

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

**Submission to the
Women and Work
Commission
2005**

AUT RESEARCH, January 2005



THE HIGHER EDUCATION UNION

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

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Summary

Higher education employment

- The barriers to female academic and academic related staff in UK higher education progressing in the workplace are widespread and endemic.
- Although the number of female academics employed in UK higher education has increased significantly in recent years, women are still over-represented on the lower grades and under-represented on the higher grades. Female academic related staff are also under-represented on senior grades.
- Female academic and related staff are more likely than men to work part-time. While this may be a preferred employment option for many women, the evidence in this submission indicates that working part-time can be a barrier to progress.
- Women's work is more casualised. Female academic and related staff are more likely than males to be employed on a fixed-term contract.
- Full-time female academic and academic related staff are consistently paid less on average than their male colleagues. The pay gap of 15% for academics is wider than five years ago.
- In the Research Assessment Exercise, men are more than one and a half times more likely than female colleagues to be counted as research active. This is a major barrier to career progression, since a great deal of weight is given in terms of promotion to an employee's research record.
- In a large number of subject areas or cost centres – particularly in science, engineering and technology – women constitute less than one quarter of the academic staff.

The failure of recent equal opportunities initiatives in UK HE

- Over the past decade, there has been considerable attention given to the subject of equal opportunities for employees in UK higher education. AUT and the other campus trade unions have consistently objected to the current situation and urged meaningful action to be taken by those responsible – the university employers.

- While some action has then been taken, usually reluctantly, the sector has in general been slow to respond to the recommendations of government and public inquiries into higher education.
- More shockingly however has been the provision of £330 million of public funding in England since 2000 for human resources initiatives – including a specific focus on equal opportunities – and yet during that period the gender pay gap has actually worsened.
- At the same time there have been continuing serious problems with the promotion, research status, contractual status and casualisation of women. This represents a catalogue of failure on the part of the universities. It is clear that a completely new approach is needed, and fast. If the employers fail then women will continue to be discriminated against.

Overcoming the barriers

- There are a number of positive initiatives in the sector which focus on promoting the advancement of women, including the Athena Project, which promotes the advancement of women in science, engineering and technology. Other initiatives have focused on the advancement of women to senior management positions in higher education.
- AUT members have found that support from other women, particularly from women in more senior positions, has helped overcome barriers to progression. However such initiatives should not be left to individuals. Employers should set up mentoring schemes which are an encouraged and respected aspect of career development. Members have also called for greater transparency in employment policies, positive promotion policies to senior posts, and improved professional development policies.
- The AUT wants employers to have a policy on the employment of part-time and fixed-term employees, with commitments to:
 - equal access to staff development and support
 - the opportunity to develop a breadth of expertise in the role
 - access to training opportunities and opportunities for promotion
 - access to and involvement in departmental and institutional decision making processes
- We want positive encouragement for women academics in undertaking research projects that will result in work that can be included in a Research Assessment Exercise submission. But a preferable long term policy would be to replace the RAE with a more appropriate method of assessing the quality of research.
- It is imperative that employers implement good training programmes for managers involved in annual career development reviews and

promotion procedures. This will ensure that ongoing training, workload allocation and pattern of work are targeted appropriately. Successful delivery of these objectives will strengthen the career development process by identifying where individuals should be encouraged to apply for accelerated progression and promotion.

- We are strongly in favour of regular statutory equal pay reviews. These should include the three key stages set out in the national guidance, which mirrors EOC policy, of analysis, diagnosis and action plans. AUT recommends that there should be financial penalties for those institutions who do not regularly instigate such reviews.
- We support the idea of equality and equal pay representatives. Equal pay representatives should have similar status to union learning representatives. They would require the right to time off for training and to undertake their duties. They would need training in being able to analyse pay, employment law, understanding of job evaluation and ways of ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.

Introduction

The AUT is the largest higher education trade union and professional association in the UK. We represent over 48,700 higher education lecturers, researchers, library, computer and administrative staff in universities and colleges across the UK. The majority of our members are in the pre-1992 higher education institutions (universities and colleges established before 1992); we also have some members in post-1992 institutions (universities and colleges established since 1992). We are affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. We are not affiliated to any political party.

We welcome this opportunity to provide a submission about employment for academic and academic related staff in UK higher education to the Women and Work Commission, in its task of examining the problem of the gender pay gap and other issues affecting women's employment, and considering how to overcome barriers to women progressing in the workplace.

It is our firm belief that the situation facing women in HE has not improved, and in many cases has actually worsened, in recent years. We believe it is shocking that our country's universities and colleges – the very places that create and transmit knowledge, ideas and values down the generations – should have such an appalling record in equal opportunities for women. Many senior individuals and organisations within the sector would claim that they are doing all they can to rectify the situation. We hope this submission shows how wrong they are and how much further there is to go.

The first section (section A) of this submission concerns data on the employment of academic and academic related staff in UK higher education, and the insight this provides into the differences between male and female employees.

The second section (section B) provides a brief summary of recent equal opportunities initiatives in UK higher education and an analysis of their effectiveness.

The third section (section C) addresses the questions asked in the call for written evidence through a mixture of AUT's national policies plus a number of individual contributions from female AUT members.

We believe our universities and colleges should be at the cutting edge of the equalities agenda. They should be leading the way in best practice and ought to be institutions which others look up to, setting an example to all those who study there. Sadly the truth could not be more different.

Section A: Higher education employment data

A1 Academic staff

This section concerns data on the employment of academic and academic related staff in UK higher education institutions. It summarises the key differences between male and female employees and seeks to identify the barriers to women progressing within the workplace. The term pre-92 refers to an institution which was a university before 1992. The term post-92 refers to an institution which became a university after 1992.

The data about academic staff is derived from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). It is important to note that HESA only collects employment data for those staff working for at least 25% of a full-time contract. This automatically excludes large numbers of part time and hourly paid staff who are employed on a casual basis, the majority of whom are likely to be women. As such the true picture of the entire workforce is almost certainly worse than that outlined below.¹

A1.1 Numbers

The number of academic staff working in UK higher education has been rising steadily in recent years, increasing at an average rate of about 2% a year over the past 7 years. The number rose by slightly more than 20,500 between 1995-6 to 2002-3, to 145,510, a rise of 16%.

The number of female academics has increased sharply, from 32% of all academics in 1995-6 to 39% in 2002-3. The number of women academics grew by nearly 20,000 - from 39,625 to 56,480 - between 1995-6 and 2002-3, an increase of 43%. The number of male academics in the UK rose by slightly over 3,500 - from 85,350 to 89,030 - in the same period, an increase of 4%.

A1.2 Working part-time

Between 1995-6 and 2002-3, the proportion of women academics employed on a part-time basis increased from 19% to 26%. The proportion of male academics employed part-time rose from 9% to 13%.

A1.3 Fixed-term contracts

Women academics are more likely than their male colleagues to be employed on a fixed-term contract. In 2002-3, 48% of women academics were employed on a fixed-term contract, compared with 38% of men. One of the reasons for this is that there are proportionately more women in the more casualised academic employment functions of teaching-only and research-only, compared with the teaching-and-research function.

A1.4 Job grades

In almost all cases, the proportion of women on a particular grade is inversely related to the seniority of that grade: the more senior the grade, the lower the proportion of female academics on the grade. However, there is evidence that the proportions of women on senior grades is gradually increasing.

The HE sector

In sectoral terms, in 1995-6 26% of all academics were on nationally agreed job grades in post-92 higher education institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; 55% were on nationally agreed job grades in pre-92 institutions throughout the UK, with a further 5% employed as clinical academics (largely in pre-92 institutions); 3% worked on nationally agreed job grades in post-92 institutions in Scotland; and 6% were employed in institutions with locally determined pay and grading structures.

By 2002-3 the proportion of all academics who were employed on nationally agreed job grades in post-92 institutions fell to 24%; the pre-92 share fell to 53%, with a further 4% employed as clinical academics; the proportion in Scottish post-92 institutions fell to 1%; and the proportion employed in institutions with locally determined pay and grading structures more than doubled, to 13%.

Post-92 institutions

In post-92 institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1995-6, women were 47% of lecturers, 37% of senior lecturers, 23% of principal lecturers, and 19% of heads of department; 45% of researcher A staff were women, and 35% of the more senior researcher B were women.

In post-92 institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2002-3, women were 53% of lecturers, 45% of senior lecturers, 32% of principal lecturers, and 30% of heads of department; 61% of researcher A staff were women, and 50% of the more senior researcher B grade were women.

Pre-92 institutions

In pre-92 institutions in the UK in 1995-6, women were 39% of lecturer A grade, 29% of lecturer B, 14% of senior lecturers, and 8% of professors; they were 46% of research grade IB (normally the 'entry' grade for researchers), 35% of research grade IA, 32% of research grade II, 27% of research grade III and 17% of research grade IV (the most senior pre-92 research grade).

In pre-92 institutions in the UK in 2002-3, women were 46% of lecturer A staff (normally the 'entry' grade for lecturers), 39% of lecturer B, 24% of senior lecturers, and 13% of professors; they were 56% of research grade IB (normally the 'entry' grade for researchers), 44% of research grade IA, 39% of research grade II, 32% of research grade III and 22% of research grade IV (the most senior pre-92 research grade).

Clinical academics and Scottish post-92 sector

Among clinical academics in 1995-6, women were 32% of lecturers, 20% of senior lecturers, and 6% of professors. In the Scottish post-92 institutions in 1995-6, women were 40% of lecturers, 21% of senior lecturers, and 20% of professors/heads of department.

Among clinical academics in 2002-3, women were 38% of lecturers, 25% of senior lecturers, and 11% of professors. In the Scottish post-92 institutions in 2002-3, women were 51% of lecturers, 35% of senior lecturers, and 23% of professors/heads of department.

Academics on locally determined grades

For academics employed on locally determined pay and grades in 1995-6, women were 26% of lecturers, 28% of senior/principal lecturers (a rare instance of an exception to the inverse relationship between the proportion of women academics and the seniority of the grade), and 9% of professors.

For academics employed on locally determined pay and grades in 2002-3, women were 45% of lecturers, 31% of senior/principal lecturers, and 17% of professors.

A1.5 Pay gap

The gap between the average salaries of full-time male and female academics has widened slightly, to 15%, so that for every £1 earned by a man, a woman only earns 85 pence. On average in 2002-3, women academics working full-time earned £30,473, while men earned £35,802. Overall, in 1995-6 female full-time academics earned on average 85.5% of the salary of male full-time academics – a gender pay gap of 14.5%; in 2002-3, they earned on average 85.1% of the salary for male full-time academics – a gender pay gap of 14.9%.

While the biggest gender pay gaps tended to occur at specialist institutions, such as medical schools, or relatively small higher education institutions, there were also a number of large multi-faculty universities with wide pay gaps – these tended to be universities with a large proportion of research-only academic staff. The following institutions in 2002-3 had pay gaps of more than 20% in men's favour: Aston University, University of Bristol, Institute of Cancer Research, Imperial College, University of Leicester, London Business School, London School of Economics, University of Manchester, University of Newcastle, University of Reading, Royal College of Art, Royal Veterinary College, St George's Hospital Medical School, University College London, Writtle College, Cardiff University, University of Wales Lampeter, University of Wales College of Medicine, University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, and University of St Andrews.

The following institutions in 2002-3 had a gender pay gap in favour of women: the Arts Institute at Bournemouth (2.6% gap), and Surrey Institute of Art and Design (0.9%).

A1.6 Discretionary pay

Discretionary pay is currently used in a number of job grades for academic staff in UK higher education. Discretionary pay is a form of performance-related pay, and is at a higher level than pay for other employees on the same main pay points of the job grade. The awarding of discretionary pay points is permanent, as opposed to being a one-off unconsolidated bonus payment.

Analysis of data for 2002-3 shows that male academics in the UK are 1.5 times more likely than their female colleagues to be awarded discretionary pay. While the discretionary 'pay gap' is relatively narrow in England, in Wales and Northern Ireland male academics are twice as likely as female colleagues to be awarded discretionary pay.

Only two higher education institutions for which the data were available had a discretionary pay gap in women's favour. At all the others, men were more likely than women to get discretionary pay – at one institution, they were more than five times more likely than women to get these higher pay levels.

A1.7 Research assessment

In terms of proportions within each gender in 2002-3 for all UK academics, 19% of female academics and 37% of male academics were counted as research active in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise. In 2002-3, 32% of female academics and 52% of male academics categorised as doing both teaching and research were counted as research active in the 2001 RAE. Male teaching-and-research academics were therefore 1.6 times more likely than their female colleagues to be counted as research active in the 2001 RAE.²

A1.8 Subjects

In 1995-6 nursing and paramedical studies, and health and community studies, were the only academic subject areas (strictly speaking, cost centres)³ in which 50% or more academics were women. By 2002-3 there were 7 subject areas in which half or more of the academics were women.

In 2002-3, fewer than 25% of academics in the following cost centres were women: mineral, metallurgy and materials engineering; computer software engineering; chemistry; other technologies; chemical engineering; general engineering; mathematics; civil engineering; physics; mechanical, aero and production engineering; electrical, electronic and computer engineering.

A2 Academic related staff⁴

A2.1 Numbers

The employment classification of academic related is officially used in the pre-92 sector, but not in other UK higher education sectors. In the pre-92 sector, the chief occupations of academic related staff are as administrators, computer staff and librarians. In 1998, there were an estimated 18,850 pre-92 academic related staff on national pay grades, of whom 47% were women. There were an estimated 1,850 pre-92 academic related staff on local pay grades, of whom 52% were women.

A2.2 Working part-time

22% of female academic related staff on national pay grades in 1988 worked part-time, compared with 7% of males. An estimated 26% of women academic related staff on local pay grades worked part-time, compared with 10% of men.

A2.3 Fixed-term contracts

39% of female academic related staff on national pay grades in 1988 were on fixed-term contracts, compared with 29% of males. An estimated 31% of women academic related staff on local pay grades were on fixed-term contracts, compared with 36% of men.

A2.4 Job grades

47% of academic related staff in pre-92 institutions were women. In their national pay grades in 1998, the proportion of women decreased with the seniority of the grade (see table).⁵

Pre-92 academic related national pay grades, rising in order of seniority	Percentage of women on grade
Grade 1	62%
Grade 2	54%
Grade 3	46%
Grade 4	32%
Grade 5	27%
Grade 6	19%

A2.5 Pay gap

The average salaries of full-time female academic related staff in 1998 were very close to the averages for males for Grades 1-5 (see table). For Grade 6, the most senior grade, there was a gender pay gap of 7.1% in men's favour.

Pre-92 academic related national pay grades, rising in order of seniority	Average full-time salary: female as a proportion of male salary
Grade 1	99.1%
Grade 2	98.0%
Grade 3	98.8%
Grade 4	99.1%
Grade 5	98.5%
Grade 6	92.8%

A3 Conclusion

The higher education employment data indicate that the barriers to women progressing in the workplace are widespread and endemic.

A3.1 Promotion

Although the number of female academics employed in UK higher education has increased significantly in recent years, women are still over-represented on the lower grades and under-represented on the higher grades. There is evidence that the proportion of women on senior grades is increasing, but there is still a long way to go to parity. Female academic related staff are also under-represented on senior grades.

A3.2 Mode of working

Women are more likely than men to work part-time. The proportion of female academics who work part-time is higher than the proportion for men; in addition, the proportion of women working part-time is increasing. Female academic related staff are also more likely than male colleagues to work part-time. While this may be a preferred employment option for many women, evidence from the responses gathered by the AUT in Section C indicates that working part-time can be a barrier to progress.

A3.3 Type of contract

Women's work is more casualised. Female academics are more likely than males to be employed on a fixed-term contract. Female academic related staff are also more likely than males to be on a fixed-term contract. In section C of

this submission we outline the particular problems faced by women on fixed-term contracts.

A3.4 Pay gap

Full-time female academic and academic related staff are consistently paid less on average than their male colleagues. The pay gap of 15% is wider than five years ago.

A3.5 Research activity

For academics engaged in both teaching and research, ie the majority of academics who are considered for inclusion in the Research Assessment Exercise, men are more than one and a half times more likely than female colleagues to be counted as research active. This is a major barrier to career progression, since a great deal of weight is given in terms of promotion to an employee's research record.

A3.6 Subjects

There is a large number of subject areas or cost centres – particularly in science, engineering and technology – in which women constitute less than one quarter of the academic staff.

Section B: The failure of recent equal opportunities initiatives in UK HE

Over the past decade, there has been considerable attention given to the subject of equal opportunities for employees in UK higher education. AUT and the other campus trade unions have consistently objected to the current situation and urged meaningful action to be taken by those responsible – the university employers. While some action has then been taken, usually reluctantly, the sector has in general been slow to respond to the recommendations of government and public inquiries into higher education.

Any action that has been taken has been largely ineffective and overly-reliant on advice and paper-based policies. More shockingly however has been the provision of £330 million of public funding in England since 2000 for human resources initiatives – including a specific focus on equal opportunities – and yet during that period the gender pay gap has actually worsened. We see this as an appalling waste of public money.

Outlined below is a chronology of reports written, inquiries set up and initiatives taken since 1997. As can be seen, the net effect of these on women working in higher education has been negligible.

1997

In 1997 the report of the all-party National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, chaired by the then Sir Ron Dearing, said:

'We recommend that all institutions should, as part of their human resources policy, maintain equal opportunities policies, and, over the medium term, should identify and remove barriers which inhibit recruitment and retention and progression for particular groups and monitor and publish their progress towards greater equality of opportunity for all groups.' (Recommendation 49)

The report also recommended the appointment of an independent review of the framework for determining pay and conditions in higher education.

1999

The resulting report in 1999 of the Independent Review of Higher Education Pay and Conditions, chaired by Sir Michael Bett, concluded: *'Additional public and other funding will be needed in particular for the major reforms of pay structures, and increases in pay levels, which we recommend ... to ensure equal pay for work of equal value'*.⁶

The Bett report said it was *'essential that comprehensive data on the numbers and pay of academic and non-academic staff are collected on a regular and systematic basis'* (Recommendation 1), and that it was essential to have a system of job evaluation as part of the reforms outlined for pay structures (R24). On equal opportunities, Bett recommended: *'Each university and HE college should have, and publish, a clear statement of its policies on equal*

opportunities and of the steps it is taking to ensure equality for women and ethnic minorities' (R59).

In **November 1999** the Secretary of State for Education and Employment wrote to the Higher Education Funding Council for England: *'I am deeply concerned about the present position on equal opportunities for HE staff. Evidence suggests that only a minority of academic staff in higher education institutions ... are women ... and that relatively few ... reach senior positions. I expect institutions to have acted on the Dearing Committee's recommendation that they have equal opportunities policies in place. I want institutions to remove barriers to recruitment and progression and to make progress towards greater equality of opportunity for all staff ... I ask the Council to ensure that all institutions have equal opportunities policy statements and that they are accountable for their proper implementation.'*

2000

In **November 2000** the Secretary of State for Education and Employment wrote to the Higher Education Funding Council for England, announcing the establishment of the Rewarding and Developing Staff funding initiative in England, worth £330 million in its first three years, for academic and support staff pay, and to 'modernise the management processes in the sector'. The SoS continued: *'In return for an investment of this size, I will be looking for evidence of improvements in human resource development and staff management. I am determined that equal opportunities for higher education staff must improve ...'* He also welcomed the establishment of the Equality Challenge Unit being set up by the four HE funding bodies, Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals: *'I look to the Unit to ensure that institutions deliver the improvements in monitoring and performance that they have agreed to in their equal opportunities policy statements. I look forward to hearing of rapid progress towards greater equality of opportunity for all groups of staff.'*

2001

The Equality Challenge Unit was founded in 2001 to 'improve equal opportunities for all who work or seek to work within the UK HE sector'.⁷ Its role includes raising awareness about equal opportunities, advice, monitoring, developing standards and disseminating good practice.

Following the Bett report, the Higher Education Statistics Agency has revised and extended its Individualised Staff Record, so that from 2003-4 it is gathering and publishing information on the employment of academic related and non-academic staff. Hitherto, HESA has only produced information on the employment of academic staff.

2002

In **March 2002** the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) published *Equal Pay Reviews: Guidance for Higher Education*

Institutions. JNCHES comprises the university employers plus all the campus unions and as such, the guidance on equal pay reviews was seen as a major step forward which had the potential to achieve a step change in pay discrimination.

The guidance provided individual institutions with a comprehensive toolkit on how to conduct equal pay reviews and how to effectively follow through on any findings. It set out the steps to take in undertaking an equal pay review, including data-gathering, diagnosis of any inequities, and action to take to remove pay gaps. The guidance was 'commended' to HEIs by JNCHES.

Unfortunately only a minority of universities and colleges have, to date, undertaken equal pay reviews. Taken together, those who say they have undertaken a review in the past two years, and those planning to carry out a review in the coming year, still only come to approximately half of the higher education institutions in the UK. In the space of almost three years the nationally-negotiated guidance has been ignored by the majority of higher education employers. This is both depressing and deeply worrying.

2003

In **February 2003** JNCHES and the Equality Challenge Unit published *Partnership for Equality: Action for Higher Education*, to 'assist individual HE institutions and their recognised trades unions to sustain effective progress towards full equality in their employment practices for all staff'. This publication updated earlier guidance published in 2000, *Equal Opportunities in Employment in Higher Education: a Framework for Partnership*.

The Partnership document recommended that institutions had clear equality strategies, with a commitment to remove barriers to equality throughout the institution. It pointed out that JNCHES 'strongly encourages' employers to conduct equal pay reviews 'if they have yet to do so'. As noted above, we believe that only a minority of institutions have conducted equal pay reviews; a report in 2004 on human resource management in HEIs in Wales found that 'pilot work on job evaluation ... and equal pay audits, are underway in a number of institutions, and in a few case institutions are beginning to think about the costs of implementing new pay schemes'.⁸

Under the JNCHES *Framework Agreement* of **July 2003**, between employers and unions in the higher education sector, all employees in the sector are to be transferred onto a new single pay spine through a process of job evaluation. The deadline for the transfer is 1 August 2006. The Framework says: '*Action to foster more equal opportunities and to ensure the delivery of equal pay for work of equal value is at the heart of this Framework Agreement, and needs to underpin its implementation at local level.*'

Conclusion

It is clear that there has been a welter of reports cataloguing the areas, issues and problems that need addressing. Latterly there have been a number of

initiatives taken by the universities themselves, as well as guidance developed in association with the trade unions. But at the same time there has been a widening of the gender pay gap, and continuing serious problems with the promotion, research status, contractual status and casualisation of women.

This represents a catalogue of failure on the part of the universities. It is clear that a completely new approach is needed, and fast. If the employers fail to do so then women will continue to be discriminated against.

Section C: Responses to consultation questions

This section addresses the specific questions posed by the Commission. It sets out AUT's national policy position on gender discrimination in pay and our recommendations about the solutions to the myriad of problems identified. We offer solutions which can be implemented at local level in individual departments and institutions. We also make recommendations about the urgent action required by the higher education funding bodies and government.

There are solutions to the key barriers to women progressing in the workplace. But in order to implement these solutions, and bring about real improvements in the working lives of female academic and academic related staff, a serious and sustained culture change is required at the highest level of university management.

In preparing this response we asked a number of female AUT members for their views on the questions posed by the Commission. They were chosen to represent a wide representation of views on the best and worst of institutional practices from their own personal experiences as academic and academic related members of staff, and through their experience of representing AUT members. A selection of anonymised responses is included below in italics.

Q 10. What are the barriers to women progressing in the workplace?

Section A of this submission concludes that the barriers to women progressing in the workplace are widespread and endemic. We identify key factors such as the high proportion of women employed on part-time and fixed-term contracts, the under-representation of women on higher grades and the research culture in higher education. The responses from female AUT members confirm these as significant barriers which require urgent attention.

Other barriers mentioned by respondents included the highly competitive culture of UK higher education, 'male' skills being more highly valued, and bullying.

Contractual status

A number of respondents identified being part-time or on a fixed-term contract as a major barrier to progression.

Being part time is perhaps the biggest indirect inhibitor of women's career progress. One is distant in so many ways from the life blood of the institution, and this tends to permeate everything. If you work part time, you are less likely to be on familiar terms with the people you may wish to influence.

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I find it almost impossible, on a personal level, to disentangle the strands of personal choice (resistance to doing anything in which I am not interested but seizing new options); having 4 children to bring up; being a woman; the

influence of institutional processes; the personal behavior of HODs [Heads of Department]. The only thing that is very clear is the disadvantage of being part time and on fixed-term contracts. And this is not dissociated from gender.

Research Assessment Exercise

For female academic staff, particularly those engaged in both teaching and research, disproportionate exclusion from the Research Assessment Exercise is a major barrier to career progression. Female academics are in a vicious circle in which they are often denied research opportunities, are then excluded from the RAE, which in turn rules them out for promotion to senior roles in universities and colleges. This discrimination therefore has a direct impact on the under-representation of women on higher grades, as identified in section A of this submission.

Regardless of the attempts to redress the culture of higher education I have yet to be convinced that it is an environment which is not basically remorseless to anyone who is seen as failing to keep up the pace – from publications for the RAE, networking, research grants etc. – as colleagues describe it ‘dead wood’. This culture may produce sympathy for women, because they are different from men and for critical years are less able to compete, but practically it is likely to put pressure on managers in HE not to engage in what may be seen as ‘positive discrimination’ unless compelled or compensated for doing so.

Occupational segregation

In section A we identified that there is a large number of academic subject areas in which women are under-represented. Similarly in academic related areas of work there are areas where women are under-represented. Even in those areas where there are a majority of women, they remain under-represented at the most senior grades.

In my previous area (libraries) the number of women professionals greatly outnumbered the men. However there were significantly more men at the very senior levels which was surprising. In my present role in the administration and particularly estates, traditional male skills are rated more highly than female skills. Senior females are more obvious in counselling and human resources type roles.

Bullying

I can think of one colleague who was an administrator in the dept of ... and was badly bullied by a male professor (personal case which led to a successful grievance and establishment of university anti-bullying policy). Interestingly, due to failure of university management at several levels the professor was never accused of bullying and his career continued untarnished. The female colleague was redeployed to a post requiring very traditional female skills and has consistently failed to achieve promotion ever since.

What positive examples are there of women/companies overcoming them?

There is a number of positive initiatives in the sector which focus on promoting the advancement of women. These are collated and disseminated by the Equality Challenge Unit and can be accessed at www.ecu.ac.uk/womenandmen. The initiatives include the Athena Project, which promotes the advancement of women in science, engineering and technology, and aims to identify the key factors which will assist career progression. Other initiatives have focused on promoting the advancement of women to senior management positions in higher education.

Responses from AUT members did not highlight these national initiatives, perhaps indicating that far more should be done to make staff aware of them. Their experiences of how academic and academic related staff have found ways of tackling the barriers to women in employment in UK higher education include personal support by other women and the adoption of policies supporting women.

I think that women have to be very resourceful: we recognise the problems and we do not flinch. We must tackle disproportionate challenges on a personal basis. The support of women in similar circumstances can provide techniques which have worked for others, and also courage. But it must be said that during the worst struggles there is no time for such meetings. A female 'mentor' may be very helpful if it is a sympathetic person. In my present post, for the first time in my life I have had such support from a female professor and the difference this has made to my progress and status, and the opportunities it has opened up for me, has been substantial. How far have institutions considered what they could do – eg by encouraging a system of support by paying for contact time for particular staff in lieu of teaching hours?

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Senior females often become disillusioned and distressed by the working style and atmosphere (me included) which creates self perception of failure and stress. Support networks and positive policies that require and encourage the use of traditionally female skills might go some way to alleviate this.

It is clear that support from other women, particularly from women in more senior positions, has helped some AUT members to overcome barriers to progression. However such initiatives should not be left to individuals. AUT believes that the positive examples that do exist in the sector should be disseminated and encouraged to ensure they become common practice. Employers should set up mentoring schemes which are an encouraged and respected aspect of career development.

What other solutions are there?

In order to find solutions institutions must address the key barriers that have been identified. The solutions mentioned by respondents included greater

transparency in employment policies, positive promotion policies to senior posts, mentoring and improved professional development policies.

Contractual status

We have already stated that a key barrier to progression is part-time and fixed-term status. Part-time and fixed-term employees now have the legal right not to be treated less favourably than full-time employees and permanent employees, respectively. These are important new legal rights. However the reality for many women is that working part-time, often on an hourly paid casualised basis, is a huge impediment to career progression.

AUT has long campaigned for a significant reduction in the use of fixed-term and casual contracts in higher education. We also believe all employers should have a policy on the employment of part-time and fixed-term employees. This should contain commitments to:

- equal access to staff development and support
- the opportunity to develop a breadth of expertise in the role
- access to training opportunities and opportunities for promotion
- access to and involvement in departmental and institutional decision making processes

Research

Earlier in the submission we highlighted the discrimination which is taking place within the Research Assessment Exercise, and the key role this plays in determining an academic's career path. AUT has called on institutions, the higher education funding bodies and the government to take responsibility for dealing with this problem.

AUT female members suggested positive encouragement for women academics in undertaking research projects that will result in work that can be included in a Research Assessment Exercise submission. This would greatly assist in their career progression. Although the higher education sector is proposing measures to equality proof the next RAE, in 2008, we are still concerned that these will not be enough to make institutions radically to overhaul their RAE inclusion strategies. A more effective policy would be to replace the RAE with a more appropriate method of assessing the quality of research.

Better personal and career development opportunities

Many AUT members identified the critical link between annual career development reviews and promotion procedures. It is imperative that employers implement good training programmes for managers involved in these. This will ensure that ongoing training, workload allocation and pattern of work are targeted appropriately. Successful delivery of these objectives will strengthen the career development process by identifying where individuals should be encouraged to apply for accelerated progression and promotion.

Women tend to need to be invited to apply for promotion, and there is no reason why both women and men could not be advised of the steps to take

towards promotion at their annual check-up meeting. HODs [Heads of Department] should also take on the responsibility of suggesting an application for promotion when (and only when) the individual has a good chance of success.

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Recruit a lot more women, change the department culture, value what women do more, promote women on the same basis as men, rather than expecting a lot more. Give women the opportunities that help them be promoted. Have HODs [Heads of Department] who know something about personnel management and staff development, particularly of women, and take it seriously.

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There is no mentoring or career development scheme in the department. Like most academic departments our succession of HODs [Heads of Department] know very little about staff career development and probably even less about developing female staff. Most of them continue to do research, though it is a large department, and often put their research before HOD responsibilities.

Q 11. What are the barriers to women moving into non-traditional jobs?

The barriers identified by AUT members include: male aggression which is linked to men tending to give their support to other men in the workplace and men being unwilling to give responsibilities to women. Our members also identified factors such as the allocation of work, manifested by women being placed in less valued areas of work within an organisation; women being excluded from informal information networks at work; and women being sidelined into 'female' areas of work within a department.

Other responses mirrored some of the comments we have already reported such as the lack of transparency in how the workplace is organised and the lack of staff development for part-time employees, who are disproportionately female.

For female academic staff, there is a number of subject areas – particularly in science, engineering and technology – where they are very under-represented, especially in the more senior grades.

I work in ... engineering department. One of the barriers is women getting in the first place. There is a very male culture with a lot of unnecessary aggression. Senior male colleagues have tended to support young male colleagues. Women tend to get admin duties that do not help their cv's and when they get more substantial responsibilities they are not given the credit from them.

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[Women academics tend to be employed in] advising, gender-related teaching and research, organising of purely social events. It may not be necessary to break down the barriers immediately - if these functions had a higher status then men would be attracted into them in time, and women would not lose out by taking them on.

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Work which involves looking after the needs of students on a one to one basis in practice appears to be pushed or steered informally towards females. Maybe this may be explained by the greater willingness of some women to take on such work, or lower levels of female ruthlessness in shifting it onto someone else To that extent, time is diverted away from research and promotion. One solution is for departments to place greater emphasis on communications with staff over workloads and preferences and systems to deliver fair outcomes. A more radical solution would be to rebalance the status of / rewards to teaching and research.

What positive examples are there of women/companies overcoming them and what other solutions are there?

Factors helping women overcome barriers to progression in employment include: positive employment policies to 'fast track' women and the use of skills development.

At first a very supportive HOD moved me onto a payscale as a Teaching Fellow, gave me the usual range of academic responsibilities and attempted to make me part 1 tutor for the department. He created an opportunity for a fast track doctorate for me but because of the pressures of family ... this was not possible.

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In my specific work area, transport, the fleet management side is regarded as traditionally a male area. My solution has been to use administrative and people management skills to manage the fleet rather than concentrate on areas which reveal my lack of mechanical skill. Training has given me sufficient knowledge and confidence to use the skills of others. Women need to become more confident that absence of skill or knowledge is not necessarily a sign of weakness.

Other solutions to help women overcome barriers in progress in employment include: policies specifically designed to increase the likelihood of women being employed; policies to change the way work is allocated in a department; and extending opportunities for part-time employees to attend at work.

Do institutions ask part timers how training could be made more accessible for them? – eg would they welcome a whole day course, perhaps with a crèche

facility, rather than several two hour sessions? What about weekend provision, so a partner could look after children? Travel takes a relatively bigger chunk of part time earnings – has a travel subsidy been considered? Still on the subject of part timers: they are less likely than full time staff to be able to practice new skills – for example, if they do not have access to the full range of hardware/software all the time as do full timers, in the office.

Organisational Practice

Q 12. What are the barriers to women's greater economic participation within recruitment, retention and promotion policies and procedures?

Barriers to greater participation by women arising from employment policies include: a lack of transparency; lack of encouragement for women to apply for promotion; policies which may take advantage of women's reluctance to be assertive, and a lack of support in career progression from heads of department.

I think an important barrier is that because promotion criteria are not particularly clear (especially with regard to publications/research, which is an important factor in academic promotions) women are disadvantaged if they take maternity leave or work part time: you simply do not spend as much time on research and so will have fewer publications. I have a colleague who is HoD [Head of Department] at an institute in the Netherlands where the promotions criteria are (say) for senior lecturer five articles in peer reviewed journals in a given period. For women who have taken maternity leave, the number of articles required for promotion are reduced pro rata for that period.

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The barriers tend to be the informality of the promotion application system among academics in the University. Women lose out in four ways:

- (a) they often are not encouraged to apply for the high-profile work which would count towards promotion*
- (b) they are less strategic in which sorts of work they offer to do*
- (c) they typically take on (and are pressured to take on) advising as their main admin role, and this has been steadily downgraded by promotion panels*
- (d) they tend not to apply for promotion until they think they have a very good case, or someone urges them to. They are also often unaware of the limiting conditions - such as that they need to have bargained their salary up at lecturer level so that they can be considered for SL [Senior Lecturer].*

It is clear from the responses we received that female staff with childcare responsibilities identified a number of barriers to progression within recruitment, retention and promotion procedures. The reasons cited include a lack of visibility in the workplace for women on maternity leave/extended career breaks and a failure of institutional policies to take account of the impact of maternity leave and extended career breaks.

Extended career breaks (beyond the 12 months in which you can return to your post) are almost impossible for women academics because you would find it very difficult to get another job if there were a gap in your publications/research outputs. I also think that there is very poor 'career development' and promotions advice for academic staff in universities. This can disadvantage women who may be less confident of their abilities and so less likely to put themselves forward for promotion (I have found this even among very able female colleagues).

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I had a particular problem with the way my maternity leave was treated within the University. My department and HoD [Head of Department] was fine about it all, and very helpful, but my Faculty would not cover my full replacement costs. As a result, my department incurred financial losses as a result of my leave. I think this action by the Faculty was very poor practice as it could result in young women being seen as potentially costly and give departments disincentives to recruit them. I feel strongly that the University should shoulder the costs of staff maternity leave so that they do not fall on the people (mainly academic staff in academic departments) who are involved in academic recruitment and promotion.

What are the positive examples and other solutions?

Since 2001, institutions in England have received large amounts of money under the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative. But there has been little sign of this being used in a positive direction.

AUT believes that the Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative is a missed opportunity. Under scheme's criteria institutions are required to implement an institution-wide system of job evaluation by 2006. This is in line with the requirements of the national pay agreement. While AUT accepts the need for robust job evaluation and role analysis processes, we believe this is only one of many tools required to close the gender pay gap. We have highlighted our concerns to the Funding Council about the lack of emphasis on wider equal opportunities issues. We recommended that an additional condition be added to the scheme with targets for each institution to reduce significantly their gender pay gap. This has not happened and it is disappointing that the Funding Council has missed the opportunity to attach a high level priority to this issue.

There are a number of solutions identified by respondents which should be implemented at institutional level including: improved training and monitoring for management; reforming the 'long hours culture'; improving work-life balance; having employment policies which ensure that the gender of an applicant is not a significant issue; and the greater use of appraisal as a means of overcoming barriers to women in the workplace.

This quote from an AUT female member reflects the frustration she feels at the failure of her institution to implement the policies that could bring about real improvements. Sadly this is a reflection of the situation in the majority of our higher education institutions.

This university is very good at establishing wonderful policies for improvement of HR practice and hopeless at ensuring they are put into practice across the university. The real barrier is effective staff training, particularly of managers, and no monitoring of policies in practice. This is just one area that would be improved by more effective training and monitoring. There is also the long hours culture. Although it affects some men, particularly those who share family responsibilities, it is experienced much more by women. Unless you work into the evening/night and at weekends and are prepared to drop everything else for a work "crisis", you are considered to be lightweight and will not get to the top. Work/life balance and real flexibility is a joke, yet the University purports to have a work/life balance policy. I think government and TUs [trade unions] need to give much more specific examples of what this really means.

Q 13. What are the barriers to undertaking equal pay reviews?

Section B of this submission showed that only a minority of higher education institutions in the UK have undertaken equal pay reviews to date. This is despite specific evidence in the 1999 Bett Report, and from data gathered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, of widespread gender pay gaps in higher education – as well as data published in the government's annual New Earnings Survey (now ASHE), of an overall pay gap for various groups of employees, such as academic staff. It is also despite recommendations from the government and sectoral bodies that institutions, who are the employers in higher education, should take action over inequality.

In 2002 AUT very much welcomed the publication of the sector-wide guidance commending institutions to carry out equal pay reviews. However a majority of institutions do not appear to have acted on the national guidance on equal pay audits, despite the commendation by both the national employers' association and the trades unions.

Although some institutions maintain that they are reluctant to conduct equal pay reviews until job evaluation has been carried out under the new national pay agreement, institutions have known for a number of years that there was evidence of unequal pay among their employees. We can therefore only conclude that the key barrier to undertaking and acting on equal pay reviews lies with the management culture in our institutions. At best, inertia seems to be to blame.

AUT's view is that a culture change is required at the highest levels of university management to make a real and meaningful commitment to implement the policies and procedures that will finally make a difference to women's working lives.

What are the positive examples and other solutions?

Positive examples of good practice on equal pay in the higher education sector are hard to find. A minority of institutions have carried out reviews and are using the results to inform the introduction of new grading structure. There is also evidence of equal pay review pilot studies being carried out in institutions in Wales.

In particular, what are your views on mandatory pay reviews?

We are strongly in favour of regular statutory equal pay reviews. As this submission has shown, the higher education sector has been very good at producing policies and guidance but has an appalling record of implementing them.

AUT believes that unless employers are obliged to carry out pay reviews little will change. We believe higher education institutions, via the appropriate funding bodies, should be set targets for the implementation of regular pay reviews. Reviews should include the three key stages set out in the national guidance, which mirrors EOC policy, of analysis, diagnosis and action plans.

Employers should be obliged to carry out these reviews regularly, publish the results including the action plan, monitor the implementation of the action plan and report on progress at regular intervals.

AUT recommends that there should be financial penalties for those institutions who do not regularly instigate such reviews.

Q 14. What are your views on equality and equal pay representatives? How would one become an equal pay representative? What would be the basis in law? What support would be necessary from trade unions and from employers?

We support the idea of equality and equal pay representatives. Equal pay representatives should have similar status to union learning representatives. They would require the right to time off for training and to undertake their duties. They would need training in being able to analyse pay, employment law, understanding of job evaluation and ways of ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.

Endnotes

¹ Source of academic staff data: Higher Education Statistics Agency individualised staff record, 1995-6 and 2002-3; percentage calculations by AUT. 1995-6 was chosen as the base year because, although it was the second year for which comprehensive data on academic staff were gathered for the whole of UK higher education, data collected for 1994-5 are not considered so reliable; at the time of writing, 2002-3 is the most recent year for which HESA

data were available. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5 in line with HESA methodology. HESA does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties. The term academic in this report includes the primary employment functions of teaching-only, research-only and teaching-and-research. Cost centres represent administrative units in higher education institutions for accounting purposes; they do not necessarily have a direct correspondence with academic departments; non-academic cost centres have been omitted for the sake of brevity. For further information see the AUT publication *The Unequal Academy* (October 2004) at

<http://www.aut.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=917>. HESA does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties.

² AUT (2004) *Gender and research activity in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise*.

³ Cost centres represent administrative units in higher education institutions for accounting purposes; they do not necessarily have a direct correspondence with academic departments

⁴ At the time of writing the submission data on the employment of academic related staff were not available in a similar format to the data on academic staff. We have had therefore to use data resulting from the staff survey conducted in 1998 as reported in the *Independent Review of Higher Education Pay and Conditions* (HMSO 1999), chaired by Sir Michael Bett. The data in the survey were a grossed-up estimate.

⁵ Data were not available on job grades for academic related staff on local pay rates.

⁶ *Independent Review of Higher Education Pay and Conditions* (HMSO 1999), para 350.

⁷ ECU & JNCHES (2003) *Partnership for Equality: Action for Higher Education*, p. 24.

⁸ HEFCW circular W04/26HE - Specialist Human Resources (HR) Management Advice to HEFCW-funded Higher Education Institutions: Final Report, p.8