Dominant conceptions of leadership in higher education have become synonymous with formally defined senior managerial roles and responsibilities. By contrast, the role of academics as intellectual leaders is comparatively neglected. ‘Hybrid’ roles among senior academics are commonplace but rarely distinguish between the expectations of managerial and more broadly based intellectual leadership. However, intellectual leadership is a tricky concept to define and can sometimes be represented as a contradiction in terms. The caricature of ‘the intellectual’ - rebellious mavericks, iconoclasts rather than joiners and so on - can appear at odds with conventional definitions of leaders and managers.

The ITL is proud to present a seminar by Dr Bruce Macfarlane (The University of Hong Kong), who will explore the concept of intellectual leadership in higher education with reference to his research on the role and attitudes of ‘full’ university professors (Macfarlane, 2011). A number of dispositions and roles are identified in relation to intellectual leadership which he argues relate to the importance of striking a balance between the privileges of academic freedom and the responsibilities of academic duty.

Dr Macfarlane is a Senior Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy and a member of the Editorial Boards of Teaching in Higher Education and Higher Education Quarterly. His research interests include academic practice, leadership and management, and he has written three single-author books focusing on professional ethics, in addition to numerous articles and book chapters.


Date: Tuesday 2 November  
Time: 12.30 - 2.00pm (12.30 for lunch, seminar to commence at 1pm)  
Location: New Law School, Seminar Room 446  
RSVP: Please register for catering purposes