

Roger Brown has had a number of leading roles within higher education – from senior civil servant to vice-chancellor – but he describes himself about all as a “policy analyst”. Few people in this country have offered more informed and often unsparing analysis of changing government policy on funding, quality assurance and widening participation, but he has always combined incisive criticism with a willingness to set out alternatives.

Speaking on behalf of the editorial board. Which judges the award, Bahram Bekhradnia, director of the Higher Education Policy Institute, described Professor Brown as “one of a, sadly too small, group of people holding senior positions in higher education who are not afraid to speak the truth to power – in Roger’s case taking no prisoners on his way”.

Since leaving his position as vice-chancellor of Southampton Solent University in 2003, which “he nursed through the achievement of university title”, he has joined “a select and distinguished group who relinquished their trappings of office to become humble professors of higher education”, in his case at Liverpool Hope University. But although is it this last position that he has come into his own as “a highly visible and highly respected – indeed, in some quarters, feared – commentator”, Mr. Bekhradnia saw professor Brown’s whole career as very much pf a piece.

His time as chief executive of the Higher Education Quality Council was notable for “its pioneering work on standards”. Before that, at the Department of Trade and Industry in the Thatcher administration, he stood out as “effectively a champion for higher education”. He has continued to be one until this day.