

Understanding and Addressing Everyday Sexisms in Australian Universities

Survey Data Research Brief

Design and Aims

Understanding and Addressing Everyday Sexisms in Australian Universities is an Australian Research Council (ARC) funded project which seeks to understand how

everyday sexisms in academia contribute to structural gender-based discrimination across individual academics' experiences, the disciplines, and Australian universities.

The project's core aims were to:

- Understand how everyday sexisms are defined and experienced by a diverse cohort of academics.
- Gather and examine evidence on how everyday sexisms contribute to gender-based discrimination across the individual, discipline, and university levels.

- Develop a suite of situated practices that will enable universities to include everyday sexisms within their current programs, strategies, and policies related to gender equity.
- Translate these findings into traditional (scholarly journal articles) and non-traditional (exhibition, blog posts, the Conversation) research outputs.

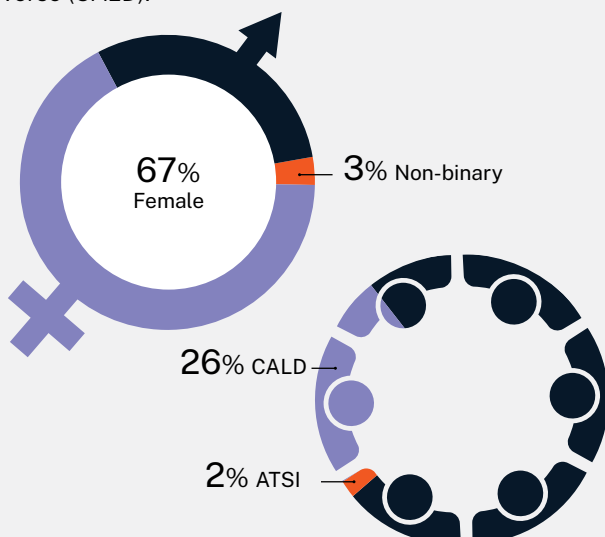
Demographics

Personal background characteristics

A total of 1257 academics from twelve institutions across four Australian states and territories participated in the online survey.

The majority of academics identified as female (n = 839, 67%), with 42 (3.4%) identifying as non-binary and/or gender diverse. Thirty participants preferred not to indicate their gender identity.

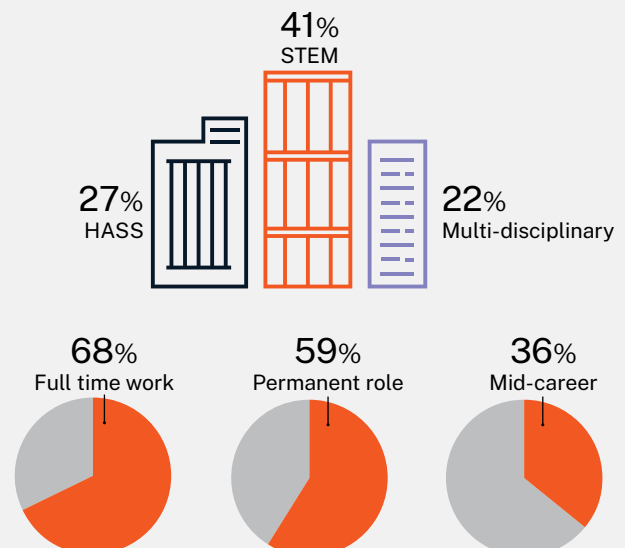
Approximately 2% (n = 20) of the total sample identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and almost 30% (n = 323) reported being Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD).



Workplace characteristics

Academics reported fairly similar representation across the humanities and social sciences (HASS; 37%) and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM; 41%) disciplines.

The majority of academics reported that they were engaged in full-time work (68%), were employed in an ongoing, permanent role (59%) and at the mid-career stage (36%).



Experiences of sexism

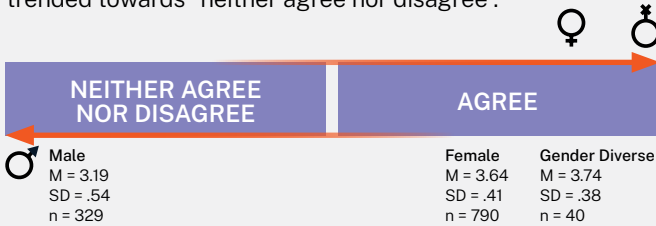
Female and gender diverse¹ academics reported experiences of sexism across their academic career between “rarely” (about once per month) and “sometimes” (about twice per month). Male academics reported witnessing or bystander experiences of sexism between “very rarely” (less than once per month) and “rarely” (about once per month), which was lower than the lived experience of sexism reported by female and gender diverse academics.



Likert scale for the measure ranged from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”).

Beliefs in sexism

Female and gender diverse academics were more likely than their male colleagues to agree that, in general, female and gender diverse academics are the victims of workplace sexism in Australian universities. Female and gender diverse academics’ mean scores on this measure trended towards “agree” as compared to male academics’ mean scores which trended towards “neither agree nor disagree”.



Likert scale for the measure ranged from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”).

Female and gender diverse academics reported similarly low levels of agreement with the idea that reverse sexism is prevalent in Australian universities (or the idea that sexism has shifted from anti-female discrimination to anti-male discrimination). Their responses trended between “strongly disagree” and “disagree”. In contrast, male academics reported greater levels of agreement, with responses trending between “somewhat disagree” and “neither agree nor disagree”.

Notably, 19% of male respondents (n = 61) agreed with the idea that men were now the victims of sexism in the academy.



Likert scale for the measure ranged from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”).

¹Here, the term “gender diverse” includes participants who identified as non-binary, gender diverse, or used gender identity terms outside of binary descriptors.

Relationships between value, safety and sexism

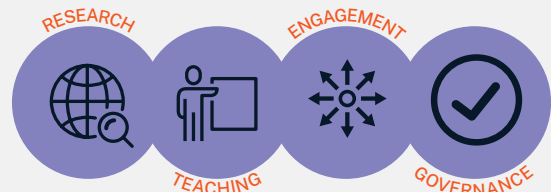
Female and gender diverse academics who felt a greater sense of being valued by their institution for their research outputs and their leadership work reported significantly fewer experiences of sexism. Their sense of being valued in the domains of teaching and engagement were unrelated to their experiences of sexism.

Female and gender diverse academics who felt a greater sense of being valued by their institution in regard to their research productivity reported significantly higher experiences of and beliefs in sexism.

Female and gender diverse academics who felt a greater sense of safety within their school/centre/institute and their university reported significantly fewer experiences of sexism.

Self-efficacy outcomes

Female and gender diverse academics’ sense of self-efficacy was measured across the four domains of:



Female and gender diverse academics’ sense of being valued by their institution for their research productivity, community and stakeholder engagement, and mentorship and leadership work was related to a significantly higher sense of self-efficacy in their capacity to undertake work in the domains of research, engagement, and governance respectively.

Demographic markers and experiences of sexism

For female and gender diverse academics, those who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, were the carer for an ageing or unwell person, employed in an ongoing/permanent role, and were at the mid-career stage were significantly more likely to report experiencing everyday sexism. Conversely, those who were employed casually and did not hold a PhD qualification were significantly less likely to report experiencing everyday sexism.

For male academics, those who identified as sexuality diverse and were employed on a fixed-term contractual basis were significantly more likely to report bystander experiences or witnessing of everyday sexism. Those male academics who were in leadership roles were significantly less likely to report bystander experiences or witnessing of everyday sexism.



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