022) nursing participants discussed devising, amending, and reinforcing the practice-cognitive structures, codes, rules, as well as conceptual frameworks and the ways in which they draw on history, to inform current and future nursing practice. This is aligned with research practice in creating the conditions for a level of ontological congruence, which was viewed as only possible when the university actively seeks to strengthen academic identities.

Support for transition highlighted the importance of orientation programmes that explicitly discuss values, expectations, language and policies and procedures within academia, and opportunities to observe or shadow teaching, as well as undertake formal training on teaching practice (Lee et al., 2022). Structured induction was also viewed as necessary to address research skills to enable novice researchers to contribute to research activities (Hurst, 2010). Seymour (2006) argued that social work needs to be vocal and unapologetic in articulating its unique contribution and value in academia, actively resisting attempts to join other professions in peddling of knowledge claims, expertise and authority. Critiquing the commodification of knowledge, where expertise is

packaged and sold as a product, Seymour (2006) argues that this undermines the core values of social work, which are rooted in critical reflection, social justice, and relational practice. As such, Seymour (2006) emphasizes that credible academic knowledge in social work should not be confined to traditional, positivist models of expertise. Instead, it should embrace pluralism, reflexivity, and contextual and dynamic understanding. Social work's key strength as a discipline, therefore, lies in its distinctiveness, particularly its commitment to ethical practice and advocacy, rather than in adopting the authoritative stance of more technocratic professions.

In terms of student experience, personal interactions with students and colleagues were considered vital to educator identity development, with the motivation of witnessing student growth and progress as an incentive for educators' retention (Barrow & Xu, 2022; Lee et al., 2022). Gaps in structured support, such as enabling ongoing professional registration as well as academic progression, were viewed as curtailing both individuals as well as the education of the next generation of professionals (Attenborough & Abbott, 2019).

Discussion and conclusion

It is clear that academic identity is a crucial component to the social reproduction of the social work profession, the development of appropriate skills and the integration of research skills into academic practice. However, despite the importance of the development of this identity for the future of leadership in the social work discipline, ensuring research capacity development and engaging in the development and dissemination of knowledge, little attention has been given to this in the literature or policy. Globally, it is therefore important for social work and allied professions to consider the learning and resulting implications from this review of the literature. Consequently, it is useful to return to the five key research questions that were used to formulate our study, and to consider the insights that emerge as lessons for the profession and the global social work academy.

Firstly, in considering our question: what are the factors that influence academic identity development in the care professions? Academic identity development in care professions is influenced by multiple factors, including cognitive, psychological, and sociological dimensions, as well as the complexities of transitioning from practice to academia. The recognition of the need to provide time and accept that transition takes place over several phases, with identity formation often occurring over a period of 1.5–3 years, with significant transition points described as 'crossing over' from clinical practice to academia, often involving cognitive and emotional adjustments (Hurst, 2010; Lee et al., 2022; Wyllie et al., 2016). For practitioners entering academia, dual identity poses individual challenges. Professionals frequently experience duality between their established clinical or professional identity and emerging academic identity, which can lead to anxiety and imposter syndrome as they struggle to reconcile the two roles (Hurst, 2010). In nursing, this anxiety and sense of imposter syndrome led novice academics to hold onto their practice identities more strongly than their academic identities (Ross et al., 2013). By contrast, social work in the UK is underpinned by a stronger theoretical and regulatory foundation. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Benchmark Statement locates social work within the social sciences and emphasizes criticality, reflection and interdisciplinary knowledge, reinforced by regulatory expectations that students become critical practitioners

(Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [QAA], 2019; Social Work England, 2021). Similarly in Scotland, the Scottish Social Services Council [SSSC] (2024) requires social work education to be at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 11, with social work curricula adequately encompassing the reflective, ethical, theoretical basis of the discipline. These frameworks arguably provide social work with a more explicitly theorized disciplinary base than nursing, though both professions continue to negotiate their academic legitimacy within neoliberal and performative higher education contexts (Daly et al., 2023).

Likewise, unplanned transitions can result as some practitioners enter academia unintentionally, which adds additional complexity to identity development (Almond, 2023). Indeed, for teacher-educators, an unintentional transition from practice to academia was characterized by the notion that being an academic was often not the original goal, but instead a position they found themselves in at a certain point in their career (Almond, 2023). The resulting personal facilitators include passion, adaptability, and a willingness to embrace new opportunities, while barriers encompass fear of new roles, culture shock, and a stronger commitment to clinical or practice roles than to education (Andrew et al., 2009).

In relation to questions about the learning that can be taken from nursing and allied care professions about academic identity, the insights provide valuable lessons for social work. The literature highlighted the impact of new work cultures and community. Transitioning from a collaborative practice setting to a competitive academic environment often results in culture shock, with informal peer support and mentoring being effective in easing this transition (Hurst, 2010; Wyllie et al., 2016). The nurturing of communities of practice played a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and authentic scholarly engagement, enabling smoother identity development (Wyllie et al., 2016; Harmon et al., 2022). So too, the role of interdisciplinary relationships provides social work academics with interdisciplinary networks to help bridge the gap between practice and academia, enhancing the appreciation of practice-based expertise (Almond, 2023). Challenging of discipline legitimacy was common within nursing, with social work practitioners potentially facing similar debates about their academic legitimacy, often due to their professional vocational origins (Barrow, 2023; Seymour, 2006).

Exploring questions about what may drive or hinder research activity in the care professions, we noted that these research activity factors in care professions were both complex and varied. These could include tensions between institutional expectation and epistemological position, with a gap between practice and academic requirements often being evident and needing to be addressed. Research expectations could also be overwhelming when first entering the academy and could lead to a reluctance to engage in research activities (Almond, 2023; Lee et al., 2022). The establishment of greater confidence and research identity were seen as positive developments. A lack of confidence and clarity in research roles hinders engagement in the literature, with the prioritization of clinical education over research further complicating academic identity development (Hurst, 2010). Structured programs, such as protected time for research development and mentorship, are seen as helpful in addressing research skill gaps, and thusly contributing to a stronger sense of academic identity (Lee et al., 2022; Wyllie et al., 2016).

Support mechanisms as a whole were therefore seen as crucial components in facilitating successful transitions to the academy, and in identity consolidation as a whole. In

nursing and midwifery, support gaps were perceived to exist in relation to maintaining professional or clinical registration and meeting the associated requirements, whilst being an academic (Attenborough & Abbott, 2019). In comparison, for registered social work professionals in England, Social Work England (2024) allows teaching and lecturing hours to be recorded as continuing professional development, meaning that for those social workers in the academy, academic practices can contribute to ongoing professional registration requirements.

In relation to the factors that influence the decision to pursue PhD study and how it is valued and perceived, our findings suggest that decisions to pursue PhD studies are influenced by individual aspirations, career development opportunities, and organizational factors. For some professionals, completing a PhD was seen as a natural progression in their career trajectory, especially for those transitioning into academia from senior practice roles (Barrow & Xu, 2023). However, there was also increasing (often implicit) pressure in academia to engage in doctoral studies and publish research, especially within competitive environments (Almond, 2023). Indeed, although their study was published out with the scope of our review, in their duo-ethnography Edwards and Parkinson (2024) reflect on the transition to academia from social work practice, citing the explicit undermining of their extensive level of practice expertise within the academic sphere, where they described feeling alienated from the academic community due to not holding a PhD. The devaluing of practice skills and expertise could thusly also contribute to pressures experienced to pursue doctoral studies, in order to feel validated within the academic environment. The perception of having a doctorate varies, with some practitioners viewing it as essential for legitimacy in academia, while others may feel that it does not align with their primary identity as educators or clinicians (Lopes et al., 2014). The introduction of the practice-based doctorate or 'doctorate of social work' in the UK and much of the global north has been suggested as one means by which the practice-research gap can be bridged, potentially facilitating the consolidation of an identity that balances both the practitioner and academic identity (Thyer, 2015, 2024). Therefore, it could be suggested that social work academic identity might lend itself to Professional Doctorates. As there is limited evidence however, the role of the practice-based doctorate in developing social work academic identity would merit further research to enhance our understanding of the role of research training through doctoral studies.

The final question related to what the benefits of practice knowledge and expertise in teaching in the care professions were and how these influence the professions' academic identity. Here, practice knowledge is seen as playing a crucial role in shaping teaching approaches and academic identity by bridging theory and practice. The integration of practical expertise in teaching helped ground theoretical concepts, providing students with relevant and applied learning experiences (Evans et al., 2010). It also provided legitimacy and credibility, such that academic staff with strong clinical backgrounds are often perceived as more credible by students and colleagues, particularly in disciplines where practical experience is highly valued (Attenborough & Abbott, 2019). Indeed, Edwards and Parkinson (2024) argue that as skilled professionals who hold advanced critical analysis and engagement skills, social work practitioners are well placed to contribute to research which bridges the gap between academia and practice, and to do so in methodologically appropriate, ethical ways which uphold the value-base of the profession. Despite the benefits of practitioner expertise to teaching and bridging

academic and practice knowledge gaps, practitioners may still struggle to establish a research identity, especially when the discipline's academic position is contested, as seen in nursing (Barrow, 2023). Consequently, using practice-based knowledge to inform curriculum development and teaching strategies could help navigate the tensions between 'knowing' and 'doing,' as well as promote a more holistic approach to academic identity development (Seymour, 2006).

Overall, the development of academic identity in care professions involves navigating complex transitions, leveraging practice-based expertise, and addressing research and legitimacy challenges within a competitive and individualistic academic environment. This has key implications for the social work academy, in which recruitment and retention of the social work academic workforce would benefit from the prioritization of community and relationality, bridging of practice and academic knowledge gaps and additional (unstructured and structured) support during the transition from practice and induction to academia. Further areas of research include the mentoring and retention of social work academics, the engendering of research culture in the social work academy, and the influence of social work's ontological position on the academic identity of the discipline. Given the already contested nature of the academic positions of some of the disciplines discussed in this systematic review, it is worth noting that social work, like many care professions, is under-valued (Block et al., 2018). Therefore, further research is merited in understanding how the already under-valued nature of caring professions, like social work, contributes to their contested positions within the academy. Engendering a greater understanding of the influence of conceptualizations of social work, and helping professions more generally, would not only contribute to potentially strengthening social work's academic identity, but to bridging existing practice and knowledge gaps, strengthening its ontological position.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Joanna Santos-Petiot  <http://orcid.org/0009-0003-1203-9252>

Trish Hafford-Letchfield  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0105-0678>

References

- Almond, T. (2023). The transitional experiences of social work practitioners working in higher education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 43(3), 269–289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2023.2208387>
- Andrew, N., Ferguson, D., Wilkie, G., Corcoran, T., & Simpson, L. (2009). Developing professional identity in nursing academics: The role of communities of practice. *Nurse Education Today*, 29(6), 607–611. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2009.01.012>
- Andrew, N., & Robb, Y. (2011). The duality of professional practice in nursing: Academics for the 21st century. *Nurse Education Today*, 31(5), 429–433. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2010.08.013>

- Attenborough, J., & Abbott, S. (2019). The impact of Nursing and Midwifery Council revalidation on the professional identity of academic staff in a higher education institution: A qualitative study. *Nursing Open*, 6(2), 434–442. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.224>
- Barretti, M. (2004). What do we know about the professional socialization of our students? *Journal of Social Work Education*, 40(2), 255–283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2004.10778493>
- Barrow, M. (2023). Ontological congruence, discipline and academic identity in university schools of nursing. *Higher Education*, 85(3), 637–650. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00858-0>
- Barrow, M., & Xu, L. (2022). Constituting ethical academics in teacher education: Navigating multiple and conflicting discourses. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 109, 103572. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103572>
- Barrow, M., & Xu, L. (2023). Constructing university-based teacher educators: Serendipity, complexity and community. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 42(3), 530–543. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2022.2089099>
- Block, K., Croft, A., & Schmader, T. (2018). Worth less?: Why men (and women) devalue care-oriented careers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1353. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01353>
- Busch, L. (2023). *Knowledge for sale: The neoliberal takeover of higher education*. The MIT Press.
- Cleary, T. (2018). Social work education and the marketisation of UK universities. *British Journal of Social Work*, 48(8), 2253–2271. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcx158>
- Daly, M., McColloch, T., & Smith, M. (2023). The place of knowledge in constructing social work identity: Validating vagueness. *British Journal of Social Work*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad212>
- Ebert, L., Mollart, L., Nolan, S. J., & Jefford, E. (2020). Nurses and midwives teaching in the academic environment: An appreciative inquiry. *Nurse Education Today*, 84, 104263. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2019.104263>
- Edwards, D., & Parkinson, K. (2024). Reflections of social work academics on moving from social work practice to the academic environment. *Practice: Social Work in Action*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09503153.2024.2386247>
- Eures. (2024). *Labour shortages and surpluses in Europe*. European Union.
- Evans, K., Guile, D., Harris, J., & Allan, H. (2010). Putting knowledge to work: A new approach. *Nurse Education Today*, 30(3), 245–251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2009.10.014>
- Forenza, B., & Eckert, C. (2018). Social worker identity: A profession in context. *Social Work*, 63(1), 17–26. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swx052>
- Galloway, K., & Jones, P. (2012). Scholarship in the discipline and higher education: The need for a fusion epistemology focused on academic identity. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 31(6), 931–933. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.744710>
- Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 26, 91–108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848.x>
- Hafford-Letchfield, T. (2007). Factors affecting the retention of learners following the degree in social work at a university in the South-East of England. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, 6(3), 170–184. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-6861.2007.00159>
- Hanley, J. (2022). Better together: Comprehensive social work education in England. *Critical and Radical Social Work*, 10(1), 127–143. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204986021X16109919484204>
- Harmon, J., Howard, M. &, & Sharrad, S. (2022). Original article habitus, social capital, leadership, and reflection: Insights for early career nurse academics. *Collegian*, 29(5), 774–781. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.colegn.2022.02.005>
- Holmes, E., Miscampbell, G., & Robin, B. (2013). *Reforming social work. Improving social worker recruitment, training and retention*. Policy Exchange.
- Hurst, K. M. (2010). Experiences of new physiotherapy lecturers making the shift from clinical practice into academia. *Physiotherapy*, 96(3), 240–247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physio.2009.11.009>
- Jahan, N., Naveed, S., & Zeshan, M. (2016). How to conduct a systematic review: A narrative literature review. *Cureus*, 8(11). <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.864>

- Kassem, R., & Mitsakis, F. (2023). Uk higher education staff's mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19. Employee relations. Advance online publication. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 46(2), 229–249. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-03-2023-0166>
- Lee, S. L., Rees, C. E., O'Brien, B. C., & Palermo, C. (2022). Identities and roles through clinician-educator transitions: A systematic narrative review. *Nurse Education Today*, 118, 105512. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2022.105512>
- Lopes, A., Boyd, P., Andrew, N., & Periera, F. (2014). The research-teaching nexus in nurse and teacher education: Contributions of an ecological approach to academic identities in professional fields. *Higher Education*, 68(2), 167–183. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9700-2>
- Marques, R. M. G., Lopes, A., & Magalhães, A. M. (2024). Academic identities and higher education change: Reviewing the evidence. *Educational Research*, 66(2), 228–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2024.2334760>
- McNamara, M. S., Fealy, G. M. &, & Geraghty, R. (2012). The visibility of the discipline on the websites of academic nursing schools. *Nursing Outlook*, 60(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2011.05.008>
- Moorhead, B., Bell, K., & Bowles, W. (2016). Exploring the development of professional identity with newly qualified social workers. *Social Work Education*, 35(3), 276–288. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2016.1152588>
- Moorhead, B., Otani, K., Bowles, W., Baginsky, M., Bell, K., Ivory, N., Mackenzie, H., & Savaya, R. (2025). Toward a definition of professional identity for social work: Findings from a scoping review. *British Journal of Social Work*, 55(2), 877–896. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcae197>
- Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., & Harris, J. (2018). *Recruitment and retention in adult social care services*. Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King's College London. Available from: [Recruitment_and_retention_report.pdf](#).
- Morley, C., MacFarlane, S., & Ablett, P. (2017). The neoliberal colonisation of social work education: A critical analysis and practices for resistance. *Advances in Social Work & Welfare Education*, 19(2), 25–40. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.295064490880318>
- Norton, C. L., Russel, A., Wisner, B., & Uriarte, J. (2011). Reflective teaching in social work education: Findings from a participatory action research study. *Social Work Education*, 30(4), 392–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2010.500658>
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. (2019). Subject benchmark statement: Social work. QAA. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-social-work.pdf>.
- Ross, F., Marks-Maran, D., & Tye, C. (2013). A foot in two camps: An exploratory study of nurse leaders in universities. *Nurse Education Today*, 33(11), 1342–1346. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.02.008>
- Scottish Social Services Council. (2024). *Scottish requirements for social work education 2024*. Available at: Social work | Scottish Social Services Council.
- Scourfield, J., O'Donnell, C., Stepanova, E., Elliott, M., Warner, N., Maxwell, N., Jones, R., Carpenter, J., & Smith, R. (2021). *Social work fast-track programmes: Retention and progression* [online]. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038249/Fast_track_final_report.pdf
- Seymour, K. (2006). From 'doing' to 'knowing': Becoming an academic. *Qualitative Social Work Research and Practice*, 5(4), 459–469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325006070289>
- Social Work England. (2021). *Qualifying education and training standards: Guidance 2021*. <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/qualifying-education-and-training-standards-guidance-2021/>
- Social Work England. (2024). *Continuing professional development (CPD) guidance for social workers*: Available at: CPD guidance - Social Work England.
- Thyer, B. (2015). The DSW: From skeptic to convert. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 43(3), 313–316. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-015-0551-4>
- Thyer, B. A. (2024). The dsw to the rescue? A response to Feldman. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 35(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315241283368>

- Trevithick, P. (2008). Revisiting the knowledge base of social work: A framework for practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38(6), 1212–1237. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcm026>
- Tufano, V. C., Summers, E. J., & Covington, B. (2023). Motivators for nurse educators to persist in their profession: A phenomenological research study. *Nurse Education Today*, 123, 105725. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2023.105725>
- Walls, P. (2011). Multicultural competence: Are BSW students adequately prepared? *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, 14(2), 141–160. <https://doi.org/10.18084/basw.14.2.6244025003u46w61>
- Williamson, B. (2024). Overhauling research commercialisation at UK universities. *Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2024.2351798>
- Wilson, G. (2013). Evidencing reflective practice in social work education: Theoretical uncertainties and practical challenges. *British Journal of Social Work*, 43(1), 154–172. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcr170>
- Wyllie, A., DiGiacomo, M., Jackson, D., Davidson, P., & Phillips, J. (2016). Acknowledging attributes that enable the career academic nurse to thrive in the tertiary education sector: A qualitative systematic review. *Nurse Education Today*, 45, 212–218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2016.08.010>
- Xu, L., & Grant, B. (2020). Doctoral publishing and academic identity work: Two cases. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 39(7), 1502–1515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1728522>