

The Women in Science (WiSci) Project

Stage 1 interim report: academic staff survey and focus groups

The WiSci project

The Women in Science (WiSci) project was initiated by Professor David Day, Dean of the Faculty of Science and was officially launched on 8 August 2008 by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence.

Professor Day decided to sponsor the project after becoming aware that, although women are well represented among undergraduate and postgraduate students and even among postdoctoral fellows, they are under-represented among staff in senior academic roles. He also believed that women were over-represented in the lower levels of the academic hierarchy and tended not to apply for promotion in the same numbers as men.

The project's goals are:

- to identify the obstacles that prevent women achieving senior roles in the sciences
- to encourage more women in the sciences into senior academic roles
- to support more women in achieving satisfying and productive careers in science.

WiSci is driven by a project team and supported by a steering committee. The project team consists of:

- Cindy Wilkinson, Director Academic Administration, Faculty of Science
- Melissa Stone, HR Advisor, SydneyPeople
- Penny Oxford, Learning Advisor, Learning Solutions.

The steering committee members are:

- Dr Elaine Baker, Principal Research Fellow, School of Geosciences (Chair)
- Dr Dieter Hochuli, Senior Lecturer, School of Biological Sciences
- Professor Kate Joliffe, School of Chemistry
- Ms Ellie Kable, Laboratory Manager, Electron Microscope Unit
- Associate Professor Robyn McConchie, Director RIAP
- Professor Robyn Overall, Head of School, School of Biological Sciences
- Dr Louise Sharpe, Clinical Research Director, School of Psychology
- Associate Professor Rosanne Taylor, Pro-Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Science.

The project team began by gathering information about the range of issues that concern women developing careers in the sciences. The project timeline was divided into three stages which match the three main target groups for this process: academic staff; general staff; and PhD students and post-doctoral fellows.

The same process will be followed for each group. A link to an online survey is emailed to both male and female staff, using a list obtained from the University's HR system. Once the results of the survey have been evaluated, a number of focus groups are to be convened to explore the key issues in more detail.

Stage 1, academic staff, has now been completed and this interim report sets out the information gathered from this group and the keys issues that have been identified.

The academic staff survey

One of the project's first initiatives was to survey electronically permanent and contract male and female academic staff at all levels within the Faculties of Science, Veterinary Science, Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the School of Medical Science. The survey was designed to identify the most crucial issues that affect the working lives of women in the sciences and also to benchmark the experience and attitudes of academic women against those of male academic staff.

The survey questions covered a range of areas including access to research grants, career development opportunities and participation in different types of leave. Participants were also asked to agree or disagree with series of statements relating to perceptions of institutional attitude, for example: "I feel like a valued member of the University community", and "My working environment is generally accepting of gender difference".

The survey received 184 out of a possible 822 responses, a response rate of approximately 22%. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (65%) were female academic staff.

Appendix A contains a list of responses to the questions, sorted by gender. A list of responses in graph form is available on the WiSci website, accessed via the Faculty of Science site or at www.science.usyd.edu.au/wisci.

Appendix B contains a sample of responses from both female and male staff to the final question of the survey, an open-ended question asking for additional comments.

The survey results highlighted some areas of interest which were explored in the focus groups. These points included the following.

Time at the University compared to level of appointment

62.2% of female academic staff who responded had been at the University for less than 10 years, whilst 49.2% of male academic staff who responded had been at the University for less than 10 years.

81.3% of female academic staff respondents were Level C or below, compared with 46.2% of male academic staff respondents.

8.9% of female academic staff respondents and 35.4% of male academic staff respondents were Level E.

Number of female academic staff in research-only roles

Of the academic staff who replied to the survey, 42% of the female staff were in research-only roles, compared to 23.1% of male staff.

Flexible working conditions

41.5% of female academic staff respondents were working part-time or had worked part-time in the past. 4.9% of male academic staff respondents were working part-time or had worked part-time in the past.

34.3% of female academic staff reported that they were using or had used parental leave. 9.8% of male academic staff reported that they were using or had used parental leave.

The impact on an academic career of a period of part-time work seemed to be one of the major issues raised by respondents.

Male academic staff more positive about acceptance in the workplace

Male academic staff were more likely to agree that their workplace was accepting of difference than female academic staff.

When asked if their workplace was accepting of ethnic differences, 71.0% of male academic staff agreed and 57.9% of female academic staff agreed.

When asked about cultural or lifestyle differences, 58.1% of male academics agreed compared to 51.4% of female academics.

Male academics mostly agreed that their workplace was accepting of gender differences (58.1%) but only 35.5% of female academics agreed with that statement.

Female academic staff feeling valued

29% of female academic staff agreed with the statement: "I feel like a valued member of my school / unit." 45.2% of male academic staff agreed with that statement.

21.5% of female academic staff agreed with the statement: "I feel like a valued member of my faculty." 33.9% of male academic staff agreed with that statement.

11.2% of female academic staff agreed with the statement: "I feel like a valued member of the University community." 24.2% of male academic staff agreed with that statement

Career advancement prospects / development

26.4% of female academic staff agreed that they were aware of opportunities for career advancement, compared to 58.4% of male academic staff.

28.3% of female academic staff agreed that development was equally available to all people in their teams, compared to 45.2% of male academic staff.

When asked about professional development in the last twelve months, 93.5% of male academic staff had attended a conference, compared to 75.0% of female academic staff. 85.5% of male academic staff and 69.2% of female academic staff had presented at a conference.

19.8% of female academic staff surveyed agreed that they had a good idea of career paths, compared to 41.9% of male academic staff.

Networking and mentoring

Male academic staff were more likely to meet up with a network of colleagues face to face than female academic staff (62.9% of male staff compared to 47.1% of female staff). The percentage of female academic staff who answered the question about having a mentor with "no" or "not really" was 76.9%, while 80.7% of male academic staff chose those options.

This appears to suggest that there is an opportunity to improve the mentoring programs available to all academic staff, and it is an issue that was raised by a number of participants in the focus groups.

Equal opportunity

When asked to respond to the statement that “management supports equal opportunity for staff”, 21.7% of female academic staff agreed. In comparison, 43.5% of male academic staff agreed with the statement.

In total, 53.8% of female academic staff either agreed or tended to agree, while 85.4% of male academic staff agreed or tended to agree with this statement.

The academic staff focus groups

Three focus groups were convened; two on the Camperdown campus and one at the Camden campus. The project team included the staff at the Camden campus specifically, in order to gain a balanced view of the issues facing women in the sciences, to reflect the views of academic staff across a number of sites, and to identify any issues that are unique to women working in academic roles on remote campuses.

Participants were initially recruited via a survey question in which they were asked to express interest in attending a focus group. Additional participants were recruited by word of mouth.

In total, 24 participants attended the three sessions.

- Session 1 had eight attendees; three male and five female.
- Session 2 had nine attendees; one male and eight female.
- Session 3, the Camden session, had seven attendees, all female.

Two of the male participants were professors, one was a level D academic and one was a level C. One of the female participants was a professor, three were level C, twelve were level B and two were level A.

Each group was taken through the same process, where participants were asked to share their views and experiences around three broad, overlapping topics. These were: career paths and career development, including SSP; infrastructure, policies and procedures; and communication and culture.

Participants in all three groups raised similar issues and had similar concerns. A summary of their comments is presented below.

Part-time work

Focus group attendees strongly confirmed that part-time work was detrimental to an academic career. Most participants felt that they were disadvantaged by working part-time, either through having a full-time workload but a part-time salary or by not being taken seriously or treated as part of the team. Other comments included:

- Working part-time was described as “academic suicide”, a “total disaster”, and “the same job for less pay”.
- Part-time work has an extremely negative impact on research output and therefore on promotion.
- Many felt they were working full-time but being paid for part-time work. “You come back part-time but you are expected to pick up a workload and responsibilities at 100%.”
- Are successful part-time people the ones who can say no to more administration?
- Being on a fixed-term contract made it hard to come back, with no job to come back to
- Managers aren’t coping with managing people working part-time or taking maternity leave.

- Your level of commitment is tied to promotion.
- Can we have more flexibility? Longer hours with fewer days?
- What precedents are there for flexible work arrangements?
- Would job sharing work in the sciences?
- It's hard to manage emails and time because everyone wants an immediate response.
- One participant is working 80% but feels she is working full-time, without the pay. She has not applied for promotion because she was told that working part-time meant she would not be successful.
- Publishing during maternity leave helps you keep in touch with your field.
- Faculty of Science Family Friendly Fellowships are great.
- Need more clarity around the criteria for fellowships.
- When you work part-time you are not seen as a "real scientist".
- You get comments like "she's in!" and "she's never there".
- There are games to play – apply for ARC funding as if you are going to work full-time and then transfer it to part-time when you get it. Never mention that you have children on the application form.
- There is frustration around the ARC restrictions on grants. Why can't post-doc positions be part-time? The same funding but stretched out over a longer time?
- "When I worked 3 days a week I didn't feel part of the group".
- "There was no guidance for how much work I was expected to do".
- "I felt guilty about the amount of work I was contributing to the group".
- It's hard to be first author when you are part-time.
- Women take technical roles instead of academic ones to have a secure part-time job.

Teaching and research

- Research-only roles are seen as temporary and those people don't have a voice.
- Science is different to other faculties – you need a lab to do your research and so your flexibility is reduced.
- When you are in a research-only position you don't feel like you are part of the culture. I don't want to be part of the culture where I am because it is "yuck".
- "It would be good to have longer contracts with greater job security as you can't plan more than a year ahead."
- You are treated differently if you are on external funding or in a temporary role.
- If you have family commitments it's hard to put in extra hours for research. Teaching is an immediate need and so your research suffers.
- The uni is very focussed on research and teaching is not recognised.
- Academics can get trapped in intensive teaching roles where they have an extremely high teaching load and their research suffers as a consequence. This means they are not able to optimise promotion opportunities.
- Female lecturers often have to be seen as "nice" to get good scores from students, whereas male lecturers are expected to be unapproachable. They don't need to be "motherly" or "sympathetic".

Maternity leave

There was a strong feeling that women coming back from maternity leave are at a disadvantage unless they have kept up with their research during their absence, or they are funded to re-connect with their research when they return. If they come back to a heavy teaching load they run the risk of failing to catch up with developments in the field of research and not being able to make those connections.

- In Germany, women returning from maternity leave receive a stipend to assist them in re-engaging with their research.
- There is a lack of information about maternity leave. Managers don't understand the processes or the funding.
- There is confusion about where the funding for the leave comes from, for example. Some managers don't replace people on maternity leave to save money – they just distribute the work to the rest of the group. This causes guilt for the person on leave.
- “They make money by us going on maternity leave”.
- Your field moves on while you are away.
- You lose your contacts. Once you go back to conferences, contacts are re-established and offers of research collaborations start coming back.
- You feel like you're asking favours of people to cover your teaching.
- There is no formal process for arranging cover for mat leave.
- Many women want to come back from maternity leave and have a research-only period, with no teaching or admin and funding to support their research.
- How do you really define performance relative to opportunity?
- Flexibility depends on your relationship with your supervisor.

Childcare

There was general agreement that the University child care support is minimal. When compared with other similar institutions Sydney University has it as a very low priority. University staff are not given preference for the few childcare places that are available and this can have a significant effect on working life.

- This is a very big issue for many people.
- Why aren't the new buildings being designed with childcare in mind?
- There is concern about the lack of places in the nearby childcare centres. Participants want staff to be given preference.
- There is not any salary sacrifice option at the moment. Is it a tax advantage? There is a lot of confusion about this.
- We need onsite child care, vacation care, before- and after-school care.
- The uni is supportive towards people with carer responsibilities.
- Money for grants to travel doesn't go far if taking the whole family.

SSP / Sabbatical

- Everyone agreed that a sabbatical was essential for building a research profile and for providing opportunities for career enhancement.
- It is difficult if your partner is not an academic – not all can take long periods of leave to travel with you.
- If the partner is an academic you try to take SSP at the same time – there should be more done at the uni to facilitate this.
- It is hard to coordinate SSP with school-age children.
- Again, there is a lack of information – and a great deal of frustration that no one can give accurate advice.

- Many participants discussed the idea of “stay at home sabbatical” – less satisfying but great to have an admin and teaching break and just focus on research. They want more opportunities to do this.
- The impact of sabbatical on small schools was discussed.
- “I don’t have a mobile life so I can’t take SSP”.
- You should be able to build up eligibility for SSP as a pro-rata option if you work part-time.
- Not having taken SSP should not disadvantage you as some people just can’t move their family.
- It should be possible to take SSP while still at the University just not doing teaching or admin. This is the case in the US where it is common practice for academic staff to take SSP within their own institution and just focus on research and papers.

Networking and mentoring

- There is no place on campus to network.
- Can we have a staff club? Other universities have clubs which provide opportunities for networking, and place to take guests to the university. Perhaps we could include PhD students. We need a relaxed setting to discuss work, research, etc.
- Can we have a faculty club?
- We need a noticeboard.
- “I feel like I don’t know anyone”
- There is no sense of community.
- Having a regular lunch with colleagues is good.
- We need a safe place to discuss work.
- Most staff don’t have a mentor or have had to find their own.
- There is a lack of successful female mentors.
- If men are seen as more confident, should women be mentored to be confident? Would male mentors be better than female mentors in this case?
- Mid-level mentors are best because the high-flyers can be daunting.
- Women need to be mentored to understand the processes at the University and how to be successful.

Career development

- Most wanted support for grant writing, especially at the start of their careers, and help with CV writing.
- Grant applications and promotions are “a bit of a game” and there is insufficient training on how to do it.
- The supervisor’s role is important in mentoring people to apply for promotion.
- We need more transparent criteria for promotions.
- It would be good to have independent advice on whether I am ready for promotion.
- Junior level staff get stuck with more pastoral care.
- We need help with travel to conferences.
- PM&D reviewers need to be more aware of the promotions process.
- You feel that you are not as competitive if you haven’t worked overseas, but this is not always possible.
- Men apply for promotion too early and women wait too long.
- The uni has a reputation for refusing first applications for promotions, which fits the male tendency of applying before you’re ready, getting knocked back, then applying again.
- The promotions process makes it hard to get measurable parameters in teaching and community service areas.

- The promotions ethos is “publish or perish”. This makes it a problem if you have taken a career break or you are working part-time.
- You need to push yourself to succeed before you have a family.
- You tend to go for promotion after you have kids.

Parking

- This is a major issue for the Camperdown campus, especially for staff dropping children at school and / or arriving after 9am.
- Many people want the option of short-term parking, for example for women who come back to meet with research students while they are on maternity leave.
- If you come to work after dropping the kids at school there are no parks.
- Breastfeeding mothers need help with parking close to their buildings so they can attend meetings.

Culture and communication

- In many meetings and seminars, the communication style is aggressive. People don't want to be part of it if they are not naturally like that. They stop putting forward their own ideas.
- Aggressive behaviour would not be tolerated in a regular workplace, so why is it in the University?
- Many aggressors are intelligent enough to stop before they “cross the line”.
- Men are often perceived as not listening, shouting and cutting women off when they talk. (Male participants reacted to this statement by asking female participants to tell men not to shout at them or interrupt).
- Some personality types are good at science but not at communicating or leading people. New hires above a certain level should be made to attend a communication course as part of their contract. They should also have basic training in EEO and HR.
- The university hires “dragon slayers”.
- We have weak management that lets bad behaviour continue.
- Complaints about big players are swept under the carpet if those people bring the University money or kudos.
- Men seem to network better with their supervisors and are promoted quickly.
- One female academic, the only one in her research team, had an empty milk carton shaken in her face and was asked to go to buy more milk. No male members of the team were approached.
- Female staff have the perception that they are given the “bad” committees and “bad” admin.
- There is tension between the need to have a work / life balance and the perception that being an academic means long hours, working weekends and an ability to put in more hours as you move up the promotions scale.
- This uni has some traditional views of what is “women's work”.
- “I don't believe there are gender issues in my workplace.”
- The uni environment is more flexible than the corporate environment.
- There is a different culture between medicine and science – medicine has more women.
- One school scheduled its seminars at 5pm. When asked if they could be scheduled at 4pm, it was felt that this discriminated against people who had lectures at that time.
- Camden staff feel it is difficult to get to 9am meetings on Camperdown campus when it means leaving home at 7am. It would be good to have more seminars at Camden though the ones that are scheduled there are held at lunchtimes, which is good.
- All academic staff feel their workloads are too heavy. “The 40 / 40 / 20 split is a joke”.
- The uni needs to recognise and value the strengths of women.

- Communication styles need to change. Some people are not aware of their communication style and that it could be inappropriate.
- Supervisors have told staff that if they don't work 60 hours a week they won't get anywhere in academia. This is not possible for people with family commitments or for those who work part-time.
- "Women have different priorities".

Why are women leaving the sciences?

- The environment is no good.
- "Men and women have different coping mechanisms". Can these be taught to early career researchers?
- A deficit of women in the sciences means that women are pushed into doing a PhD, though maybe they are not cut out for it.
- Women are not aware that they can work up the ladder slowly and don't have to achieve everything early. We need more role models of "slow chuggers". You can work up the ladder later in life.
- They are sick of complaining as it does no good.
- Women who do a PhD don't understand what the career expectations will be.
- Personal choice.
- Child care.
- Lack of part-time jobs with flexible hours?
- Academics need a supportive spouse to be successful. This is harder for women as men are perceived as the breadwinners and are not expected to be as flexible or supportive as a female would be with an academic husband.

Female staff without children

- Some participants noted that women without children need to be supported as well.
- One female participant without children feels that she is expected to work more outside regular hours than others who have children.

Next steps for the project

Both the survey and the focus groups provided valuable insights into the issues facing women in the sciences. To complete Stage 1 of the WiSci project, this report will be presented to the program owner, Professor David Day, and to other project stakeholders, for their consideration.

Stage 2, the survey of general staff, will begin in May 2009 and will be followed later in the year by Stage 3, surveying post-doctoral fellows and PhD students.

Recommendations

Based on the information gathered from the academic staff who responded to the survey and who participated in the focus groups, the project team would like to recommend the following actions.

1. A structured mentoring program to be implemented by the Faculties of Science, Veterinary Science and Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, and the School of Medical Sciences. This would be a collaborative project, with the mentoring focussing on career development rather than teaching or research skills, and it would complement the existing mentoring programs in these areas. The mentoring program would be available to all academic staff.
2. More information should be available on the SSP program and this information should be easily accessible from a central source. Specifically, clarification is sought on the question of whether SSP has to be taken at another institution and whether preference is given to applications involving overseas travel.
3. More flexibility to be built into the SSP process, for example to allow couples to apply together, or for a shorter SSP to be spent at the University of Sydney.
4. More development to be available to assist all academic staff in preparing for and applying for promotion.
5. The University should investigate the possibility of offering part-time post-doctoral fellowships.
6. Part-time staff need more structure and clarity around their roles, including promotion criteria, workloads and career development opportunities. The University should define some fundamental models and procedures for people working part-time.
7. Further investigation is needed into the number of women who work in research-only, contract roles.
8. Consideration should be given to creating more networking opportunities for academic staff. This could be linked to the re-establishment of a staff club or it could mean that a series of events could be held where informal discussions can take place.

Appendix A

Demographics

Where do the respondents work?

	Total	Female	Male
Faculty of Veterinary Science	20.1%	23.5%	13.8%
Faculty of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	8.2%	5.9%	12.3%
School of Biological Sciences	12.5%	15.1%	7.7%
School of Chemistry	6.5%	2.5%	13.8%
School of Geosciences	6.0%	6.7%	4.6%
History & Philosophy of Science	1.1%	0.8%	1.5%
School of Mathematics & Statistics	5.4%	3.4%	9.2%
School of Medical Sciences	14.1%	16.0%	10.8%
School of Molecular & Microbial Biosciences	13.0%	13.4%	12.3%
School of Physics	6.0%	5.0%	7.7%
School of Psychology	4.9%	6.7%	1.5%
Other	2.2%	0.8%	4.6%

How long have the respondents worked at the University?

	Total	Female	Male
Less than 1 year	3.3%	2.5%	4.6%
1 year but less than 3 years	17.4%	21.0%	10.8%
3 years but less than 5 years	13.0%	12.6%	13.8%
5 years but less than 10 years	23.9%	26.1%	20.0%
10 years but less than 15 years	13.0%	16.0%	7.7%
15 years but less than 20 years	14.1%	10.9%	20.0%
20 years or longer	15.2%	10.9%	23.1%

What levels are the respondents?

	Total	Female	Male
Level A	11.9%	15.2%	6.2%
Level B	30.5%	38.4%	16.9%
Level C	26.0%	27.7%	23.1%
Level D	12.4%	8.9%	18.5%
Level E	18.6%	8.9%	35.4%
Other	0.6%	0.9%	0%

How do the respondents describe their roles?

	Total	Female	Male
Research only	35.0%	42.0%	23.1%
Teaching and Research	59.9%	51.8%	73.8%
Other	7.9%	9.8%	4.6%

Survey responses

Q7. When did you last receive an external research grant?

	Female	Male
No grant yet	33.0%	16.9%
Last three years	51.8%	69.2%
Last five years	4.5%	7.7%
5+ years ago	10.7%	6.2%

Q8. Have you participated in the Special Studies Program (SSP / Sabbatical?)

	Female	Male
No	81.3%	56.9%
Yes, within the last three years	5.4%	7.7%
Yes, within the last five years	3.6%	13.8%
5+ years ago	9.8%	21.5%

Q9. Do you have primary care responsibilities? (Please choose all that apply)

	Female	Male
No	67.6%	81.5%
Child / children < 5	10.8%	6.2%
Child / children 5 – 12	14.4%	6.2%
Child / children 13 - 18	11.7%	7.7%
Other primary care	5.4%	1.5%

Q10. Do you have shared care responsibilities?

	Female	Male
No	72.1%	38.5%
Child / children < 5	6.3%	18.5%
Child / children 5 – 12	10.8%	18.5%
Child / children 13 - 18	11.7%	24.6%
Yes, other	7.2%	6.2%

Q11a. Our management provides a clear sense of direction

	Female	Male
Agree	13.1%	21.0%
Tend to agree	35.5%	29.0%
?	16.8%	22.6%
Tend to disagree	24.3%	22.6%
Disagree	10.3%	4.8%

Q11b. Morale in my team is generally high

	Female	Male
Agree	22.4%	29.0%
Tend to agree	31.8%	40.3%
?	16.8%	8.1%
Tend to disagree	21.5%	19.4%
Disagree	7.5%	3.2%

Q11c. The decisions management makes concerning staff are generally fair

	Female	Male
Agree	15.0%	19.4%
Tend to agree	35.5%	40.3%
?	26.2%	29.0%
Tend to disagree	16.8%	9.7%
Disagree	6.5%	1.6%

Q11d. I feel like a valued member of my school / unit

	Female	Male
Agree	29.0%	45.2%
Tend to agree	38.3%	30.6%
?	9.3%	14.5%
Tend to disagree	13.1%	6.5%
Disagree	10.3%	3.2%

Q11e. I feel like a valued member of my faculty

	Female	Male
Agree	21.5%	33.9%
Tend to agree	28.0%	27.4%
?	27.1%	19.4%
Tend to disagree	15.9%	9.7%
Disagree	7.5%	9.7%

Q11f. I feel like a valued member of the University community

	Female	Male
Agree	11.2%	24.2%
Tend to agree	33.6%	29.0%
?	29.9%	22.6%
Tend to disagree	16.8%	17.7%
Disagree	8.4%	6.5%

Q12a. Most of the time it is safe to speak up

	Female	Male
Agree	52.3%	61.3%
Tend to agree	29.9%	24.2%
?	4.7%	11.3%
Tend to disagree	6.5%	0.0%
Disagree	6.5%	3.2%

Q12b. Little effort is made to get the opinions and thinking of staff

	Female	Male
Agree	10.3%	9.7%
Tend to agree	15.0%	17.7%
?	12.1%	12.9%
Tend to disagree	38.3%	35.5%
Disagree	24.3%	24.2%

Q12c. I have the opportunity for input before changes are made which will affect my job

	Female	Male
Agree	34.6%	25.8%
Tend to agree	29.9%	37.1%
?	15.9%	21.0%
Tend to disagree	11.2%	11.3%
Disagree	8.4%	4.8%

Q12d. My manager generally understands the problems I face in my job

	Female	Male
Agree	30.8%	40.3%
Tend to agree	43.0%	35.5%
?	9.3%	14.5%
Tend to disagree	8.4%	3.2%
Disagree	8.4%	6.5%

Q13a. My working environment within the faculty / school is accepting of ethnic differences

	Female	Male
Agree	57.9%	71.0%
Tend to agree	31.8%	22.6%
?	8.4%	4.8%
Tend to disagree	0.9%	1.6%
Disagree	0.9%	0.0%

Q13b. My working environment within the faculty / school is accepting of differences in cultural background or lifestyle

	Female	Male
Agree	51.4%	58.1%
Tend to agree	34.6%	30.6%
?	9.3%	9.7%
Tend to disagree	3.7%	1.6%
Disagree	0.9%	0.0%

Q13c. My working environment within the faculty / school is accepting of gender differences

	Female	Male
Agree	35.5%	58.1%
Tend to agree	32.7%	29.0%
?	14.0%	9.7%
Tend to disagree	15.0%	3.2%
Disagree	2.8%	0.0%

Q14a. I am generally aware of opportunities for career enhancement / advancement

	Female	Male
Agree	26.4%	54.8%
Tend to agree	40.6%	32.3%
?	15.1%	8.1%
Tend to disagree	14.2%	3.2%
Disagree	3.8%	1.6%

Q14b. I believe my career enhancement / advancement prospects are good

	Female	Male
Agree	14.2%	25.8%
Tend to agree	32.1%	32.3%
?	15.1%	24.2%
Tend to disagree	24.5%	11.3%
Disagree	14.2%	6.5%

Q14c. I have a good idea of possible career paths at the University

	Female	Male
Agree	19.8%	41.9%
Tend to agree	35.8%	35.5%
?	17.9%	9.7%
Tend to disagree	22.6%	11.3%
Disagree	3.8%	1.6%

Q14d. I feel that management supports equal opportunity for staff

	Female	Male
Agree	21.7%	43.5%
Tend to agree	32.1%	41.9%
?	23.6%	4.8%
Tend to disagree	14.2%	6.5%
Disagree	8.5%	3.2%

Q14e. I think my performance is evaluated fairly

	Female	Male
Agree	25.5%	40.3%
Tend to agree	35.8%	33.9%
?	16.0%	16.1%
Tend to disagree	15.1%	4.8%
Disagree	7.5%	4.8%

Q15a. I have the skills and knowledge I need in order to perform effectively

	Female	Male
Agree	53.8%	59.7%
Tend to agree	34.0%	37.1%
?	5.7%	0.0%
Tend to disagree	6.6%	3.2%
Disagree	0.0%	0.0%

Q15b. Development opportunities are equally available to all the people in my team

	Female	Male
Agree	28.3%	45.2%
Tend to agree	28.3%	29.0%
?	18.9%	16.1%
Tend to disagree	15.1%	6.5%
Disagree	9.4%	3.2%

Q15c. My manager / supervisor will encourage me to apply for a more senior role when I'm ready

	Female	Male
Agree	24.5%	30.6%
Tend to agree	28.3%	24.2%
?	26.4%	32.3%
Tend to disagree	7.5%	6.5%
Disagree	13.2%	6.5%

Q16. What professional development activities have you undertaken in the last twelve months? (Please choose all that apply)

	Female	Male
Conference attendance	75.0%	93.5%
Presenting at conference	69.2%	85.5%
Program at Learning Solutions	26.0%	24.2%
Faculty / school-based seminars	68.3%	66.1%
ITL program	20.2%	11.3%
E-learning / online program	10.6%	9.7%
Coaching	6.7%	14.5%
No development	8.7%	1.6%
Other	7.7%	9.7%

Q17. Do you have a mentor who works with you to help you develop in your role?

	Female	Male
Yes	23.1%	19.4%
Not really	47.1%	33.9%
No	29.8%	46.8%

Q18. Do you have a network of colleagues with whom you discuss issues and current developments in your field? (Please choose all that apply)

	Female	Male
No	16.3%	12.9%
Yes, meet regularly face to face	47.1%	62.9%
Yes, contact via email	45.2%	51.6%
Yes, see each other at conferences	43.3%	45.2%
Other	7.7%	4.8%

Q19. Apart from teaching and research, what activities do you spend time on at work?

	Female	Male
Organising conferences	28.3%	45.9%
Consultancy	20.2%	32.8%
Mentoring other staff	52.5%	59.0%
Student care / welfare	64.6%	63.9%
Administration	81.8%	90.2%
Committees	51.5%	72.1%
Other	11.1%	16.4%

Q20a. Please indicate which, if any, of the following work arrangements and support benefits you have used: Parental leave

	Female	Male
Yes, currently using	3.0%	0.0%
Yes, used in the past	31.3%	9.8%
Haven't used	65.7%	86.9%
Not aware of this	2.0%	4.9%

Q20b. Please indicate which, if any, of the following work arrangements and support benefits you have used: Personal carer's leave

	Female	Male
Yes, currently using	0.0%	0.0%
Yes, used in the past	14.1%	8.2%
Haven't used	81.8%	86.9%
Not aware of this	4.0%	6.6%

Q20c. Please indicate which, if any, of the following work arrangements and support benefits you have used: Part-time work

	Female	Male
Yes, currently using	26.3%	3.3%
Yes, used in the past	15.2%	1.6%
Haven't used	54.5%	91.8%
Not aware of this	4.0%	4.9%

Q20d. Please indicate which, if any, of the following work arrangements and support benefits you have used: Job share

	Female	Male
Yes, currently using	1.0%	0.0%
Yes, used in the past	2.0%	1.6%
Haven't used	87.9%	88.5%
Not aware of this	9.1%	11.5%

Q20e. Please indicate which, if any, of the following work arrangements and support benefits you have used: Child care centre

	Female	Male
Yes, currently using	3.0%	6.6%
Yes, used in the past	19.2%	14.8%
Haven't used	74.7%	75.4%
Not aware of this	3.0%	3.3%

Q21a. I believe I have the opportunity for personal growth and development

	Female	Male
Agree	27.3%	45.9%
Tend to agree	34.3%	36.1%
?	21.2%	9.8%
Tend to disagree	8.1%	3.3%
Disagree	9.1%	4.9%

Q21b. I find it very difficult to balance my work and personal responsibilities

	Female	Male
Agree	24.2%	18.0%
Tend to agree	24.2%	34.4%
?	14.1%	9.8%
Tend to disagree	25.3%	24.6%
Disagree	12.1%	13.1%

Q21c. I would recommend this faculty / school as a good place to work.

	Female	Male
Agree	19.2%	37.7%
Tend to agree	42.4%	39.3%
?	23.2%	18.0%
Tend to disagree	10.1%	3.3%
Disagree	5.1%	1.6%

Q22. Taking everything into account, what is your current level of satisfaction with your job?

	Female	Male
Very satisfied	14.1%	32.8%
Satisfied	50.5%	45.9%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23.2%	14.8%
Dissatisfied	7.1%	3.3%
Very dissatisfied	5.1%	3.3%

Q23. Are you currently seeking a more senior position?

	Female	Male
Yes, within my faculty	13.1%	24.6%
Yes, elsewhere within the University	2.0%	3.3%
Yes, outside the University	16.2%	14.8%
Not at present	75.8%	68.9%

Q24. Have you applied for promotion in the past three years? If so, what triggered your decision to apply?

	Female	Male
Haven't applied in last three years	69.7%	67.2%
HoS / Dean suggested I apply	8.1%	4.9%
Peer(s) suggested I apply	11.1%	8.2%
Felt I was ready	24.2%	27.9%
Other	6.1%	4.9%

Q25. Thinking about your reasons for seeking or not seeking a more senior role, please indicate the statements that best reflect your feelings at the moment

	Female	Male
Not seeking – happy in current role	12.1%	26.2%
Not seeking – still learning this job	19.2%	13.1%
Not seeking – don't think I'll be successful	26.3%	13.1%
Not seeking – won't be able to juggle other responsibilities	18.2%	21.3%
Seeking a more senior role - I'm ready for a new challenge	13.1%	26.2%
Other	33.3%	21.3%

Comments from "other" category – female staff (as entered into the field on the survey)

- Very difficult to achieve promotion from part time position
- The job is satisfying but stressful - difficult to have a life! Also I have just been promoted
- A whole lot of my contemporaries have been promoted and I feel sad that I've been left behind due to prolonged part time work. I also know that I am capable of being promoted in the next few years.
- Not seeking a more senior role because I am not prepared to make the sacrifices expected of me within the role
- Elbows - I'm not sure if I know well enough to use my elbows
- My position/responsibilities are already fairly senior, work/family balance remains an issue
- not seeking because of short-term research appointment
- Seeking a more senior role but worried I won't be able to juggle all my other responsibilities

Comments from “other” category – male staff (as entered into the field on the survey)

- waiting for the politics to be right
- recently promoted, not actively seeking another position yet, but will soon
- Too busy to apply for promotion.
- Very few opportunities for more senior research-only roles
- A more senior role is evidence of success, and brings new opportunities
- In the short term I need to devote time to my family

Q26. At the present time, are you seriously considering leaving the University?

	Female	Male
Yes	22.2%	23.0%
No	59.6%	59.0%
Don't know	18.2%	18.0%

Appendix B

Other comments: Question 27

“Do you have any other comments or suggestions you would like to make about the workplace and your opportunities within your faculty?”

A sample of responses from female staff (as entered into the field in the survey)

“Having put my name down for childcare next year, I feel quite insecure about getting a place in childcare that will allow me to go back to work. At this point, the childcare centres do not confirm anything and waiting is the only option... could something be done about it? having peace of mind is beneficial for women in science doing research.”

“One of the major flaws of the University of Sydney is the lack of communication at all levels. Policies, conventions, guidelines change without people knowing about the changes. This may exacerbate the isolation of or lack of opportunities felt by women staff.”

“It would be good if there were more opportunities for research staff. I have been employed on short-term grants since 1995.”

“Opportunities within the faculty are good. I perceive a rather strong male way of operating in the senior management of the university.”

“Faculty is too fragmented to be supportive. Support must (and mostly does) come from within research group but no context. Research fits in well with national/international groups and industry but faculty shows little interest. Academic outputs are the only focus and little value is given to other achievements.”

“Support and direction for the requirements for promotion needs to be sort by the candidate. Working part-time is very demanding - as you are generally expected to still achieve/participate at the same rate as full-time. Managing time between work and home means spending a lot of evenings at home on work-related tasks.”

“At the University of Sydney I have worked in two schools. In the former it was clear that impediments to progress as a female academic might have been the case, but in the latter it was clear from the outset that this was not the case. The take home message is that it is not just the University atmosphere per se, but the presence or absence of a supportive environment at the school/department level.”

“sexism is not overt within my Faculty but it is very male-dominated and I feel that women in the Faculty have to perform better than men to achieve the same level of recognition.”

“I would like the Univeristy to consider permanent positions for research only staff. I do not think it is fair that teaching/research staff (some of whom do not generally have grants) have the safety of permanent positions while people that would like to do research full-time (and bring in money through grants) do not have this option.”

“As a (science) postdoc it is difficult to plan to far ahead as most positions are for only a limited amount of time eg 18 months, max 3 years”

“Part-time postdoc scholarships are not currently offered within the university, which means that part-time Mums are always at a disadvantage in not being able to apply for Uni scholarships.”

“Our faculty is unusual in having several women in senior positions. The University is not so successful. We do not provide enough opportunities for young women to secure permanent positions. Rewarding "achievement relative to opportunity" is not implemented well.”

“1. Serious thought needs to be given to the status of career academics who are part-time. For example, no part-time staff of any level are entitled to park on the main campus. Surely, for example, a research-active Level E who works 80% fractional should have at least the status of a level B staff member who has been at the uni for three year! 2. I have also recently found that my department has reduced funding for conferences etc that are available for part-timers. This is very disappointing as the dept has always previously been very supportive of my research which has allowed me to build an international reputation and attract students while working part-time.”

“The culture of respect, cohesion and shared leadership of the Faculty of Veterinary Science makes it a great place to work. This requires effort and resources to maintain. Continuing this investment by the University, and increasing it to provide additional staffing resources and shared leadership opportunities, is essential to maintain and strengthen the present collegial culture.”

“I find the faculty very flexible and would feel comfortable running any idea past supervisors if I thought it would improve my career and productivity. I would like to point out that catering for women in the workplace goes much further than organising childcare and helping with research upon re-entering the workforce after children. As a woman without children I still experience certain female issues within my field, school and faculty. And these take up brain time too.”

“Our faculty is a great place to work because of our culture of shared leadership and valuing the contributions staff make. However the university outside is much less positive and supportive especially at more senior levels where the lack of credible female role models is obvious and discouraging.”

“The Faculty needs to recognise, promote and reward teaching only academics. If all are appointed for research capability then who will seriously connect with undergraduate learning?”

“My experience of working in my School is often one of aggression and competition. It would be lovely to have a cooperative atmosphere and one in which people had time for tea breaks to chat casually about science etc. It seems to me that many new policies that are designed to improve something in the University or School will achieve what they have been designed to do, but take up more time, and therefore diminish the experience of working for those goals. New policies would be improved if they considered that the University is made up from individuals.”

“I feel that everyone is encouraged to better themselves and the opportunities to succeed at the School of Physics are very good.”

"I feel things have greatly improved for women in the faculty and my school in the last 5 years or so. However, prior to this it was a difficult place to work as a woman, and this may be why there are few women now in senior positions. I also think the grant system makes it very difficult to take time out to raise a family. Although there is the opportunity to say that

you have had a career break I don't believe this is really taken into account when assessing track record, as the disruption to productivity extends well beyond the period of maternity leave. There are also few female role models at the university who have successfully balanced working as a research-teaching academic and raising a family."

"It is overall a good place to work but workloads are very high. I manage because I am able to devote almost my whole life to my at present. I am hoping to have children but am very concerned as to whether I will be able to effectively balance them and still have an academic career."

"Sydney Uni claims to provide childcare facilities to the Uni community. We had our child on all the waiting lists for 6 months before she was born and did not get a place. We ended up having to get a place outside the uni. I think it is outrageous that the general community has just as much chance of getting a place as an academic. I ended up postponing my return to work for an extra few months and in the end my partner had to resign from his job to look after our baby so that I could return to work. The Uni needs to seriously think about providing childcare for academics and other staff at the uni."

"I compare the academic position I am in with that of many male colleagues and wonder if my skills and performance are less recognised than them i.e. I seem to have achieved as much as they have, but they are at a higher academic level than I ever was at any stage for the same "qualifications". I think this could be because (a) I don't shout enough about what I can and have done and (b) people (probably men and women) don't value the things I (women?) bring to the job equally to those brought by men."

"I like the fact that we have flexible working hours and are able to work from home when necessary."

"Uni is very good for highly motivated individuals. The range of responsibilities is onerous and can bleed high achievers dry more so than private industry in my opinion because the job is never finished. More guidance/mentoring re: which areas to focus on and being empowered to say no would be useful."

"I feel that most of the time that women are given equal opportunities, however, I am aware of staff members who treat their male staff and students differently to their female staff and students. I do not know whether they are aware of this or whether they do it without realising. I sometimes feel that equality is paid lip service by some staff members - at least I don't have to work too closely with them. Also, I think some of the issues raised at the WiSci opening such as workloads etc. are not just limited to female staff. I feel that most younger staff members (male or female) find it difficult to balance home and work life as we seem to be expected to be able to teach lots of units, churn out the papers, apply for funding and do some committee or admin work on top of that to satisfy our PMD. I realise that all staff members need to actively contribute to academic life however I know that some younger staff members feel like it is all getting a bit too much."

"Main problem is lack of paths to transition from research appointments to permanent position, especially with a broken career history and subsequent change of field making it hard to get my own research grants"

"I am concerned that our Faculty does not have any women professors. There seems to be a glass ceiling that others have not broken. I have found I am being headhunted by other organizations and promised a more rapid progression to a senior level outside the uni. I think it is really important for early career researchers to have female mentors - and they are few and far between at USyd."

A sample of responses from male staff (as entered into the field in the survey)

"Senior academic roles, especially those that are research-intensive, are not family-friendly due to the excessive time requirements. In my own field, academics with research profiles are competing with academics in research institutes who can spend 100% of their time on research. If they also work Saturdays it is very hard to compete with them. I believe that it is important to value all roles (including teaching-focused roles) equally, recognize that some roles suit women better than others, and provide career advancement opportunities for all members of staff regardless of their roles."

"The biggest issue that I face is insufficient administrative support staff to help with the large amount of administration (much of which does not require my level of expertise) associated with my substantial internal and external academic responsibilities compared to people of comparable standing overseas or in other Universities/Institutions in Australia. This severely compromises my research output, and the time that I feel I need to devote to higher level teaching and research matters, as other matters tend to take precedence."

"There are hardly any opportunity for interaction with the senior management of the Faculty and most of the time not sure what decisions are made and what is the future of the Faculty."

"1. Would like to see that administration structures support academic roles more than at present 2. Current infrastructure and facilities need rapid improvement 3. Decision-making processes need to be more open and inclusive"

"More transparency will be good"

"chemical reactions don't know if you are male or female. we are judged on our chemistry."

"NSW school holidays often do not coincide with University holidays. This makes it very hard to balance personal and work requirements during School holiday time."

"My major concerns are the lack of formal direct mentoring for all staff at the senior levels. For academic staff it appears to be self-promotion rather than encouragement by mentors and supervisors. For general staff, the capacity for development and 'promotion' is abysmal. Reclassification can be a disheartening process for general staff and does not reward or recognize their personal or academic achievements."

"There should be a stronger emphasis on new positions/appointments being offered with part-time hours as a possibility. Also, support for women in science is not just about providing support during child-raising years. The short-lists for university-wide or faculty-wide opportunities such as Future Fellowships or USyd Postdoctoral Fellowships need to be assembled with a view to ensuring that there is an equitable approach to gender balance."

"1) Lack of technical support staff means that 'research only' staff spend a lot of time not actually doing research, which limits both results and opportunities for enhancing careers. 2) Limited opportunities for promotion of research only staff"



“Workplace is excellent, support and resources excellent. School of Physics is hamstrung by current funding model, and unable to retain all the Fellows that it has been successful in attracting.”

“I was encouraged to apply for promotion earlier but did not, because it was more important to me to ensure my care responsibilities for my children were organized first.”

“Focus on Women in Science is great, but broadening it to "couples in science" would be good (I'm in that boat) to examine joint SSP etc.”

“The university is being very proactive in requiring that most committees have at least one member of each gender. Unfortunately because there are relatively few women at level E, in particular, this means that the senior women in the university spend a disproportionate amount of time serving on university committees relative to their male peers. This imbalance needs to be addressed somehow, perhaps, by waiving this requirement for the lower level committees.”