

The Gender Pay Gap in Higher Education: 2015/16 data report Executive Summary

Introduction

This report seeks to go beyond standard benchmarks for monitoring the gender pay gap and seeks to present an analysis of gender balance across university contract levels, an analysis of the distribution and stratification of academic staff across the 51 point spine by gender, and an analysis of how stratification varies between Russell Group, Other Pre 92 universities and Post 92 universities.

All data has been drawn from the HESA 2015/16 Staff Record. The Contract Levels used throughout this report are those used by HESA.¹

Key Findings

The gender pay gap for academics remains at 12%, driven by large gaps for professors and senior academics

- The overall mean and median gender pay gap for staff on academic contracts is 12.2% (median) and 12.0% (mean).
- In 2013/14 the mean academic gender pay gap was 12.6% and in 2014/15 it was 12.3%. At the current rate of change it take another 40 years to close this gap.
- The overall gap for non-academic staff are 11.1% (median) and 9.9% (mean).
- The median gender pay gap for academic Senior Management is 6.3%, but the mean gap is 13.1% - indicating a substantial preponderance of male senior managers among the very top earners within this grade.
- The widest gender pay gap in favour of men for non-academic staff is at the Senior Management level at 10.7% (median) and 14.1% (mean).
- Professors within Russell Group (5.9%) and Other Pre 92 institutions (6.5%) display a substantially larger gap than is found at Post 92 institutions, where the gender pay gap for professors is comparatively low at 2.4%.

¹ A detailed description of contract levels is available on the HESA website - https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c15025/combined_levels

- These significant gaps at senior levels combine with stark gender imbalances to drive and push up the overall gender pay gap in higher education

The large gender imbalance among senior academic staff is a primary driver of the intransigent gender pay gap.

- While the gender balance for the total academic workforce is 45.3% women / 54.7% men, women outnumber men at the early career contract levels of research assistant, teaching assistant and early career lecturers/researchers.
- There is then a very clear and continuous decline in the proportion of women as seniority increases. Only 39.2% of those at Senior or Principal Lecturer, Reader, and Principal Research Fellow level are women.
- Less than one quarter (23.9%) of Professors are women. This stark imbalance, when coupled with the large monetary gender pay gap among professors (£5,116 per year), is a primary driver of the overall gender pay gap for academics working the UK.
- At the elite research intensive Russell Group universities the imbalance is even greater – just over a third (35.3%) of senior lecturers are women, and only 22.7% of professors are women. At non-Russell Group Pre 92 universities only 23.7% of professors are women, and at Post 92 universities 29.1% of professors are women.

The stratification of men and women across the pay scale begins at the early career stage and is further entrenched as careers progress

Higher education staff below professorial or function head level are paid on a single 51 point pay spine² and there is a normal expectation of incremental career progression on this spine within each of 5 academic grades. In 2015/16 the point 1 on the spine was £14,323 and point 51 was £58,754.

- Proportions of men and women shift as the pay spine progresses. At every spine point up to 43 there are proportionally more women than men (with equal numbers at points 38 and 41) but at the most senior points from 44 onwards there are proportionately more men than women.
- This is particularly evident at the very top of the scale where there are significantly more men (12.5% vs.7.9%) than women on points 49 – 51. This imbalance precedes the even larger and entrenched imbalance at the professorial level beyond the top of the 51 point spine.
- Female academics aged 30-39 years proportionately outnumber males at every single point of the scale below point 38, and then at every single point of the scale from point 38 and beyond, men outnumber women.
- 23.2% of female academics aged 40-49 years are at or above point 45 of the spine, whereas 32.5% of male academics in that age group are at or above point 45. This is a 40.0% overrepresentation of men at the top of the spine.

²Details of the pay spine are available here: https://www.ucu.org.uk/he_singlepayspine

- Within the Russell Group this gender stratification is very evident at points 49, 50 and 51, the very top of the scale. 13.3% of male academics at Russell Group institutions are at these top three spine points, compared to only 8.0% of women
- Among non-Russell Group Pre 92 academics 9.6% of men and 5.6% of women are at points 48-51
- At Post 92 universities, stratification is not entrenched at the early or mid-career stages, and there are very similar percentages of men and women at all spine points up to point 48. However, men outnumber women from point 49 onwards, with 9.8% of men and 7.0% of women occupying points 49 to 51 of the scale.

UCU's next steps to tackle the gender pay gap

Some higher education employers have engaged positively with UCU and in collaboration have produced thorough equal pay audits with clear plans for action. However, it is clear that many employers are not currently carrying out equal pay reviews with UCU branches.

Of equal concern is that too many employers are producing documents that don't contain the level of detail needed to identify the causes of unequal pay and are failing to commit to concrete action to actually close the gender pay gap.

UCU is frustrated with the lack of action on gender pay at New JNHCES. We are now taking the approach of submitting local equal pay claims at individual universities as the first step towards identifying and rectifying the intransigent problem of unequal pay.

Resources for members

Guidance: Tackling the Gender Pay Gap

UCU has published detailed guidance on requesting and scrutinising an equal pay audit, assessing, equal pay cases, and determining the drivers of the gender pay gap at your institution. The guidance provides detailed steps to follow for every part of the process from assessing your current position, to requesting and analysing an audit, to submitting a claim and negotiating favourable outcomes.

The guidance is available to members here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/genderpay>

Rate for the Job pay comparison website

UCU's Rate for the Job online comparison tool allows you to access the average salaries for men and women at your institution by contract level and gender, and allows you to compare up to five institutions at a time. It also allows comparison with VC pay and contains a toll for calculating the real hourly wages of hourly paid teaching staff.

All the information on the site is presented in an accessible graphical format that can easily be adapted for local campaigning.

Rate for the Job can be accessed by members here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/rateforthejob>

Addressing the gender pay gap is a key priority for UCU, and branches are encouraged to discuss how this can be done at their institution with their regional office.