

The Future of Enterprise Bargaining in the Higher Education Sector

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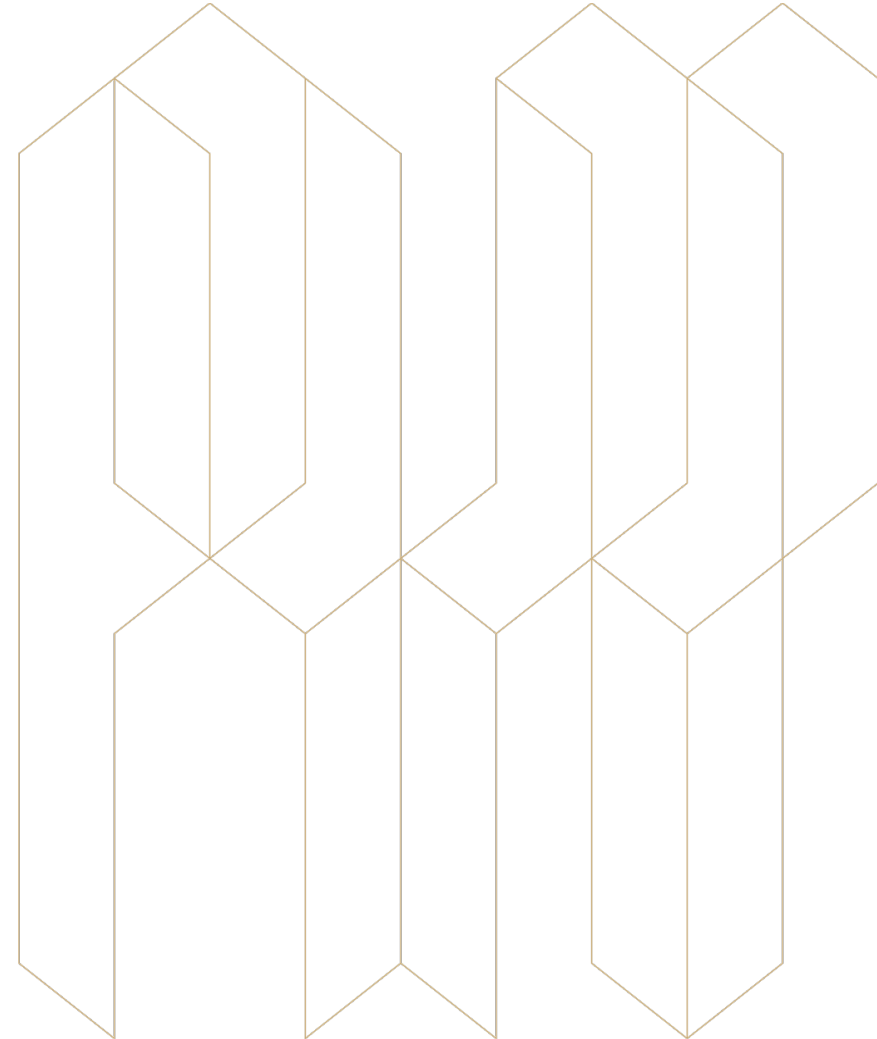
Overview

VC perspective

Sociological perspective

Reflections, not a blueprint

- 1) Negotiating the current industrial landscape
- 2) The future of work in the HE sector and areas to consider within the IR context



Keating 1993: Model of Future Industrial Arrangements

Corrs, Chambers, Westgarth presentation

It is a model under which compulsorily arbitrated wage increases would be there only as a safety net. This safety net would not be intended to prescribe the actual conditions of work of most employees, but only to catch those unable to make workplace agreements with employers.

Over time, the safety net would inevitably become simpler.

We would have fewer awards, with fewer clauses.

Current HE Industrial Arrangements

- Complex
- Over-regulate many workforce aspects
- Create confusion and uncertainty
- Lead to unhelpful, accusatory discourse
- Induce and cultivate divisions between management and unions
- Continue to overlook critical structural issues

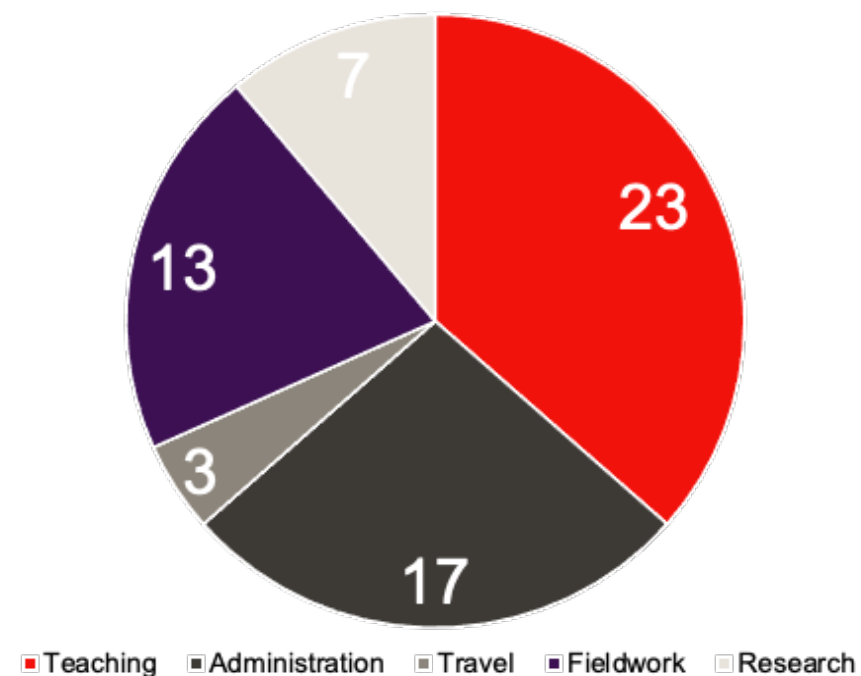
Workload
Wage 'theft'
Casualisation
Leave Provisions
Gender & Diversity

Workload

Current models are confusing, costly, counterproductive

ACU examples:

[Academic Workload Policy 2021 \(acu.edu.au\)](http://acu.edu.au)



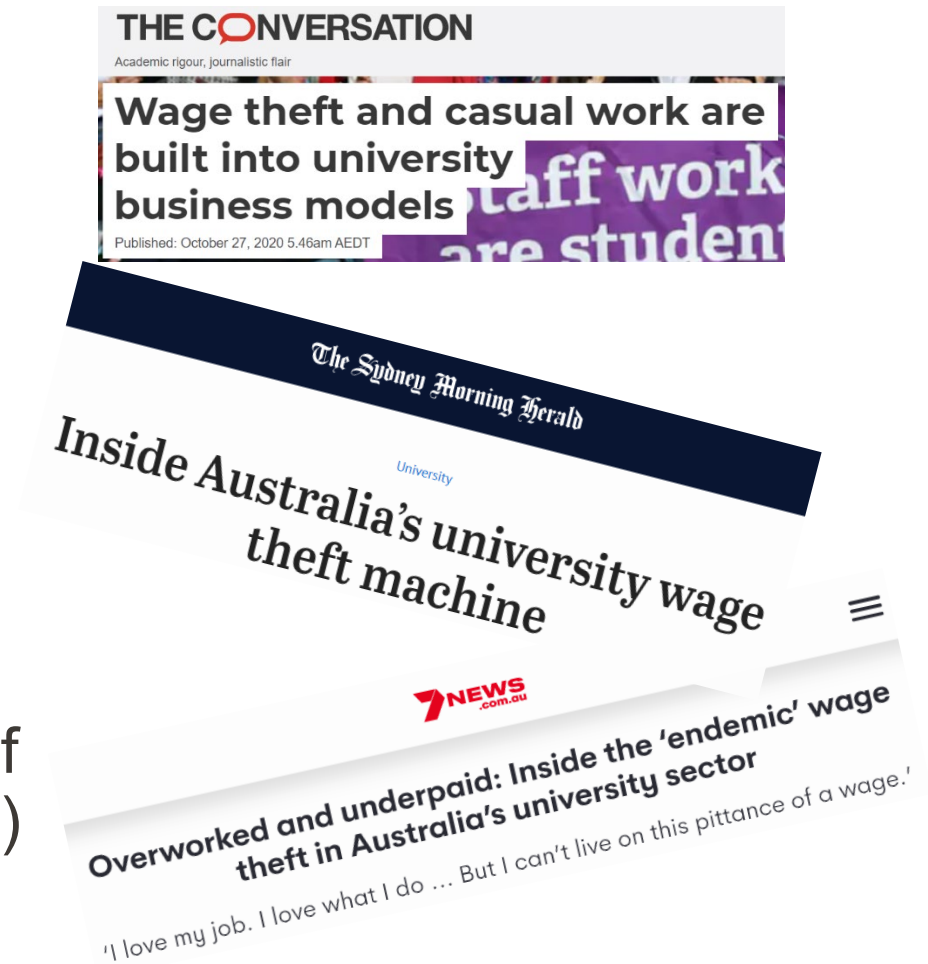
'Wage Theft'

Highly motive and misleading discourse
(overpayments also frequent)

Not deliberate, not part of 'business model'

Creates antagonism and distrust

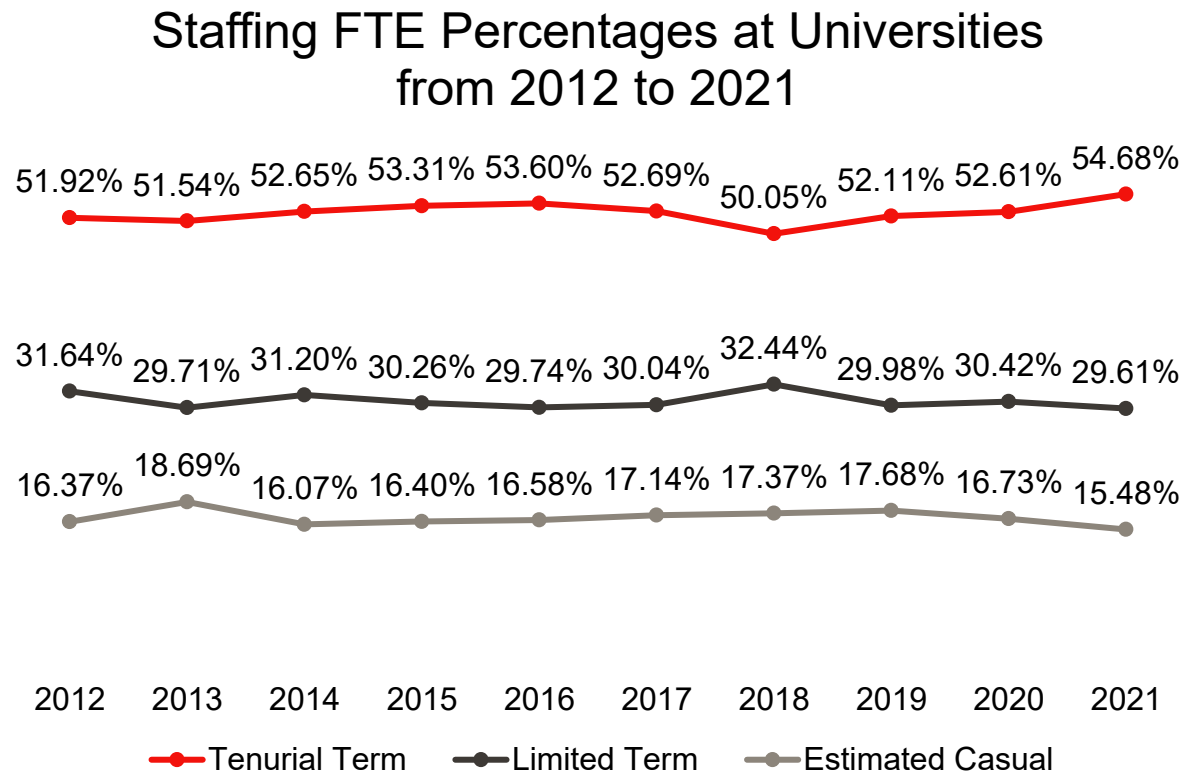
Requires co-operation to address the causes of
incorrect payments (e.g., confusing regulations)



Casualisation

Since 2019, casualisation has fallen from 17.68% to 15.48%.

Almost 85% of estimated FTE staffing levels are either permanent or fixed-term staff



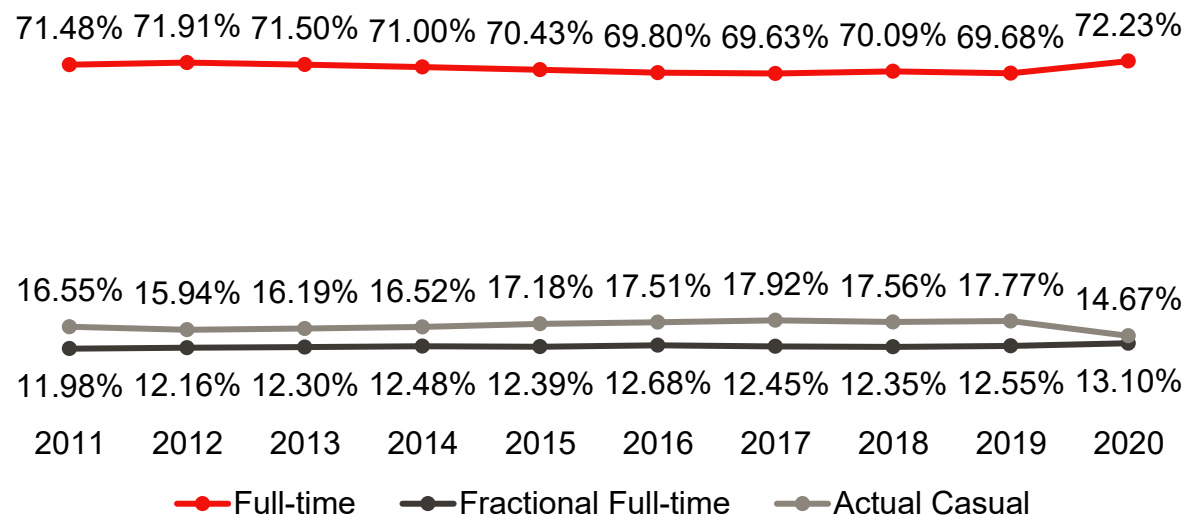
Source: AHEIA, *Briefing Note*; Department of Education, Skills and Employment, *Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2021 Staff data*.

Casualisation

Actual casualisation has declined from 17.92% in 2017 to 14.67% in 2020.

Casual employees represent less than 15% of actual FTE staff.

Actual Staffing FTE Percentages at Universities from 2011 to 2020

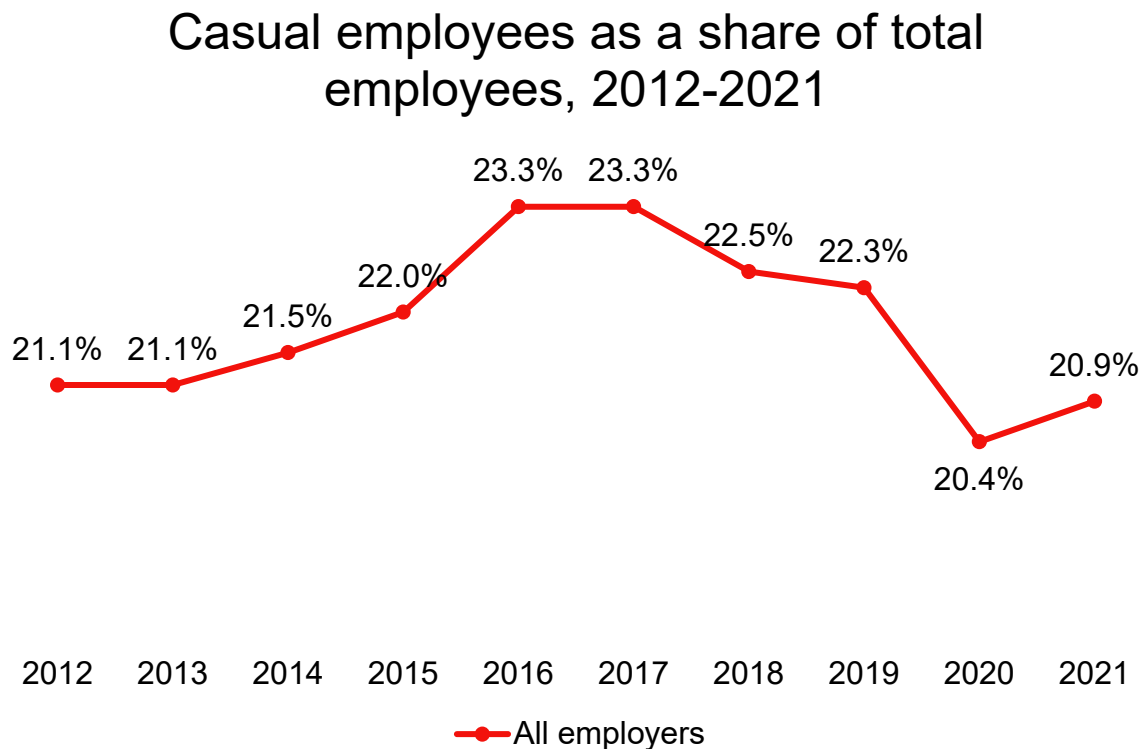


Source: Department of Education, Skills and Employment, *Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2021 Staff data*.

Casualisation

Casual employees make up around 20% of the Australia workforce.

Universities are using casual employees at a similar rate to the rest of the Australian economy.



Source: AHEIA, *Briefing Note*; Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Working arrangements*.

Relevant consideration

- Most industries rely on a casual pool
- Dynamic sector with fluctuation of enrolments
- Support of non-casual workforce (eg fieldwork; grant-related activity)
- Opportunities for ECRs and PhD students

Leave Provisions

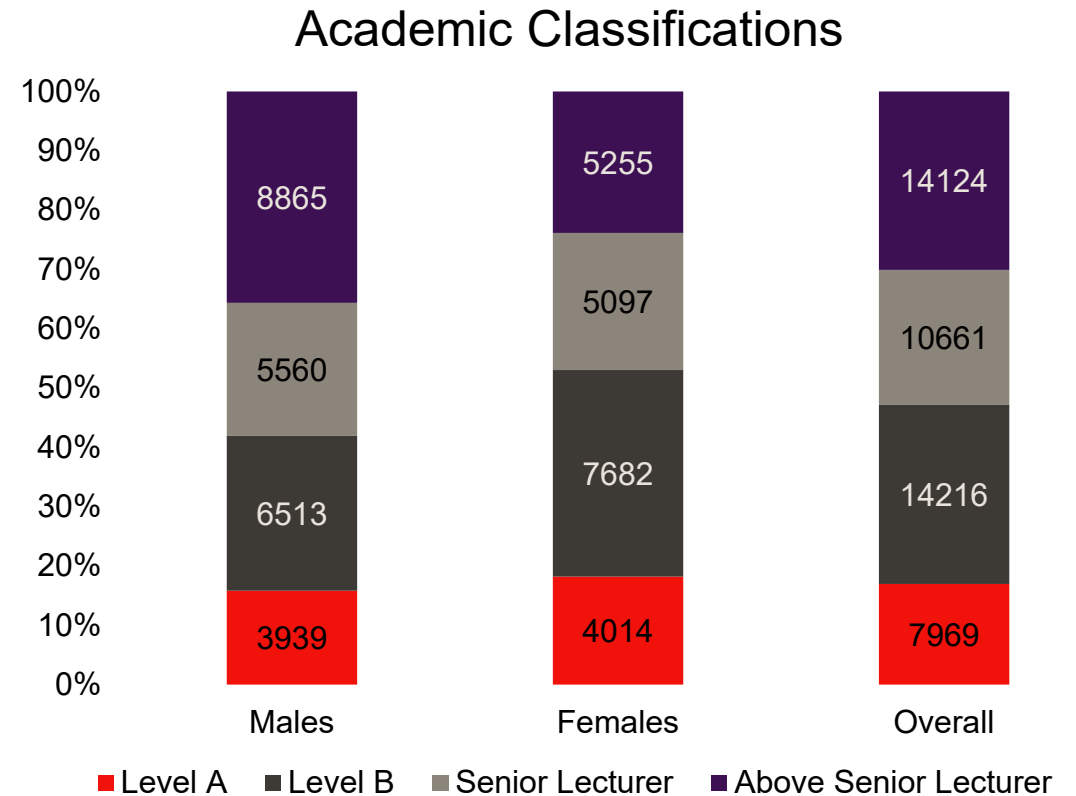
The sector offers generous leave conditions that are above National Employment Standards

- Annual
- Long Service
- Personal /Carers
- Parental
- Grandparents
- Compassionate
- Community Service
- ADF Reserves
- Trade Union Training
- Extraordinary Leave
- Living Organ Donor Leave
- Gender Affirmation
- Support for Victims of Family/Domestic Violence

Gender Equality

A greater proportion of men than women in an academic role are classified above Level C.

More women are working at Levels A and B than men.

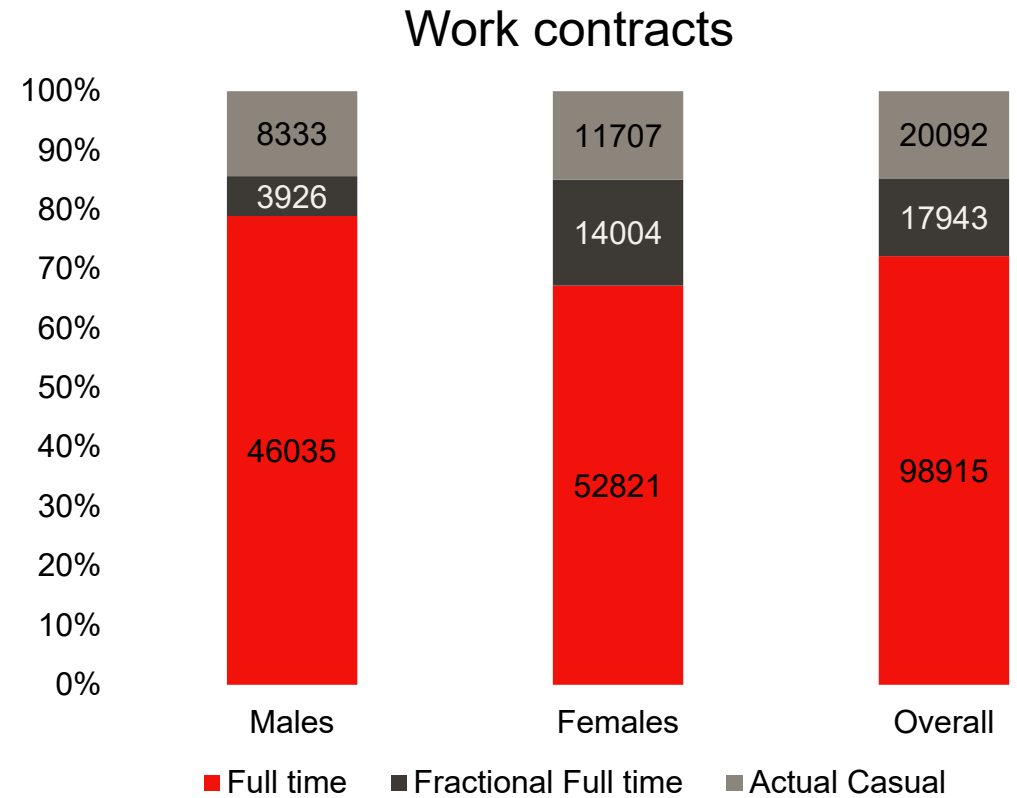


Source: Department of Education, *Staff Time Series*

Gender Equality

Almost 80% of FTE men working in HE have a full-time contract

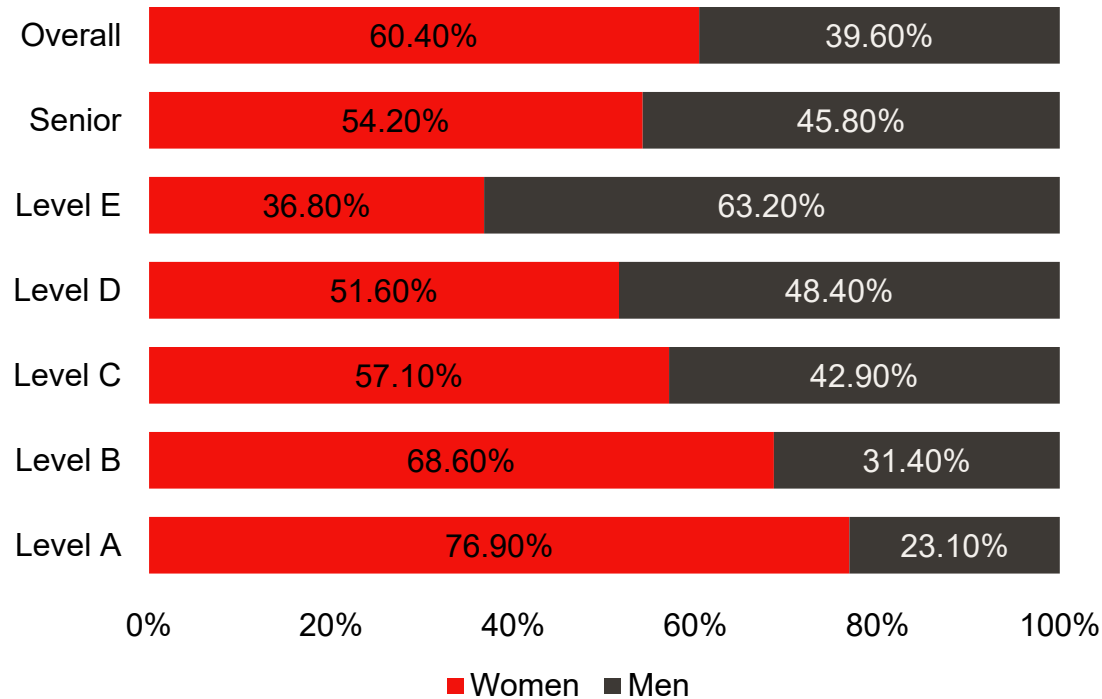
Less than 70% of FTE women working in HE have a full-time contract



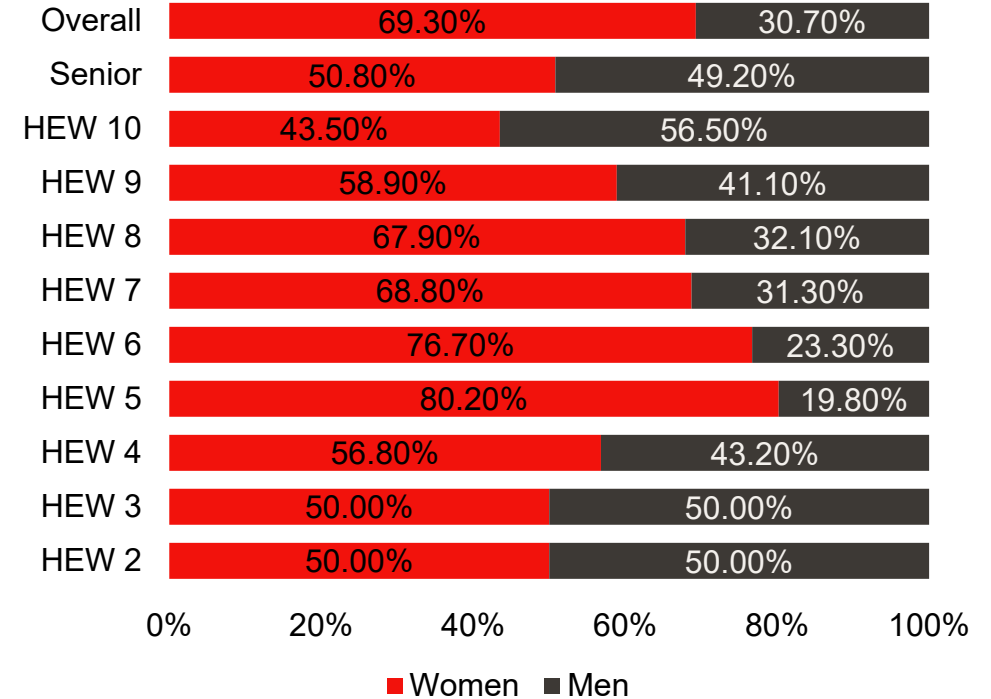
Source: Department of Education, *Staff Time Series*

ACU Gender Ratio

ACU Academic Staff by Level



ACU Professional Staff by Level



The Accord: 'Reimagining of the Sector'

Potential turning point

AHEIA has called for an industrial relations element to be fed into the broader Universities Accord process.

“One of the priorities of the federal government’s sweeping Universities Accord is to improve employment conditions in higher education. This is long overdue.”

'Some of them do treat you like an idiot': what it's like to be a casual academic

Steven Burch, University of Tasmania, **Amrinder Khosa**, University of Tasmania, **Esin Ozdil**, La Trobe University

Published: March 23, 2023 6.42am AEDT

Future HE Industrial Arrangements

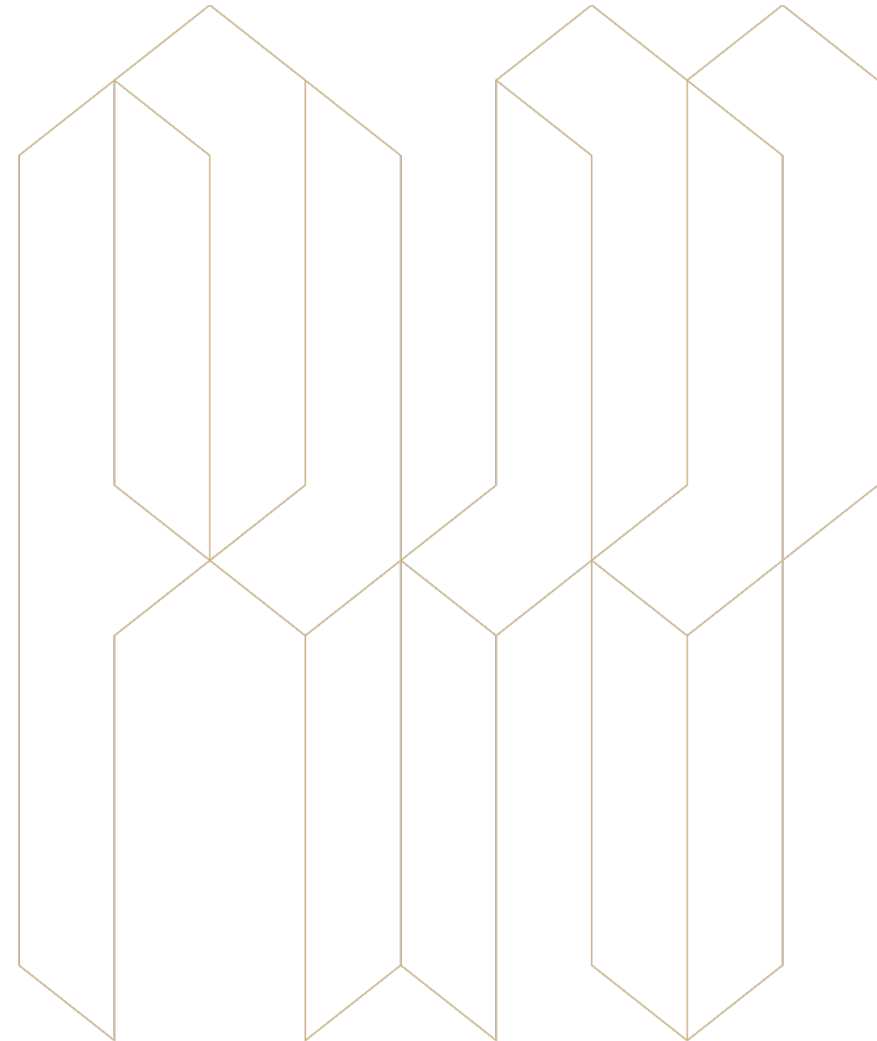
- Simple
- Fit for purpose
- Fair
- Balance between job security and the need for flexibility
- Economically sustainable

Future industrial arrangements must also factor in predicted changes regarding how work will be done in the future.

Universities claim to be preparing their students for the future but are they preparing themselves and their workforce for the future?

The Future of Work

- Technological advancements
- Disappearance of some jobs and the creation of others
- New employment platforms
- Workplaces will expand across the globe
- People will work outside of traditional arrangements
- Greater fluidity between professional and personal lives
- People will change jobs more frequently.



The Future University

Will likely see:

- Constantly changing needs and expectations of students to meet market and career demands
- Digital evolution of teaching and learning
- Greater augmentation of work functions with technology
- Strong university-industry R&D nexus
- Fluid and highly competitive funding conditions
- International networks and co-creation

The Future University

Campus Morning Mail 4 May 2023

TEQSA Predicts

- Growth in private sector and more dual sector providers
- Pathways of learning industry driven

TEQSA Warns

- International student recruitment will rely on education agents and on partners for course delivery
- Technology, currently “file sharing websites, contract assignment completion and artificial intelligence,” are potentially “existential threats” to academic integrity

The Future University

Higher education employers and employees might expect:

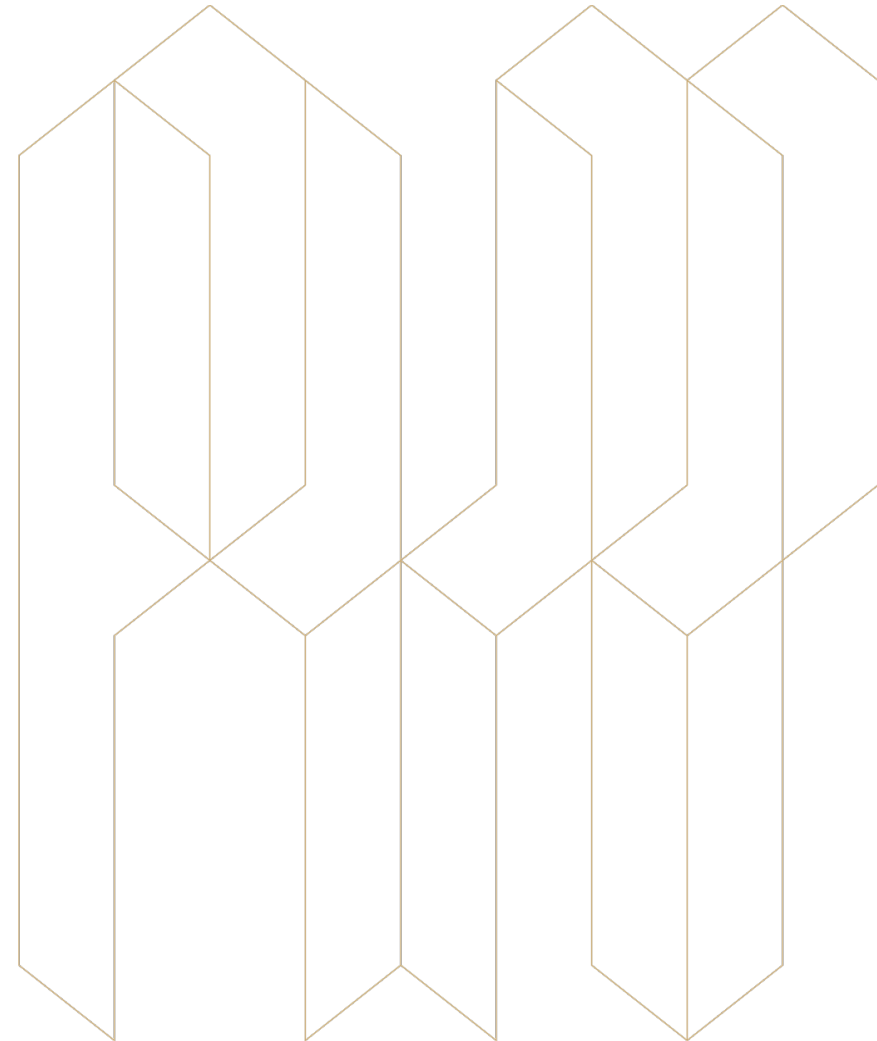
- Smaller pools of full-time employees with more tasks being outsourced
- More non-standard employment arrangements (task-focused)
- Different measures of performance
- Flexible working arrangements
- Greater staff turnover
- Global work pool

Future Considerations for IR

Examples:

- Appropriate representation for non-standard employees
- Investment in employees: enabling employment fluidity and mobility
- Use of new technologies e.g., management by algorithm, monitoring and surveillance

See: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages#part5>



Representation of Non-Standard Employees

In Australia, non-standard work has remained steady since 2001 at around 55% of total employment.

Australian higher education already has a significant non-standard component

Must do more to prepare for current and predicted challenges

Non-standard employment is defined as any employment which is not a permanent and full-time. This include fixed-term contracts, casual employment, part-time employment and self-employment (Lass and Wooden, 2020).

See: <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/staff-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2021-staff-data>
<https://theconversation.com/amp/some-of-them-do-treat-you-like-an-idiot-what-its-like-to-be-a-casual-academic-201470>

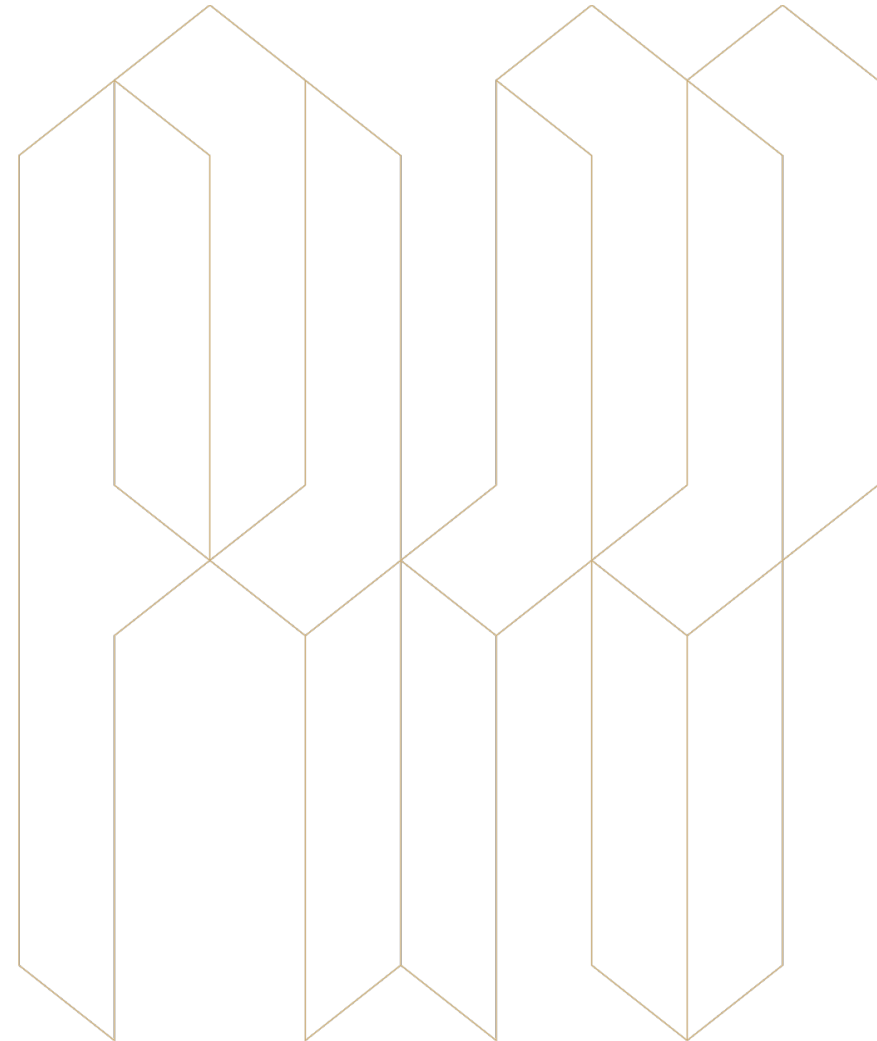
Investment in Employees: Training

Most employees are not prepared for the future of work

Greater demand for skills training and career development

Expectation for employers to provide ongoing training

See: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2022/11/06/70-arent-prepared-for-the-future-of-work-demands-for-upskilling-surge/?sh=3674aa23b654>



Management Through Technology

Advantages:

- Management of, and connection with, remote teams
- Efficiency
- Risk mitigation

Disadvantages:

- Distancing from employees
- Compromises privacy and autonomy
- Creates power imbalance /lack of transparency

Communication platforms

File share

Project management systems

GPS tracking

Performance monitoring

Algorithmic management

Algorithmic Management

Machine learning algorithms

Automated decision making

- Filter job applicants
- Create schedules
- Monitor performance and productivity

Have serious moral implications

Source: Jarrahi et al. 2021. 'Algorithmic management in a work context'. Big Data & Society, July-December.

Algorithmic management is a diverse set of technological tools and techniques to remotely manage workforces, relying on data collection and surveillance of workers to enable automated or semi-automated decision-making.

[Mateescu and Nguyen 2019](#)

Through systems such as Microsoft Teams, organizations can also collect data about the minutiae of a worker's activity, productivity, and other granular aspects of their performance
[Jarrahi et al. 2021](#)

Conclusion

Keep industrial arrangements simple and fit for purpose.

Universities must be prepared for new challenges in order to remain relevant and competitive. This includes a different conversation across the bargaining table.

