



Australian
Higher
Education
Industrial
Association

31 July 2008

Secretariat
Review of Australian Higher Education
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**Review of Australian Higher Education
Submission by the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association**

The Australian Higher Education Industrial Association is the employer association for the higher education sector, registered under the Workplace Relations Act 1996. AHEIA represents the interests of its members, which include 29 of Australia's public universities and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, in relation to employment matters.

AHEIA supports the view that additional funding will be necessary to enable Australian universities to recruit and retain staff, particularly in the face of an ageing academic workforce and increased international competition.

There is already tension between the "standard mode" of academic employment (long-term, tenured, teaching and research academics teaching in traditional modes) and the needs of universities, and this tension is likely to increase with the changes envisaged by the Discussion Paper.

Significant numbers of academic employees are already engaged in other than "standard mode" employment. These arrangements include casual or sessional academics, fixed-term researchers and persons engaged on contracts for services rather than as employees. They also include specialist positions resulting from the disaggregation of traditional academic work, including positions that are now not easily categorised as either academic or general staff.

Such arrangements are legitimate responses to the labour market demands of universities, particularly their need for flexibility, adaptability and currency of professional expertise. It would be wrong to treat these arrangements as an aberration to be discouraged or suppressed. To do this is to run the risk of marginalising these staff and excluding them from appropriate support and accountability mechanisms.

Universities are already exploring a range of innovative approaches to staffing matters, including possible changes to academic classification and pay structures,

AHEIA File Ref: 08/091

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enhanced performance management and reward mechanisms or teaching focussed/teaching intensive categories.

Other universities are successfully addressing their labour needs by utilising large numbers of employees engaged in other than the “standard model”. For example, the Australian Technological Network universities employ large numbers of currently active professionals in academic roles on a part-time basis in professional education.

Reports suggest that similar trends are evident in overseas universities, particularly in the UK^{1,2} and USA³, and will be of even more importance as we engage in increasing competition with overseas universities.

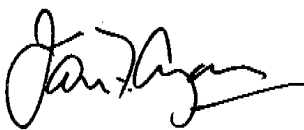
Recruiting future academics to Australian universities will require better managing of academic careers, both the “standard mode” career but also innovative employment arrangements that meet future university needs and which may be more attractive to younger people.

In the future, universities will need:

- a greater capacity to adjust their staffing in response to changing demands;
- more efficient and cost effective ways of delivering key services;
- more effective quality control over those services;
- staffing arrangements that can resource increasing connections between higher education and vocational education and training.

Additional funding will be necessary to address a range of employment-related considerations including, but not limited to, salary levels applicable to all staff. It will also be needed to support market based loadings for individual staff, performance related pay schemes and staff development initiatives directed at the full range of employment types in universities of the future.

Yours sincerely



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Executive Director

¹ ‘More than two-thirds of academics recently starting continuous work in UK higher education were employed on a fixed-term basis’, *Fixed-term: the scandal continues*, Universities and Colleges Union, November 2007

² ‘Teaching-only staff were once deemed unworthy of the name “academic”. But one in four UK academics is now labelled so, and the proportion is expected to grow’. *A lesser breed?*, Times Higher Education, 6 February 2008

³ ‘Professors with tenure or who are on tenure track are now a distinct minority on the country’s campuses, as the ranks of part-time instructors and professors hired on a contract have swelled, according to federal figures analyzed by the American Association of University Professors’, *Decline of the Tenure Track Raises Concerns*, New York Times, November 20, 2007