



ICAC UNIVERSITY INTEGRITY SURVEY 2020

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



**ICAC University Integrity
Survey 2020**
South Australia

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South Australia's three public universities occupy unique positions in this state's public administration. Created by state legislation, they are charged with the advancement and dissemination of higher learning and knowledge through teaching, research and scholarship. They instruct, examine and confer awards on domestic and international students with a view to meeting the needs of industry, commerce, the professions and the wider community. They employ thousands of staff, and hold significant public lands, resources and funds. Their interactions with industry and the not-for-profit and government sectors are considerable and expanding.

Every member of the community has an interest in the universities maintaining, not only excellence in their teaching and research, but also the integrity of their operations.

The integrity of any organisation is framed by the attitudes and experiences of its staff. Organisations that struggle to listen to their employees, or to call out impropriety or to take effective action against improper conduct are at a heightened risk of corruption.

In March 2020 Independent Commissioner Against Corruption officers conducted a survey designed to better understand the attitudes and experiences of public officers employed by the state's three public universities in relation to matters of integrity. This report is a synopsis of the findings arising from that survey.

Like all surveys, this one interrogated the perceptions of respondents. The results do not pretend to be a precise depiction of the state of affairs in South Australia's public universities. However, the survey results are illustrative of the concerns of public officers working in the university sector. The results identify areas of weakness, tension and risk that could provide opportunities for corruption.

I hope the insights and observations offered in this report will stimulate each university to review its operations, policies, procedures and reporting cultures. Listening to employees about their experiences of improper conduct, and taking action upon reports and complaints of poor conduct or poor systems, are the surest methods of maintaining and improving the integrity of any agency. This is an opportune time for renewed focus on the particular corruption and impropriety risks present in South Australia's university sector.

I record my thanks to the universities for their cooperation in facilitating the survey. I also acknowledge the university public officers who shared their thoughts about integrity. This is most appreciated. I am grateful to my research officer, Adam Harrison, for his invaluable assistance in the development of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ann Vanstone'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

The Hon. Ann Vanstone QC
Independent Commissioner Against Corruption

University public officers expressed considerable concern about their universities' cultures of reporting corruption or inappropriate conduct.

A third of respondents agreed that their university places reputation above addressing problems. Only one in four agreed their employer had adequate protections in place for those who report corruption or inappropriate conduct. A majority of respondents were not confident that reporting would result in some form of action. A significant number of respondents reported feeling intimidated at the prospect of reporting and worried about whether it could impact on their job security.

These responses raise questions about whether it is safe for university staff to report wrongdoing, and about the universities' commitment to encouraging an effective reporting culture and listening to their staff.

Despite these concerns, 75% of respondents agreed they would be willing to report to someone inside their organisation. This is encouraging. Listening to staff is essential in order for organisations to improve operations by eliminating impropriety and correcting its negative effects. All organisations should ensure they develop an environment where reporting inappropriate conduct is encouraged and acted upon appropriately.

University public officers demonstrated lower levels of awareness of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption and the Office for Public Integrity, compared with broader public administration in South Australia. There was a lower level of awareness of statutory obligations to report suspected corruption and serious or systemic misconduct and maladministration to the Office for Public Integrity. There was also a low level of willingness to report such conduct to the Office of Public Integrity, particularly among academic staff and older and more well-established staff.

Inappropriate conduct encountered in the university sector, was primarily:

- bullying and harassment
- favouritism / nepotism
- inappropriate staff recruitment (both fixed term and sessional staff)
- improper influence or practice involving student enrolment, student assessment and grading
- failure to fulfil duties
- conflicts of interest
- inappropriate conduct in research or scholarly practice

Additionally, 18% of respondents agreed that their workplace had to 'bend the rules to achieve its goals'.

Respondents separately identified areas where their university was vulnerable to inappropriate conduct. These identified vulnerabilities broadly match the conduct encountered (see page 4):

- bullying and harassment
- favouritism / nepotism
- inappropriate staff recruitment (both fixed term and sessional staff)
- improper influence or practice involving student enrolment, student assessment and grading
- conflicts of interest
- inappropriate conduct in research or scholarly practice

Fewer university public officers than in broader public administration agreed they had been provided with information or training on corruption risks to help protect against these activities.

While there are shared integrity risks across the university sector, the experiences and attitudes of university public officers are not homogenous. Universities comprise diverse academic and professional staff working in numerous institutes and administrative bodies. Attitudes and behaviours may vary markedly between different areas and cohorts within the universities. Hence, to some degree, efforts to promote integrity may require an understanding of local circumstances and an effort to customise the messaging.

Management and leadership typically did not fare well in the qualitative feedback. The quantitative data showed a disconnect between the opinions of leaders and those of other staff. The leaders had a more positive view than their staff. Management personnel were described by some as being disinterested in the problems facing staff, exploitative and immune to criticism. It was said they were tightening control over staff dissent.

The survey also revealed consternation among respondents, particularly academic staff, about declining standards of university education, inappropriate student enrolment and pressure to pass students.

There were claims of an excessive and damaging focus by management and leadership on student fees and revenue. This focus was described as impacting negatively on integrity, encouraging poor behaviour, negatively impacting on teaching, and contributing to a work culture where people were unwilling to speak up.

The tension described by respondents between ensuring financial sustainability and maintaining standards of education, research and student intake may provide numerous opportunities and pressures for corrupt or inappropriate conduct. Those risks must be explored and effectively managed.

Divergence between the experiences and attitudes of academic staff compared with professional staff was also prevalent.

Teaching workloads, academic publishing demands, the pressure to find ongoing grants or funding, and insecure employment suggest there are some pockets of anxious and disenfranchised university employees. This is particularly the case for less senior academic staff. In addition to the personal toll on staff, disgruntled employees are at increased risk of engaging in corrupt and inappropriate conduct.

Finally, the survey responses suggested that universities do not suffer from a lack of policies or procedures. Rather, the challenge appears to be in ensuring that policies are disseminated, understood and complied with. There was some evidence that compliance with policies is a problem in situations related to grading and student enrolment, as well as among 'high achieving' or 'valuable' staff. Such staff were seen to be held to less demanding standards.

All public officers in the university sector, particularly those in management and leadership positions, are encouraged to read and reflect upon the contents of this report.

The Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC) University Integrity Survey 2020 builds upon the ICAC Public Integrity Survey 2018. It helps complete our understanding of the attitudes and experiences of public officers in respect of corruption and inappropriate conduct in South Australian public administration.^A

The survey was ‘live’ from 10 March 2020 to 3 April 2020. A total of 3,240 responses were received^B; 1,364 respondents identified as working at the University of Adelaide, 695 from Flinders University and 1,173 from the University of South Australia. Eight respondents did not identify the university where they worked. A total of 1,041 respondents provided responses to at least one qualitative question. Responses were assessed and coded to identify key themes.^C

The survey questions are shown in Appendix one. Rounding has been used in respect of statistical results. Accordingly not all tables and figures total 100%.

Demographics of respondents

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS	N*	%[†]
Gender		
Female	1,847	57.6
Male	1,325	41.3
Does not identify as a gender [‡]	23	0.7
Other [‡]	14	0.4
Age		
20 years and under [‡]	14	0.4
21 to 34 years	572	17.9
35 to 44 years	944	29.5
45 to 54 years	883	27.6
55 years and above	791	24.7

^A The employees, contractors, and members of Council of South Australia’s three public universities are public officers for the purposes of the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012*.

^B No questions were mandatory and not all responses were complete. Respondents typically did not provide answers to all qualitative questions.

^C Comments such as ‘N/A’, ‘Nothing to add’ or those referring to experiences at organisations other than the three public South Australian universities were not included. Quotes have not been corrected and contain original typographical errors. For the sake of brevity the traditional use of [sic] to highlight such errors has not been used. Descriptions of acronyms or explanatory text may occasionally be added in square brackets.

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS	N*	%[†]
Employment type		
Permanent / tenured / ongoing	1,834	57.3
Fixed term (minimum one year contract)	912	28.5
Casual / sessional / short fixed term (less than one year contract)	456	14.2
Role[§]		
Academic levels A to C	895	28.0
Academic levels D or above	399	12.5
Other academic position	76	2.4
(All academic roles)	(1,370)	(42.9)
HEO1 to HEO6	930	29.1
HEO7 to HEO10	720	22.5
Other professional position	87	2.7
(All professional roles)	(1,737)	(54.4)
Senior Manager / Senior Staff or above	87	2.7
Time with organisation		
Less than one year	353	11.1
1 to 5 years	1,132	35.5
6 to 10 years	693	21.7
11 to 20 years	672	21.1
More than 20 years	337	10.6
Time in the university sector		
Less than one year	202	6.4
1 to 5 years	760	24.1
6 to 10 years	687	21.8
11 to 20 years	890	28.2
More than 20 years	618	19.6

* As no questions were mandatory the number of respondents in specific demographic categories is smaller than the total of all responses.

[†] Percentages are calculated on the total number of respondents who responded to that particular question.

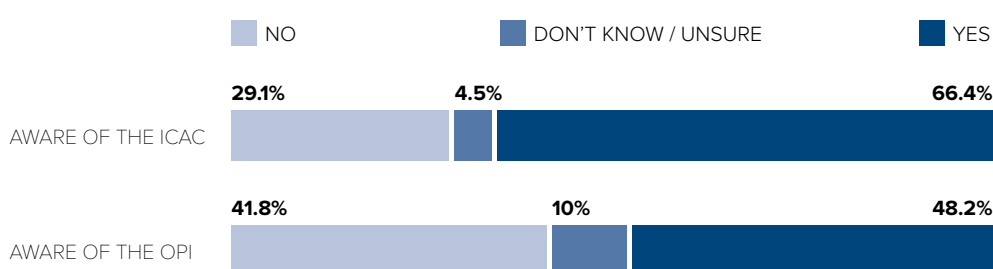
[‡] For the purpose of statistical analysis this category was excluded due to the low numbers.

[§] These categories were developed in consultation with the three universities to best represent their workforces.

Awareness

The survey asked whether respondents were aware of the ICAC and the Office for Public Integrity (OPI).

University public officers had lower levels of awareness of the ICAC than observed in broader public administration (66.4% compared to 79.7%) and of the OPI (48.2% compared to 61.8%).



STATISTICAL FINDINGS ^{1, D}

Aware of the ICAC

- ▶ Senior staff and professional staff were more likely (95.4% and 68.5%) and academic staff were less likely to agree they were aware of the ICAC (62.0%).²
- ▶ Permanent staff were more likely (72.5%) and fixed term staff and casual staff were less likely to agree they were aware of the ICAC (60.4% and 54.0%).³
- ▶ There was steadily increasing agreement that a person was aware of the ICAC by age (from 47.9% for those aged 21 to 34 years to 80.5% for those aged 55 years or more).⁴
- ▶ There was steadily increasing agreement that a person was aware of the ICAC by length of service at their university (from 56.3% for those employed for less than one year, up to a maximum of 83.7% for those employed at their university for more than 20 years).⁵
- ▶ There was steadily increasing agreement that a person was aware of the ICAC by length of service in the university sector (from 53.0% for those employed for less than one year, up to a maximum of 79.8% for those employed for more than 20 years).⁶

^D Please refer to Appendix two, endnote 1 for a detailed description of the statistics in this report. The tests identify if there are statistically significant differences between demographic groups, such as gender, age, role at the university etc. For example, women being more likely to 'Agree' and men being more likely to say 'Don't know / not sure' when answering a particular question. Typically, only significant differences in whether respondents 'Agree' with a statement will be provided. In the absence of such differences, any significant differences in the proportions of demographic groups who say they 'Disagree' or 'Don't know / not sure' will be provided.

A lack of awareness of the ICAC / OPI is an obvious barrier to university public officers complying with their obligation to report certain types of conduct to the OPI.

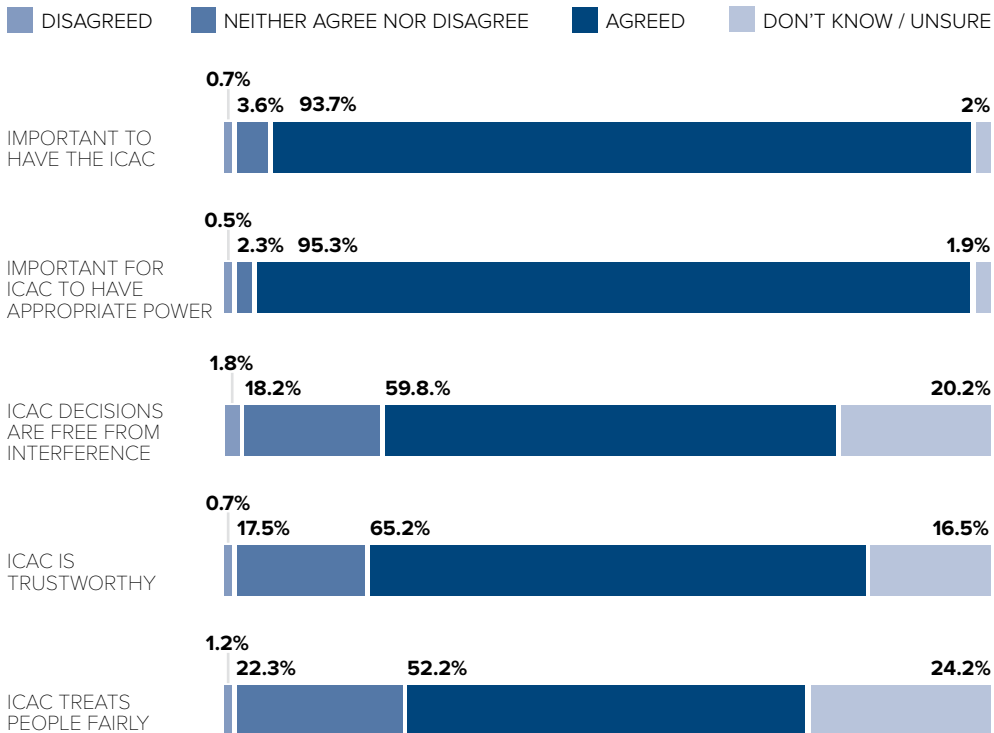
There is steadily increasing awareness of the ICAC with increased age and time worked at their university or in the university sector. There is higher awareness among permanent staff, or those in a senior or professional role.

Groups with lower awareness of the ICAC included academic staff, fixed term staff and casual staff. Post hoc analysis^E showed awareness of the ICAC was significantly lower in less senior academic (levels A to C), less senior professional (HEO1 to HEO6) and 'other' academic and professional positions.

A lack of awareness of the ICAC / OPI is an obvious barrier to university public officers complying with their obligation to report certain types of conduct to the OPI.

Perceptions

Respondents who were aware of the ICAC were asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of the ICAC.

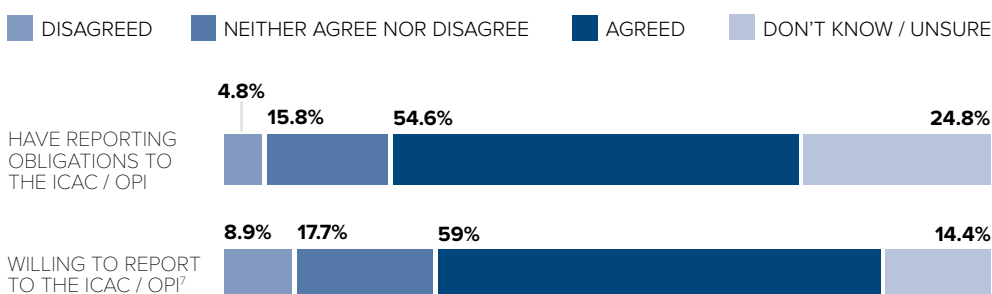


Responses indicated a relatively positive view of the ICAC, although some responses demonstrated ambivalence surrounding the ICAC's independence, trustworthiness and fair treatment. This ambivalence likely reflects a lack of familiarity with the ICAC.

^E Additional exploration of the data that was not part of the initially planned series of statistical tests. For the sake of brevity the specific data from these further breakdowns of responses is not typically included in the report.

Reporting to the ICAC and the OPI

Public officers have an obligation under the ICAC *Directions and Guidelines*^F to report to the OPI all reasonable suspicions of corruption and serious or systemic misconduct and maladministration in public administration.



University public officers had lower levels of agreement about their reporting obligations and their willingness to report, than observed in broader public administration (54.6% compared to 79.7% and 59.0% compared to 69.3% respectively).

STATISTICAL FINDINGS

Have reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI

- ▶ Women were more likely (26.8%) than men (22.0%) to say they *did not know / were not sure* they had reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI.⁸
- ▶ Senior staff and professional staff were more likely (79.3% and 57.8%) and academic staff were less likely (49.3%) to agree they had reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI.⁹
- ▶ Fixed term staff were more likely (57.8%) to agree they had reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI.¹⁰
- ▶ Those aged 55 years or more were more likely (7.0%) to *disagree* they had reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI.¹¹
- ▶ There was steadily decreasing agreement that the respondent had reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI the longer a person had worked at their university (From 69.8% for less than one year to 48.1% for 20 years or more).¹²
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were more likely (75.0% and 60.7%) and those who had worked for 11 to 20 years and more than 20 years were less likely (50.0% and 48.5%) to agree they had reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI.¹³

^F <https://icac.sa.gov.au/directions-guidelines>

Willing to report to the ICAC / OPI

- ▶ Men were more likely (63.9%) than women (56.1%) to agree they would report to the ICAC / OPI.¹⁴
- ▶ Senior staff were more likely (75.6%) and academic staff were less likely (57.3%) to agree they would report to the ICAC / OPI.¹⁵
- ▶ Fixed term staff were more likely (62.7%) and permanent staff were less likely (56.7%) to agree they would report to the ICAC / OPI.¹⁶
- ▶ There was steadily decreasing agreement that a person would report to the ICAC / OPI by length of service at their university (from 76.8% for those employed for less than one year to 52.4% for those employed for more than 20 years).¹⁷
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were more likely (79.7% and 65.1%) and those who had worked for 11 to 20 years or more than 20 years were less likely (52.9% and 54.6%) to agree they would report to the ICAC / OPI.¹⁸

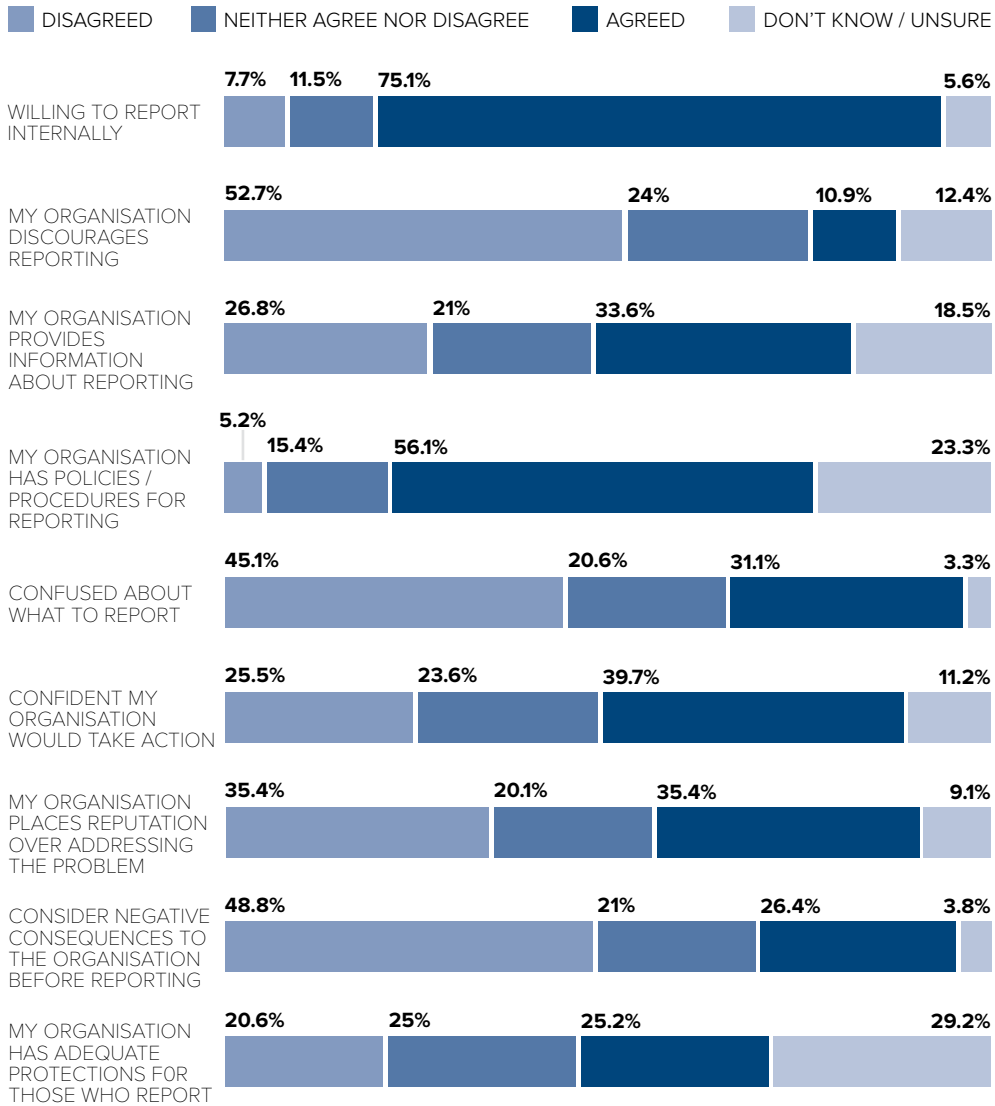
The data strongly suggests that awareness of reporting obligations and willingness to report to the ICAC / OPI is low, particularly among academic, older and more well-established staff. Higher levels of awareness and willingness to report among younger and newer staff may suggest a recent change in induction practices incorporating awareness of the ICAC, though it is unclear if this is the case.

All university public officers should understand they have an obligation to report certain types of conduct to the ICAC / OPI and the universities should make it known that reporting is expected.

The data strongly suggests that awareness of reporting obligations and willingness to report to the ICAC / OPI is low, particularly among academic, older and more well-established staff.

Reporting internally

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about reporting corruption / inappropriate conduct within their organisation.



There appears to be a lack of knowledge within the universities about what conduct should be reported and how a person should make a report.

Large numbers of respondents were equivocal or uncertain about whether their university discouraged reporting and a significant number felt it is, or could be, inappropriate to report. University messaging must stress that reporting is both required and appropriate.

The majority of respondents disagreed or were uncertain that reporting would result in some form of action.

There appears to be a lack of knowledge within the universities about what conduct should be reported and how a person should make a report.

A third of respondents agreed their university places its reputation above addressing problems.

Not addressing problems could have a more detrimental effect on a university's reputation because problems tend to magnify over time.

The responses of university public officers raise concerns about whether they feel safe to report. Only one in four respondents agreed that their organisation had adequate protections for those who report.

Three-quarters of respondents agreed they would report internally, which is surprising given the less positive responses to other questions about reporting internally.

The majority of respondents disagreed or were uncertain that reporting would result in some form of action.

The responses of university public officers raise concerns about whether they feel safe to report.

STATISTICAL FINDINGS

Willing to report internally

- ▶ Permanent staff were more likely (8.8%) and fixed term staff were less likely (4.9%) to *disagree* they were willing to report internally.¹⁹
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were more likely (81.1% and 77.9%) and those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years were less likely (69.7%) to agree that they were willing to report.²⁰
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year were more likely (86.4%) and those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years were less likely (72.5%) to agree that they were willing to report.²¹

My organisation discourages reporting

- ▶ Men were more likely (13.5%) than women (8.6%) to agree their organisation discourages reporting.²²
- ▶ Academic staff were more likely (13.9%) and professional staff and senior staff were less likely (8.6% and 3.7%) to agree their organisation discourages reporting.²³
- ▶ Permanent staff were more likely (13.0%) and fixed term staff were less likely (7.4%) to agree their organisation discourages reporting.²⁴
- ▶ Those aged 55 years or more were more likely (13.9%) and those aged 21 to 34 years old were less likely (7.5%) to agree their organisation discourages reporting.²⁵
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years, 11 to 20 years and more than 20 years were more likely (14.2%, 14.1% and 14.4%) and those who had worked at their university for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (4.8% and 7.4%) to agree their organisation discourages reporting.²⁶
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years and more than 20 years were more likely (13.0% and 14.3%) and those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (6.4% and 6.8%) to agree their organisation discourages reporting.²⁷

My organisation provides information about reporting

- ▶ Professional staff and senior staff were more likely (35.5% and 63.9%) and academic staff were less likely (29.3%) to agree their organisation provides information about reporting.²⁸
- ▶ Fixed term staff were more likely (36.4%) and casual staff were less likely (28.8%) to agree their organisation provides information about reporting.²⁹
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for less than one year (46.3%) were more likely and those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years were less likely (28.3%) to agree their organisation provides information about reporting.³⁰
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year were more likely (47.4%) and those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years were less likely (30.4%) to agree their organisation provides information about reporting.³¹

My organisation has policies / procedures for reporting

- ▶ Senior staff were more likely (85.4%) and academic staff were less likely (52.5%) to agree their organisation has policies / procedures for reporting.³²
- ▶ Casual staff were less likely (48.4%) to agree their organisation has policies / procedures for reporting.³³
- ▶ Those aged 21 to 34 years were more likely (30.2%) and those aged 55 years or more were less likely (20.6%) to answer *Don't know / Not sure* in response to whether their organisation has policies / procedures for reporting.³⁴
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for less than one year were more likely (64.6%) to agree their organisation has policies / procedures for reporting.³⁵
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year were more likely (66.1%) to agree their organisation has policies / procedures for reporting.³⁶

Confused about what to report

- ▶ Women were more likely (33.7%) than men (27.2%) to agree they were confused about what to report.³⁷
- ▶ Senior staff were less likely (11.0%) to agree they were confused about what to report.³⁸
- ▶ Casual staff were more likely (36.0%) and fixed term staff were less likely (28.1%) to agree they were confused about what to report.³⁹
- ▶ Those aged 21 to 34 years were more likely (42.1%) and those aged 45 to 54 years and 55 years or more were less likely (27.2% and 26.2%) to agree they were confused about what to report.⁴⁰
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years were more likely (36.2%) and those who had worked at their university for less than one year or more than 20 years were less likely (26.0% and 25.7%) to agree they were confused about what to report.⁴¹
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 6 to 10 years were more likely (36.7%) and those who had worked in the sector for more than 20 years were less likely (25.2%) to agree they were confused about what to report.⁴²

Confident my organisation would take action

- ▶ Senior staff were more likely (75.6%) and academic staff were less likely (35.5%) to agree they were confident their organisation would take action.⁴³
- ▶ Fixed term staff were more likely (44.6%) and permanent staff were less likely (37.4%) to agree they were confident their organisation would take action.⁴⁴
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were more likely (56.5% and 43.0%) and those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years were less likely (33.5% and 34.5%) to agree they were confident their organisation would take action.⁴⁵
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were more likely (60.6% and 45.0%) and those who had worked in the sector for 6 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years were less likely (35.7% and 35.4%) to agree they were confident their organisation would take action.⁴⁶

My organisation places reputation over addressing the problem

- ▶ Academic staff were more likely (41.4%) and professional staff and senior staff were less likely (31.4% and 17.1%) to agree their organisation places reputation over addressing the problem.⁴⁷
- ▶ Permanent staff were more likely (37.2%) and fixed term staff were less likely (32.2%) to agree their organisation places reputation over addressing the problem.⁴⁸
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 11 to 20 years or more than 20 years were more likely (42.3% and 41.5%) and those who had worked at their university for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (25.2% and 30.9%) to agree their organisation places reputation over addressing the problem.⁴⁹
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years or more than 20 years were more likely (39.9% and 41.0%) and those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (24.0% and 29.2%) to agree their organisation places reputation over addressing the problem.⁵⁰

Consider negative consequences to the organisation before reporting

- ▶ Men were more likely (29.2%) than women (24.1%) to agree a person should consider negative consequences to the organisation before reporting.⁵¹
- ▶ Senior staff were less likely (16.7%) to agree a person should consider negative consequences to the organisation before reporting.⁵²
- ▶ Those aged 21 to 34 years were more likely (30.7%) to agree a person should consider negative consequences to the organisation before reporting.⁵³
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year and for 11 to 20 years were more likely (33.3% and 29.9%) and those who had worked in the sector for more than 20 years were less likely (22.7%) to agree a person should consider negative consequences to the organisation before reporting.⁵⁴

My organisation has adequate protections for those who report

- ▶ Men were more likely (28.0%) than women (23.3%) to agree their organisation has adequate protections for those who report.⁵⁵
- ▶ Senior staff were more likely (71.1%) and academic staff were less likely (21.6%) to agree their organisation has adequate protections for those who report.⁵⁶
- ▶ Permanent staff were more likely (23.3%) and fixed term staff and casual staff were less likely (16.8% and 16.8%) to *disagree* their organisation has adequate protections for those who report.⁵⁷
- ▶ Those 21 to 34 years old were more likely to answer *Don't know / Not sure* (36.4%) that their organisation has adequate protections for those who report.⁵⁸
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for less than one year were more likely (31.3%) and those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years and 11 to 20 years were less likely (22.0% and 21.9%) to agree their organisation has adequate protections for those who report.⁵⁹
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year were more likely (36.3%) and those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years were less likely (21.8%) to agree their organisation has adequate protections for those who report.⁶⁰

Academic staff had consistently more negative perceptions of reporting internally, with less senior academics holding more negative views. Further enquiry is warranted to determine why academic staff, particularly those in less senior positions, have these attitudes, what experiences underpin them, and what may be required to change them.

Senior staff had significantly more positive views than their colleagues. For example, 71.1% of senior staff agreed there were adequate protections for those who report compared to only 21.6% of academic staff. Professional staff held more positive views than academic staff but were still less positive than senior staff. Despite potential social desirability pressures on senior staff to hold and / or express positive views of their university, the existence of such a large difference in perceptions needs to be better understood.

Younger staff and those newer to the organisation or the sector generally held more positive views. There could be many reasons for those views, such as less exposure to inappropriate conduct, better induction, recent positive changes in culture and practices, or social desirability in responses. Older staff and those who had worked at their university or in the sector for longer, expressed more negative opinions. This may reflect more experiences with their university's response to inappropriate conduct.

Permanent staff who tended to be older also gave less positive responses. Permanency may allow for more frank responses with respondents being less vulnerable to repercussions. However, permanent staff were more likely to disagree that they would report internally. This lower willingness to report may relate to their more negative perceptions of the university.

Academic staff had consistently more negative perceptions of reporting internally, with less senior academics holding more negative views.

Lower agreement among casual staff on various points suggests this inherently more vulnerable group may need greater engagement with reporting policies and procedures, and instruction on the types of conduct they should report.

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

The qualitative responses also raised varied problems with reporting internally, questioned the utility of reporting, and described negative consequences from reporting.

Reporting

A large volume of qualitative feedback referred to problems with reporting or speaking up.

Ninety-three respondents commented on personally experienced difficulties in reporting including reporting people in senior positions, insufficient 'proof', the vulnerability of being on temporary contracts and other difficulties. Forty-three respondents described the workplace as having a poor reporting culture.



"Fundamentally it's a 'don't make waves' if you want to keep your job attitude.

"If you are not an associate professor or professor or a favourite, you fly under the radar to avoid being targeted. You don't rock the boat. Therefore, you don't report."

"in some areas it is strongly discouraged to report including from senior staff."

"The short contracts also mean it's less likely tutors will report since they don't want to lose their next contract."

"I have been a manager myself and would be really careful about making a formal complaint to these people & not confident it would be heard..."

"Sure, we can discuss different policies in place that exist but the REALITY is that I would be extremely careful about reporting someone who is an Executive Dean, or a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or Senior Manager at the University. So let's distinguish between official policies that are in place and the reality of reporting - these are two different things."

"I cannot report inappropriate behaviour, as, in my experience, the inappropriate behaviour is a result of leadership. My direct supervisors are not acting inappropriately, but senior executive (Dean of School, Dean of Faculty, Deputy Vice Chancellor) are the ones giving directions which can only be achieved by inappropriate conduct."

Thirty-four respondents stated they would not report, were reluctant to or had been discouraged from doing so. Forty-three respondents expressed that reporting was too difficult or there were difficulties in proving matters, or difficulties post having made a report.



“I tried to complain about this to [redacted] and was asked not to as we are all vulnerable.”

“I was touched inappropriately by an academic. I raised it with [redacted] and was told not to report it as it would be an awful process to go through and [redacted] will protect the Academic and the University’s reputation over me.”

“Staff reporting misconduct are treated as if they require counselling, are somewhat deranged, and are disbelieved. The approach is to send staff for counselling and resilience training.”

“...if they do take action, it is purely defensive.”

Forty-two respondents discussed uncertainties regarding the process of how, where and what to report and other uncertainties regarding reporting. Eighteen respondents acknowledged the need for training. Twenty-three respondents said that reporting was not discussed by their university and training was not provided.



“I have never heard of a concept of reporting corruptions or misconduct at [redacted] as a staff member.”

“There is no training for staff members and certainly no culture of reporting any corruption or inappropriate conduct”

“I wouldn’t know what processes I needed to follow if I needed to report anything (and I’m not 100% sure on what I need to report either).”

“I for one have not seen anything that easily tells me what needs to/ or can be/ should be reported and to whom.”

“Less effective training seems to occur for more junior academics, researchers and professional staff.”

Utility of reporting

In addition to the practicalities of speaking up, respondents raised concerns about the efficacy of reporting. Forty-four respondents suggested there was no real point in speaking up. Reflecting these concerns, a greater number of respondents (108) provided examples where reporting was ineffective. Ninety-seven respondents discussed there being no consequences for poor conduct, especially for more senior staff and academics who attract prestige or funding and 11 respondents noted that wrongdoing was actually rewarded.



“I have no faith that, should I complain, that this would be addressed.”

“People are reticent to report inappropriate conduct because nothing ever happens and the ‘whistle-blower becomes a victim.”

“Complaints regularly get made and then fail to get investigated.”



“they are allowed to continue to supervise and even take on new students after matters have been aired and reports of misconduct been submitted and explored and agreed to (ie implicitly agreed there is fault).”

“Numerous people have formally complained about concerns, and the supervisors have done nothing because it is in the University’s best interest not to do so... for example, citation cartels and self-citation that lead to artificially high university rankings and high h-index rankings of an academic...”

“HR just covered up the issues because the bully was bringing a lot of money in to the university.”

“There are examples of academic staff who have been subject to research dishonesty discipline (more than once) and who do not meet the minimum standards for teaching and research. The university appears to be accepting of this behaviour.”

“So any report of misconduct against a senior manager can be covered up by senior management with no difficulty.”

“Inappropriate conduct is not addressed if the person is ‘successful’ e.g. brings in funding.”

“...no disciplinary action seems to take place. Instead, these staff tend to get rewarded and promoted.”

The dangers of reporting

Thirty-two respondents discussed varied 'vulnerabilities' (eg being on casual contracts) that impacted their ability to speak up. Eighty-three respondents said that speaking up would invite retribution.



“This was particularly hard on PhD students who were very vulnerable- the same people who were managing research process, were deciding on teaching contracts, so [redacted] to make the contract teaching an issue was also to jeopardize [redacted] research status.”

“The loss of ‘tenure’ or ‘permanent’ contracts for more fixed-term and casual positions is removing job security and having a flow-on impact that’s reducing the ability for individuals to speak up and allowing compromises to creep in.”

“To stand up takes extraordinary courage in this system, and often a willingness to say goodbye to your job, your health, and your future.”

“...going against their HDR supervisor was too much of a risk and they thought they might get sent home.”

“I do not believe it is wise to be too open in this forum. The university can be quite vindictive in its treatment of those that raise issues.”

Seventy-three respondents either witnessed or experienced negative consequences from reporting. These consequences included losing or feeling forced to leave a job. Reflecting these experiences, 50 respondents said that a person who is speaking up is often seen to be at fault.



“I reported an issue of inappropriate conduct...It has come at a significant personal cost and it would appear that the uni has a low risk-appetite for dealing with inappropriate conduct (so long as they keep on pumping out those publications and winning research grants).”

“I have seen people complain about bad practices and then they were suspended, and a couple have been fired !”

“When staff have complained to the University officially, their fixed term contracts were never renewed, remaining staff never speak up any more after seeing this happen to three other staff.”

“Reporting anything makes you a victim forever, and nothing will change that. If you report anything, you become a very strong focus of attention and EVERYTHING in your life is turned over so that anything that can possibly be wrong may be found out and used against you, including something trivial... Reporting management senior staff is deadly.”

Available protections for staff were questioned, with 53 respondents raising concerns about Human Resource (HR) decisions or competence.



“University HR departments do not behave in a manner that supports the staff within the organisation. HR help senior management get away with inappropriate behaviour.”

“HR practices seem to change according to the who is involved, rather than strict policy implementation”

Spurious reports

Twelve respondents described experiences they viewed as ‘spurious’ or ‘fake’ reports. Respondents described being unaware of what they were accused of, the negative impact of the allegations on their reputation, or people accusing others of wrong doing to avoid being criticised.



“When confronted, she cries bullying and so nobody wishes to get the black name next to them, so they leave her alone.”

“The male academic who now has the misconduct charge does not even know what he actually did wrong, that is, the letter of finding is totally unclear on that... How will they repair their reputations?”

The ICAC / OPI does on occasion receive complaints and reports that lack substance. However, vexatious or spurious reports are not common. It is far more likely that fear of repercussion would prevent a person from making a report as opposed to a person maliciously lodging a false report. The receipt of a report is not confirmation of wrongdoing. However, reports should ordinarily be taken at face value for the purpose of determining appropriate enquiries and action.

Positive comments

Forty-eight respondents provided comments describing a positive reporting culture, feeling comfortable to report or confident that reporting would make a difference. Twenty-three respondents gave examples of when speaking up had been effective.



“In our area any corruption or fraudulent activity would be reported.”

“The culture of positive reporting has been fostered in the last few years, at least in my unit, by providing training and awareness - directed from our leader.”

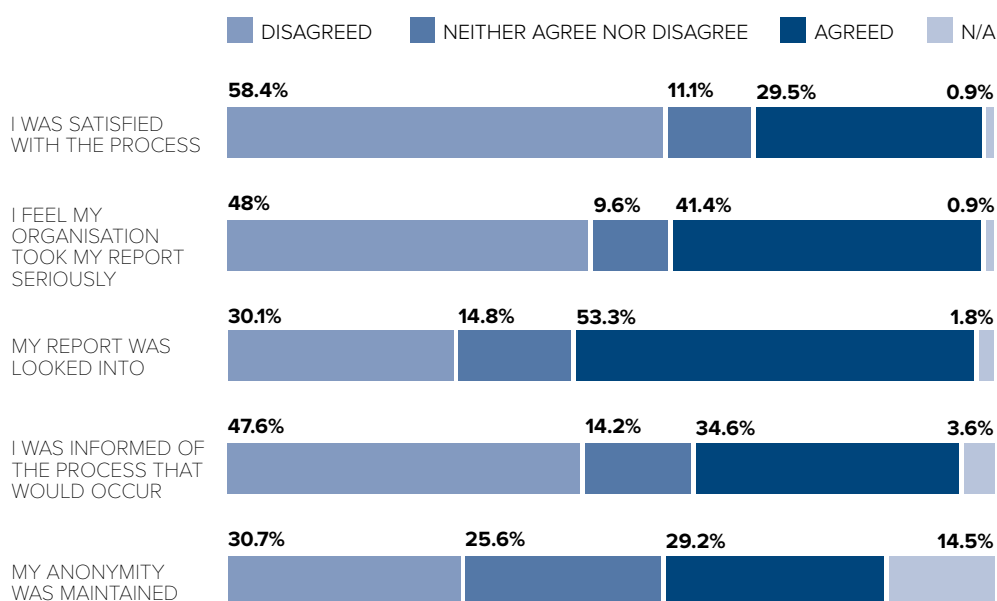
“Workplace culture has changed and when a staff member was witnessed being bullied by another staff member everyone who saw it spoke up and told the bully their conduct was not acceptable.”

“In terms of assessment, the university provides dedicated staff to deal with academic integrity issues. They were very thorough in their assessment and as a staff member I was always relieved to have this assessment handled by others.”

Accepting that this is a survey of perceptions, the quantitative data and the large volume of negative comments highlight a problem in the university sector around employees' confidence in speaking up. All three universities must ensure that speaking up is seen as appropriate, important and safe for staff across levels and roles.

Experiences with reporting internally

A total of 343 respondents (10.8% of those who answered this question) agreed they had previously reported corruption or inappropriate conduct to someone inside their organisation. Noting a report can be made to more than one person, 47% had reported to a supervisor or manager, 43% to a Head of Department, School, College or Faculty, 27% to Human Resources, 18% to an 'Other'. Respondents that had reported were asked further questions about their experiences.



Most participants were dissatisfied with the process after having made a report. This result could be limited by respondents conflating their dissatisfaction with the outcome of their report, with the process that was undertaken. Accepting this, it is still reasonable to suggest that dissatisfaction with the process is likely to impact on future willingness to speak up.

Most participants were dissatisfied with the process after having made a report.

In fact, respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the process were less likely to agree they would report internally: 92.3% of those who were satisfied with the process agreed they would report compared to only 64.6% of those who were dissatisfied. Consequently, it is important to understand why and where such dissatisfaction exists, and ensure that processes for dealing with reports of wrongdoing engage with and manage the expectations of reporters.

It is unclear why many respondents were not informed of the reporting process. This is a simple point to address as staff can and should be informed of a general process that follows making a report without breaching privacy or confidentiality.

The survey responses also suggest a need for universities to review how the confidentiality of those who report is being maintained. Although absolute confidentiality cannot be promised, all organisations should do their best to protect confidentiality as far as is possible and appropriate.

Responses to the five questions about internal reporting experiences were highly interconnected. Overall satisfaction with the internal reporting process was strongly positively correlated with the remaining four questions.⁶ Hence, if a respondent felt they were taken seriously, their report was looked into, that they were informed of the process, or that their anonymity was maintained, they were more likely to be satisfied with the process of reporting. The strongest correlation ($r=.823$) was between satisfaction with the process and feeling the organisation had taken the respondent's report seriously. Ensuring public officers know that their report will be taken seriously could help to improve overall satisfaction with the process.

Most respondents reported to a supervisor / manager or a Head of Department, School, College or Faculty. It is likely that satisfaction with the process was strongly influenced by the response and behaviour of the individual to whom the report was made. It is important to ensure that all staff in leadership positions are sufficiently trained in how to appropriately receive and manage reports.

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⁶ ($r>.5$, all at $p<.001$) (please refer to Appendix two, endnote 1 for a brief description of statistical correlations)

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

Varied comments were received relating to experiences with reporting internally. In relation to the specific process and channels for reporting, nine comments were positive and 19 were negative. Twenty-three respondents raised concerns regarding anonymity. Finally, 19 respondents commented negatively on the quality or process of investigations after a report was made. Seventeen respondents raised communication problems during or post investigations.



“I have found it quite easy to report inappropriate conduct when students engage in it.”

“...instead of taking my concerns seriously and addressing them the people who are in a position to change things instead went to significant lengths to try to find out who I was.”

“The lack of discipline for poor behaviour and inconsistent disciplinary practice create an environment for perpetrators to remain protected and in many cases, for whistleblowers to be exposed or forced to identify themselves when reporting misconduct.”

“the process saw management able to advise external investigators to not interview others listed in complaints and only interview the reporter and the accused. There is no transparency with report details and complainants are advised that all information is commercial in confidences.”

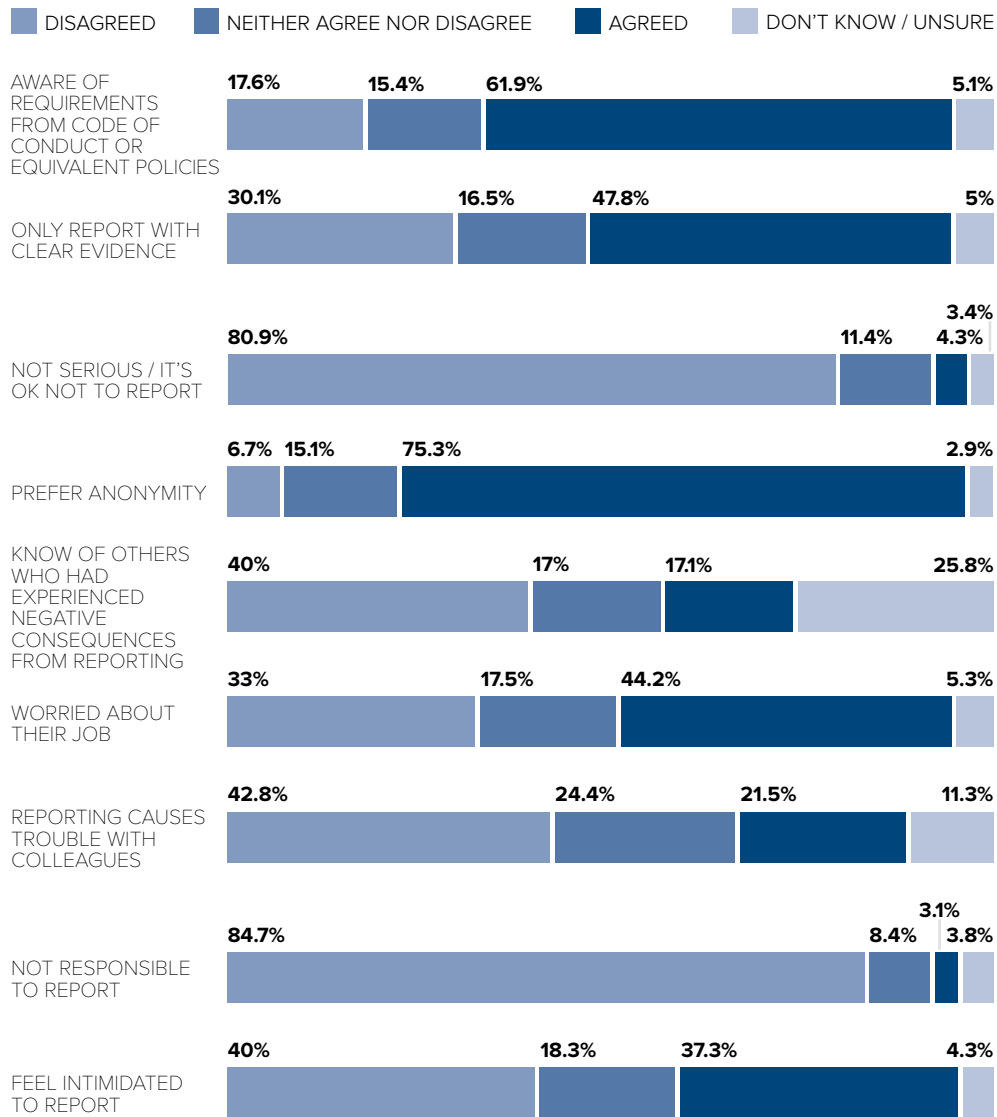
“I feel that the investigative procedure was handled very badly and that, after the initial (groundless) allegation, the investigator went on a ‘fishing expedition’ trying to find something wrong...I have seen them do this to a colleague as well.”

Of the 343 public officers who identified that they had previously reported corruption or inappropriate conduct within their university, their subsequent experiences appear mixed and most were left dissatisfied. Universities need to consider how to improve the experiences of those who report to ensure they are valued and taken seriously, even in circumstances where allegations are not ultimately substantiated.

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Attitudes to reporting

Respondents were asked a series of questions addressing attitudes to reporting.



Most respondents agreed they had a responsibility to report and that corruption or inappropriate conduct should be reported regardless of whether it is seen as 'not serious'. This is pleasing because low level inappropriate conduct can often be an indication of more serious underlying issues. If left unaddressed these can escalate into more serious impropriety.

Just under half of respondents agreed that a person should only report improper conduct when there is clear evidence. The ICAC reporting obligations for public officers do not require having 'clear evidence' before making a report. The threshold for ICAC reporting obligations is 'reasonable suspicion'. One does not need to have clear evidence as to the existence of events, just a reasonable suspicion based on proper consideration of the available information. It is understandable that public officers would want to thoroughly convince themselves of the existence of improper

conduct before taking the difficult step of speaking up. However, public officers need to know that such evidence gathering is unnecessary to make a report. In some cases the gathering of 'clear evidence' by public officers may be inappropriate and could compromise any subsequent investigation.

Four out of ten respondents stated they would be worried about their job if they reported.

There appeared to be a gap in university public officers' awareness of their codes of conduct or equivalent policies. Universities should seek to close this gap and ensure all employees are aware of the behavioural standards to which they will be held.

Respondents showed a clear preference for reporting anonymously. Universities should consider how reporters can best be afforded anonymity, while also making them aware of those circumstances where anonymity cannot be provided, or would be difficult to maintain. Even where anonymity cannot be ensured, universities should protect their employees as far as possible from reprisals or adverse consequences.

Significant proportions of the university workforce felt intimidated to report and / or concerned about the consequences of reporting. Four out of ten respondents stated they would be worried about their job if they reported. The creation of robust reporting cultures within organisations requires that such fears be allayed, and employees are supported in their reporting.

Seventeen percent of respondents knew someone who had suffered negative consequences from reporting. Considering that only 11% of respondents stated they had reported, the fact that 17% of the whole sample knew of someone suffering negative consequences reveals how awareness of negative experiences extends beyond the individuals experiencing them. This multiplying effect can considerably undermine other public officers' willingness to report.

Seventeen percent of respondents knew someone who had suffered negative consequences from reporting.

STATISTICAL FINDINGS

Aware of requirements from Code of Conduct or equivalent policies

- ▶ Senior staff were more likely (91.5%) and academic staff were less likely (59.0%) to agree they were confident they knew what was required of them under their Code of Conduct or equivalent organisation policies and procedures.⁶¹
- ▶ Casual staff were less likely (55.0%) to agree they knew what was required of them under their Code of Conduct or equivalent organisation policies and procedures.⁶²
- ▶ Those aged 45 to 54 years and 55 years or more were more likely (66.3% and 66.0%) and those aged 21 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years were less likely (55.0% and 58.6%) to agree they knew what was required of them under their Code of Conduct or equivalent organisation policies and procedures.⁶³

Only report with clear evidence

- ▶ Men were more likely (50.5%) than women (45.9%) to agree a person needs clear evidence before reporting corruption or inappropriate conduct.⁶⁴
- ▶ Academic staff were more likely (51.0%) and professional staff and senior staff were less likely (45.9% and 37.0%) to agree a person needs clear evidence before reporting corruption or inappropriate conduct.⁶⁵
- ▶ Those aged 21 to 34 years were less likely (41.3%) to agree a person needs clear evidence before reporting corruption or inappropriate conduct.⁶⁶
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years were more likely (51.2%) and those who had worked in the sector for 1 to 5 years were less likely (42.1%) to agree a person needs clear evidence before reporting corruption or inappropriate conduct.⁶⁷

Not serious it's ok not to report

- ▶ Senior staff were more likely (92.7%) and academic staff were less likely (78.9%) to *disagree* that if corruption or inappropriate conduct is not too serious it was ok not to report it.⁶⁸
- ▶ Casual staff were both more likely to agree (7.0%) and less likely (74.6%) to *disagree* that if corruption or inappropriate conduct not too serious it was ok not to report it.⁶⁹

Prefer anonymity

- ▶ Women were more likely (77.7%) and men were less likely (72.0%) to agree they would prefer to remain anonymous when reporting.⁷⁰
- ▶ Professional staff were more likely (77.2%) and senior staff were less likely (48.8%) to agree they would prefer to remain anonymous when reporting.⁷¹
- ▶ Those aged 21 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years were more likely (84.9% and 78.6%) and those aged 55 years or more were less likely (67.0%) to agree they would prefer to remain anonymous when reporting.⁷²
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 1 to 5 years were more likely (79.3%) and those who had worked in the sector for more than 20 years were less likely (66.7%) to agree they would prefer to remain anonymous when reporting.⁷³

Know of others who had experienced negative consequences from reporting

- ▶ Academic staff were more likely (20.1%) and professional staff and senior staff were less likely (15.3% and 4.8%) to agree they knew others who had experienced negative consequences from reporting within their organisation.⁷⁴
- ▶ Permanent staff were more likely (19.8%) and fixed term staff were less likely (13.0%) to agree they knew others who had experienced negative consequences from reporting within their organisation.⁷⁵
- ▶ Those aged 21 to 34 years were less likely (13.1%) to agree they knew others who had experienced negative consequences from reporting within their organisation.⁷⁶

- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years, 11 to 20 years or more than 20 years were more likely (19.9%, 23.3% and 22.5%) and those who have worked at their university for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (6.1% and 13.0%) to agree they knew others who had experienced negative consequences from reporting within their organisation.⁷⁷
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years or more than 20 years were more likely (21.0% and 21.7%) and those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (6.5% and 11.3%) to agree they knew others who had experienced negative consequences from reporting within their organisation.⁷⁸

Worried about their job

- ▶ Women were more likely (46.0%) and men were less likely (41.1%) to agree they would be worried about their job if they made a report.⁷⁹
- ▶ Academic staff were more likely (47.6%) and senior staff were less likely (12.2%) to agree they would be worried about their job if they made a report.⁸⁰
- ▶ Casual staff were more likely (50.5%) and fixed term staff were less likely (40.9%) to agree they would be worried about their job if they made a report.⁸¹
- ▶ Those 55 years old or more were less likely (40.5%) to agree they would be worried about their job if they made a report.⁸²
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years or more than 20 years were more likely (49.6% and 38.1%) and those who had worked at their university for less than one year were less likely (34.1%) to agree they would be worried about their job if they made a report.⁸³
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 6 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years were more likely (47.9% and 49.1%) and those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or more than 20 years were less likely (28.1% and 38.7%) to agree they would be worried about their job if they made a report.⁸⁴

Reporting causes trouble with colleagues

- ▶ Academic staff were more likely (25.0%) and professional staff and senior staff were less likely (18.8% and 11.0%) to agree that if they reported they would likely be in trouble with their colleagues.⁸⁵
- ▶ Fixed term staff were less likely (18.9%) to agree that if they reported they would likely be in trouble with their colleagues.⁸⁶
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years were more likely (25.5% and 24.4%) and those who had worked at their university for less than one year were less likely (12.5%) to agree that if they reported they would likely be in trouble with their colleagues.⁸⁷
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 6 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years were more likely (24.4% and 24.9%) and those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (9.9% and 18.3%) to agree that if they reported they would likely be in trouble with their colleagues.⁸⁸

Not responsible to report

- ▶ Senior staff were more likely (97.6%) to *disagree* that it was not their responsibility to report.⁸⁹

Feel intimidated to report

- ▶ Women were more likely (40.4%) than men (32.3%) to agree to feeling intimidated to make a report.⁹⁰
- ▶ Senior staff were less likely (9.6%) to agree to feeling intimidated to make a report.⁹¹
- ▶ Those aged 21 to 34 years were more likely (43.4%) and those aged 55 years or more were less likely (32.2%) to agree to feeling intimidated to make a report.⁹²
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 6 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years were more likely (41.4% and 42.0%) and those who had worked at their university for less than one year were less likely (26.5%) to agree to feeling intimidated to make a report.⁹³
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years were more likely (41.1%) and those who had worked in the sector for less than one year or more than 20 years were less likely (24.6% and 33.4%) to agree to feeling intimidated to make a report.⁹⁴

Subsequent analysis revealed that less senior academic staff generally provided more negative responses to questions about reporting or speaking up. In particular, being worried about their job if they were to report and feeling intimidated to report.

Senior staff, who consistently had more positive responses in their attitudes to reporting, should be aware their perceptions do not reflect those of other employees.

As would be expected, casual staff were less exposed to relevant policies (eg Code of Conduct) and more said they would be worried about their job if they reported. Due to the insecurity of their employment casual staff are a vulnerable group requiring engagement, education and support on reporting matters.

...less senior academic staff generally provided more negative responses to questions about reporting or speaking up.

...casual staff are a vulnerable group requiring engagement, education and support on reporting matters.

Many respondents took the opportunity to provide additional commentary on themes that were not otherwise encompassed by the survey's quantitative questions. These were revealing of broader challenges for university management and university workplaces more generally.

Management

Respondents discussed various aspects of organisational culture and their impressions of management behaviour and character. A total of 197 respondents provided negative comments related to leadership, management and poor planning or decision making.



“Very senior staff don't always have a good understanding of good governance, or the protection it affords them. The tendency, and trend, is to label governance as 'bureaucracy', and try to reduce it, and consider checks and balances as duplications of effort.”

“Adherence to policy has been poor. Adherence to ordinary processes of workplace integrity and equity has been poor. Procedural fairness in decision making regarding staff has been poor. Transparency is poor.”

“It is nothing short of a wholesale 'divide and conquer' approach. The VC is particularly complicit in this but it is clear that he does not care at all.”

The 'corporatisation' or 'monetisation' of the university was also the subject of a large volume of feedback (126 respondents). These comments typically described the university as overly focused on money, student fees and the enrolment of full fee-paying students. Seven participants also raised concerns about Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for their university which encourage poor practices and behaviours to meet benchmarks.



“In many meeting at the [redacted] level, it is always being reiterated to increase student enrolment to keep your job at this university.”

“All Australian Universities under the current chronic under-funding from the Federal government are forced into a conflict of interest to accept any warmblooded object that can pay fees, versus their appropriateness to enrol”

“The key vulnerability the university faces is its over-reliance on international students' fees. This impacts on potential corruption in recruitment, enrolment, assessment, academic integrity, student support, misconduct processes and graduation. It is common for senior managers to disregard problems...and make the problem one about 'poor teaching' or 'low quality assessment/curriculum'.”

Numerous respondents implied that management allowed inappropriate conduct to occur, or that management had failed to address such conduct. These will be discussed in a latter section of this report. However, thirty-three respondents were explicit regarding management's failure to address inappropriate conduct.^H



"This is enabled by a failure of senior leadership (at the head of school and pro-vice chancellor of division level) to act on clear/documented examples of bullying/harassment."

"The icing on the cake was that [redacted] have knows for decades that he is a bully and inappropriate with women, but they refused to do anything. No one has the backbone, so others keep suffering."

Various less common themes were expressed in respect of management behaviour. Nineteen respondents discussed a lack of academic input into matters of enrolment, curricula, teaching and assessment. Thirty-two respondents reported the setting of onerous personal KPIs, resulting in unreasonable expectations and pressures on staff. Twenty-nine respondents raised problematic workplace communication, including lies and transparency.



"The Faculty mandates to the School the number of students to enrol, the number of foreign students to enrol, and minimum marks to pass courses."

"...any semblance of academic control over our curricula or research is gone - we are now forced into one poor decision after the other by professional staff managers who are not qualified to make decisions in these domains."

"Performance criteria are so excessive it is impossible for staff to meet those criteria without spending a significant amount of unpaid time (i.e. beyond their paid 37.35hours per week) doing research, teaching preparation and administration."

"Senior management is systematically avoiding good records management practices, which makes decision-making at high levels very nontransparent."

Lack of transparency and lack of communication about decision-making in parts of the University leave it open to corruption."

^H This is separate to responses describing reporting's lack of efficacy.

Workplace

In addition to comments on the behaviour of management, respondents raised other concerns or points relevant to their workplace. One hundred and forty-three respondents described negative aspects of the workplace, including a poor office culture, poor morale, work health and safety and other issues.



“Sadly the culture in the workplace has changed from one of respect and collegiality to one of disrespect, distrust and toxicity.”

“Taken together many of these behaviours create a culture of fear and intimidation whereby the objectives of the faculty are placed above policy, process and the well-being of students and staff.”

“Poor WHS practices despite the paper systems in place that do not reflect the reality”

“I understand being able to scale a work force up/down but this is blatant engagement of consultants in roles that would normally be considered contract or continuing - with the aim of hiding the true cost of doing business.”

“Much of the policies are imposed from top-down with limited impact of staff consultation processes, perceived as token, low transparency on some of the reporting (where some data are not released).”

Thirty-one respondents discussed problems with limited resources.



“...management kept on increasing course enrolment numbers even though it's not sustainable for some disciplines without increasing capital investment and teaching staff at the same time”

“Staff are bullied by managers because the central uni bullies managers through unreasonable demands, inadequate funding and unreasonable KPIs for management.”

While fewer in number, 31 respondents commented positively on university management and office culture.



“Academic and professional staff are expected to lead by exemplary behaviour and if the universities employ leaders with excellent interpersonal skills and strong emotional intelligence this has a positive flow on effect for everyone and contributes to culturally safe working environment.”

“I am proud to work for this organisation.”

“[redacted] is the best and I love working for them”

Work hours and payment

Sixty-one respondents described feeling pressure to work excessive hours, problems in the processes for allocating work or determining work capacity, being underpaid or working for free.



“Many colleagues work well in excess of their contracted hours because they are so fearful of not getting a renewed Fixed Term Contract. It’s really exploitative, and I don’t see it ever getting better.”

“I am concerned that when we apply for Commonwealth grants for funding and specify that we will spend xx amount of time on the grant, that when it is awarded based on this assertion, that under the [redacted] workload model we are not allocated the time that was specified in the contract. Although this has been raised numerous times, and in my opinion in breach of the contract, the faculty management refuses to address this issue.”

“Forced to put on topics twice per year instead of once with no additional resources, support or staff (when we were already overloaded but not ‘on paper’ due to not recognising the extra assessment in [redacted]).”

“Casuals are routinely underpaid for the real work they do. The same with all staff. Workload models intentionally hide and disguise and disqualify work so that it appears that staff have safe and manageable workloads. It’s a lie and one that staff have repeatedly complained about. Rather than address the issue, management punishes and ostracises those that complain.”

Staffing levels and qualifications

The final comments relating to management and the workplace, concerned staffing levels and staff having appropriate qualifications. Fifteen respondents said there were too few staff to effectively do the work required, though five said there were too many staff in inappropriate roles. Thirty-eight respondents also raised concerns about colleagues not being appropriately qualified or trained for their roles.



“There are numerous examples of staff being promoted to Professors Level E, and given professorial pay at \$180,000 pa, when they have no journal or scholarly publications, no research income, no PhD students, no scholarly books, never taught ... whereas the regular promotion process to get to Level E is EXTREMELY onerous. As I understand, the current [redacted] was made a Professor, when he does not have a PHD!. Looking at his track record, he has no publications, no PhD students, no research grant income, and did not teach.”

“Faculty management are practically pointless. They are academics with little to no formal training usually, and at all times their obsession with reputation and ‘optics’ far outweighs their other duties to academic rigor, standards and scholarly performance.”

Respondents raised points in relation to their workplace and the management of those workplaces. These comments were more negative than positive. Many of the points raised, such as excessive work expectations or underpayment, were framed in the context of the universities’ focus on income and student fees.

Many survey respondents provided comments on various aspects of teaching, from student admission to passing courses. This feedback was frequently provided in the context of the universities' focus upon fee generation and reliance on international students.

Student admissions

A total of 108 respondents provided comments regarding the 'types' of students being admitted to courses. This was typically in the context of an apparent decline in the academic 'quality' of students and admission into courses for which they lacked the capacity. Of these 108 respondents, 61 raised poor English skills as a critical factor in student academic struggles.



"When I first arrived at the university, in the first course I taught, I was immediately shocked 30-40% of my THIRD-year university students could not write coherently or barely at a grade 9 level. This initial experience has not worn off."

"International students are accepted with well below the required English language proficiency in order to maintain income. The senior management refuse to engage with these issues and just accuse academics of being bad teachers when they raise it."

"...international student fees seem to trump all standards in enrolment, assessment and grades. Lower and lower grades are required to 'pass' (eg 40% for a course), and serious misconduct in assessment is often ignored by senior managers as just being 'too hard' to deal with...There is evidently misconduct in recruitment practices, as many students are accepted into the university, ostensibly having demonstrated adequate English standards (eg IELTS 6.00 or equivalent) but when they arrive they are unable to speak functional English. There appears to be no will to meaningfully address this issue."

"...it was made abundantly clear entry requirements weren't important, we just needed to obtain higher enrolment figures. Staff feel as those they have to let ill-equipped students into programs despite the students won't succeed"

Fifty-one respondents provided negative comments relating to course admissions, while 19 provided negative comments on the recruitment of international students.



“...not allowed to reject students on the basis of English language scores. Assessment of applications was later taken away from academics and put in the hands of administrators.”

“There is a strong feeling that student enrollment is increasingly business oriented with decreasing regard to meeting absolute entry benchmarks. Inter-university competition and current funding models are driving the lowering of the bar in enrollment decisions.”

“The current system of overseas recruiters (paid on commission) and internal ‘incentives’ for executive/senior staff of areas with high international student numbers is, at best, unethical (& conflict of interest) and very likely corrupt.”

As perhaps expected when considering responses that highlight pressure to recruit students, some respondents (29) described an excessive number of students and the pressure this placed on staff. Five respondents described student numbers above the levels mandated by course accreditation requirements. Ten respondents mentioned problems related to teaching practice and course accreditation requirements.



“Gross scale over enrolment in courses and program that attract higher fee paying students, without reasonable infrastructure, physical, human and financial to support these numbers.”

“The university continually makes offers and admits students into the [redacted] that far exceeds the number of students they are accredited for. Each year the cohort increases and exceeds the number approved by [redacted].”

“The [redacted] is required to achieve certain levels of performance, such as [redacted] to student ratios, [redacted] and other indices, in order to be accredited. I am aware that some of these indices were ‘massaged’ to achieve minimal requirements...The required ratio of full professors [redacted] was achieved by listing full professors in the [redacted], who did not teach in the [redacted]”

Student grades and assessment

There was a sense that teaching staff were under pressure to ensure students, and their fees, were retained. A large number of respondents (156) discussed pressure to pass students irrespective of the students' ability, English proficiency, understanding of the subject matter or the students' personal effort. Some described this specifically as being related to keeping international fee-paying students happy and enrolled.



“There is pressure on people to change student grades from a fail to a pass. The students are normally international students with poor english skills.”

“There is financial pressure throughout the higher education sector to ensure that international full-fee paying students pass their coursework. This is putting pressure on Academic staff to pass students with lower than normal academic achievement. An example i was given last year was when a pass mark for an assessment was reduced from 50% to 48% and then to 46% to ensure that most students could pass.”

“I think often as lecturers we are under great pressure to keep the students ‘happy’ as if they were customers rather than people that pay to receive an education. I also think that, sometimes, the grades tend to be ‘inflated’ so that to show the high standard of the University, while students not always deserve those grades.”

“There is considerable pressure placed upon us to grade students favorably both to maintain our reputation as an institution to attract future income from students, and to ensure our own personal ‘popularity’ with respect to student teaching evaluations which form a key component of any promotion application or ongoing performance assessment.”

In addition to pressure from management to pass students, twenty-seven respondents mentioned receiving pressure from students or their families to pass courses.



“Students are also aware that they can by-pass the request for remark policy and that if they complain to [redacted] about their grade that they may be summarily passed (if they failed) or given a higher grade (if they did not get the grade they wanted) The [redacted] does this without reference to or consultation with the academic staff member who gave the original mark.”

“I haven’t seen any inappropriate behavior from staff but I did see a student trying to bribe a staff member to write their thesis. The suggestion/attempt was shut down but no further action was taken.”

In terms of pressure to pass students, 111 respondents highlighted concerns with the 'framework' for grades or how this framework was being implemented. This included marking to a standard curve, set pass rates, and the impact of student evaluation forms on promotion or employment opportunities for staff who teach.



"There is an 'expectation' that fail rates will not be above 20%. This has led to a lowering of standards over time."

"The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) instrument (linked to promotion potential) puts pressure on teaching staff to inflate grades and to pass fail papers (because this sweetens students' evaluations of teaching)...Staff holding out for high standards by only awarding high grades and passes when the papers warrant such grades are not eligible promotion because their SETs are low."

"Course coordinators are questioned and even blamed if their course does not have a credit average."

Thirty-three respondents provided examples of students' grades being overwritten, or students being passed despite the original grade they received.



"Circumstances of students obtaining fail grades that are then later changed to pass or higher grades to allow students to progress in their program."

"Grades from academics have been overridden by senior management over concerns about high failure rates."

Pressure to lower standards and pass students or students' grades being modified would naturally imply that some graduates may not be as skilled or knowledgeable as their degree suggests. Twenty-two respondents reported students passing courses or attending placements where their competence was seen as lacking or their lack of ability could have potential health or safety implications.



"Because of funding cuts and extreme measures taken by [redacted], some of the clinical assessments have been cancelled...The quality of education and assessment is getting lower and lower - this will ultimately reflect in reduced quality of graduates and patient care in the community. Some staff are afraid to speak about these issues and are waiting for major misadventures in patient clinics before the penny drops, without which the authority will not do anything the erosion of course quality, assessment and patient care."

"These graduates were then fired from the jobs within a matter of weeks because they could not complete simple tasks. This undermines the quality of the degree and damages the reputation of the university and the Australian education sector."

Sixty-nine respondents explicitly mentioned that courses or teaching had declined in quality or been made more simplistic.



“My feeling is that there is continued downward pressure on ‘academic standards’ - we feel constant pressure to ensure that fail rates remain low in courses, and this encourages avoiding more complex or challenging course content. The pressure arises because we are funded per student and more students is then always better.”

“if students do not attend courses, fail assignments and get bad grades, academics are hauled over the coals, so the result is that academics make courses easier and increase grades so no questions are asked.”

“The university has lost control of clinical requirements and many students are graduating without completing a sufficient number of procedures that are workforce ready and competent as a new graduate.”

In addition to responses describing pressure to change grades or lower assessment standards, 43 respondents discussed students cheating, with some commenting on the difficulties of effectively dealing with such conduct, and others reporting failures to adequately address academic dishonesty.



“Academic integrity issues are often not reported and not acted upon. Grades are moderated to achieve a set up goal. Cheating is a huge problem.”

“The university’s income is dependent on overseas student fees so it is reluctant to thoroughly investigate academic integrity issues relating to this cohort. Purchasing of essays prepared by a third party or paid for by students is far greater than the university wishes to admit. I have had students in my tutorial who can barely speak English and yet they are able to submit very fluent essays. Research shows that 10% of students self-report cheating in some form. I am aware that the purchase of essays is ‘big business’.”

“I’ve seen people who don’t speak English get their degrees here, despite the fact that all the teaching and all essays, are in English. It’s common knowledge that they pay to have their essays written, and we don’t do anything about it. It would be more honest to just sell them the degree in the first place. It’s a disgrace.”

Respondents provided many examples of feeling pressured to modify grades or lower the difficulty of assessment so that students did not fail. Various respondents highlighted that this may have been the case to assist those international students with limited English.

QUALITATIVE COMMENTS ON RESEARCH / SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH FUNDING

Some responses discussed concerns with research and scholarship practice, and grants or other forms of scholarships, awards or funding.

Research / scholarship

Sixty-four respondents raised various concerns related to publishing academic journal articles. These included the impact of feeling pressured to publish, feeling forced to include other authors, having to accept a lower authorship listing, self-citation and the gaming of publishing indices and metrics.



“There is also a widespread problem of gifting publication and funding. In essence, this is where a (typically senior) academic has their name added on a paper/report/grant even though they contributed nothing. By adding a senior name, it can greatly increase the chances of a younger academic’s submission getting accepted.”

“There are several academics that participate in publication groups. One of Australia’s worst offenders is in [redacted], and is listed in self-citation databases, but there are others. It is not criminally ‘illegal’, but it is disgusting scholarly practice. Nothing is done because he increase’s [redacted] ERA [Excellence in Research for Australia] ranking score. One student did his PhD and had 52 journal papers in 3 years. This is simply not possible if done honestly.”

“...we have also been instructed to make sure that we cite the recent publications of colleagues (even if these publications are unrelated to our work) to make sure that citation counts are kept high. Field Of Research (FOR) codes have sometimes been inappropriately changed by ‘higher-ups’ in an attempt to shift poorly-cited papers into someone else’s area, so that our area has a higher average citation count.”

Thirty respondents raised other apparent breaches of research integrity.



“[redacted]: 1) Routinely submitted manuscripts to journals without approval from all coauthors. 2) Deliberately removed control data that weakened the conclusions, to decrease the chance of manuscripts being rejected. 3) Lied in the methods section of scientific papers to conceal flaws in experimental design. 4) Claimed the credit for discoveries that were made by other scientists on numerous occasions...6) Gamed the metrics by exaggerating conclusions and findings to increase attention and gain more citations...This rotten behaviour resulted in this person being promoted from a ‘postdoc’ to professor in [redacted]. It was disturbing to watch, and was gleefully enabled by some in higher positions.”



“A couple of my colleagues quite clearly publish bogus scientific research, plagiarise off others, or publish the same article many times in different journals ... all just to increase metrics to help their CV.”

“There is zero accountability for conducting experiments with scientific rigour, it is almost discouraged as it can be expensive and time consuming. These flaws in basic scientific rigour can be easily picked up in the peer review process in publishing, however publishers often make assumptions that good scientific practices have been followed and do not follow up with any checks to ensure this is the case, therefore poor scientific rigour in biomedical science is endemic.”

There were many comments on the practices and procedures relevant to research. Respondents described situations of feeling exploited to do research (14), losing intellectual property (12), research being quelled or sabotaged (7), problems with PhD supervision (15), that the quality of science was decreasing (11) or some other negative issue (19).



“...involved multiple students over years where HDR [Higher Degree Research] students on visas had their visa status held over them to exploit them. This included free research labour and more commonly significantly underpaying students for their research assistance (putting them on very low hourly rates), and also getting them to mark for free.”

“I have even come across situations where a professor managing [redacted] will prevent the PhD student of a colleague from publishing work simply because he wants to stop this ‘sub-project’ being successful, since it might distract from his own work.”

“I know many supervisors who have a large number of students that they ignore and do not supervise at all. Any publications they write get their supervisors named attached to them by default, and the supervisors spends the time allocated to supervising students doing other projects.”

Research funding

Research funding in terms of grants, awards, scholarships and industry funding was a point for varied feedback. Twenty-six respondents mentioned favouritism or a lack of equity in the allocation of research funding and five mentioned discriminatory practices or behaviours.



“The university’s relationship to [redacted] and other government grants is inappropriate at funds are counted as research income even though the university has a delegate sitting on the panel and making decisions about to whom to award funding.”

“Senior staff are highly likely to give preference their own specific areas of interest when allocating funding and resources”

Falsifying data or other dishonesty in both funding applications and the research products produced from that funding was raised by thirty-three respondents.



“Researchers may have results of an experiment at the time of applying for a grant. (i.e. they are proposing to do something that has already been done.)”

“Blatant falsifying credentials in funding applications is widespread, but not policed and with no consequence.”

In addition to concerns of falsified information, 15 respondents noted situations where it did not seem grant requirements were fulfilled. A further 23 respondents raised concerns regarding third party affiliations, partners or funders of research and five described concerns of unused grant funds.



“The University lacks clear cut grants management processes and appropriate training for staff - this has resulted in mismanagement of grants (where managers are not familiar with the ‘fine print’ and spend funds inappropriately, under-deliver on the contracted obligations or report progress that has not actually occurred.”

“borderline corrupt practices in applying for grant funding (eg not disclosing the exorbitant ‘on-costs’ and levies claimed by the university), perhaps because outside bodies such as industry partners would quite rightly find these costs unacceptable. There is little transparency about funding, and often only a token engagement with industry who are supporting the research.”

“The University has a view that government grant funds should be used to ‘make money’ for the university. Govt grants now require a matching contribution and there are times when the University exaggerates the in-kind contributions they will be making in order to attract funds.”

Financial misconduct regarding grants or other research funding is also discussed later in this report.

Respondents have provided comments which have highlighted diverse problems within research activity, such as inappropriate authorship, questionable data, poor supervision etc. There are also comments describing potential problems with funding applications and use of research funds. While this does not confirm such behaviour is occurring or how widespread the behaviour may be, this is still a flag for universities to consider how to best assess if and where such conduct is occurring and how to ensure any such behaviour is eradicated in the future.

Corruption / inappropriate conduct in the last three years

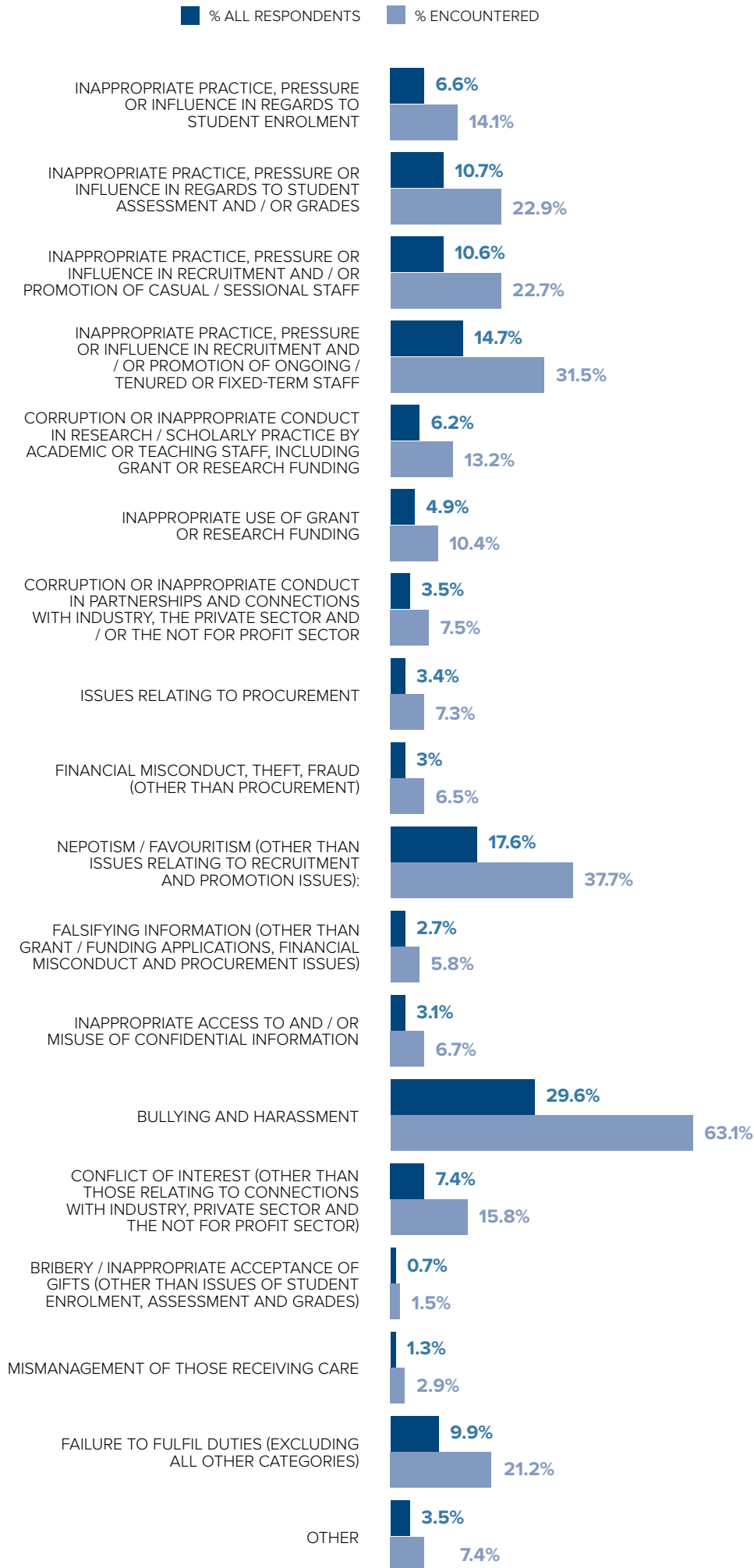
Respondents were asked if they had personally encountered corruption or inappropriate conduct in the last three years. If a respondent had encountered corruption or inappropriate conduct they were asked to identify the type(s) of conduct by reference to 18 categories.

A total of 53.2%¹ of respondents reported not encountering corruption / inappropriate conduct in the last three years. This is higher than the 45.5% of broader public administration who reported not encountering corruption / inappropriate in the last five years. This difference may well be accounted for by the reduction in time frame from five years to three years, a decision which was made to better align and coordinate future integrity surveys.

For the purposes of the following figure the conduct encountered is shown both as a proportion of those who identified as having encountered the corruption / inappropriate conduct (% Encountered), and as a proportion of the whole sample (% All respondents). The second measure gives a more realistic perspective of the actual prevalence of corruption / inappropriate conduct in the university sector as seen by respondents.

¹ This is calculated excluding 142 respondents who did not select 'Not encountered' but also did not select any of the individual corruption categories.

ENCOUNTERED CORRUPTION / INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT



The survey does not assess the frequency, impact or severity of corruption / inappropriate conduct encountered.

Post hoc analyses were performed on the more frequently encountered categories of corruption / inappropriate conduct.

Permanent staff and women were more likely to agree to encountering bullying / harassment. More than half (55%) of casual staff who had encountered corruption / inappropriate conduct, stated they had encountered bullying behaviour.

Those who had worked at their university or in the university sector for 11 to 20 years were more likely to report encountering nepotism / favouritism. There were no significant differences between academic, professional or senior staff in having encountered nepotism / favouritism.

Respondents who had been employed for a shorter period of time in either their university or the sector were less likely to have encountered problems in hiring or promotion of ongoing / tenured or fixed term staff. Unsurprisingly, casual staff were more likely to report encountering problems in the hiring and promotion of casual / sessional staff.

Casual staff, women and academic staff were more likely to describe inappropriate practice, pressure or influence in regards to student assessment and / or grades.

Permanent staff and women were more likely to agree to encountering bullying / harassment.

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

Respondents provided varied qualitative comments about specific forms of poor behaviour at their university and the broader integrity cultures of their organisation.

Broader integrity issues

Seventy respondents described their university or their workplace as having what could be described as poor integrity behaviours, such as hiding problems or improperly seeking to protect reputations, while 20 respondents described their workplace as being corrupt or immoral.



“The organisation cares far more about its reputation than it does about these issues.”

“Senior management are busy cutting budgets to increase their bonuses, in response to their KPIs around costs etc, but integrity, morale and the other factors that help to maintain integrity of the institution are pointedly not measured. This creates a direct conflict of interest in their behaviours, that leads to many of the other conflicts of interest, e.g., with the enrolment and grading of international fee-paying students.”

“There is still very much a culture of keeping any negative inappropriate misconduct as quiet as possible, maintain reputation, and above all; maintain funding from investors.”

A large number of respondents (127) provided comments describing limited integrity controls or that existing controls were in some way problematic. Integrity controls covered a broad range of university functions, eg auditing checks of finances, confirming due process has occurred in hiring, tracking expenditure etc.



“The university has lots of policies and procedures, but they are too complex, hidden from daily activities, and we are never audited. There is no reason to follow policies, because there is no policing.”

“I have experienced excellent reporting culture but then feedback that the unit [redacted] is not one of the best because it comes up on a report based on reporting numbers. The staff have done the right thing and discreetly reported.”

“The level of scrutiny regarding appropriate expenditure is much lower than what is applied by the public sector - there is a general lack of cost consciousness.”

Policies and procedures, if followed, are a key form of integrity control for organisations. Thirty-six respondents discussed that policies were not always followed or were applied inconsistently and 28 respondents expressed a need for improved integrity measures or training.



“There is widespread practice in actual practice misaligning with documented procedures and standards, especially in relation to teaching delivery, student recruitment, international visa requirements etc etc. In other words, what is happening ‘on paper’ is not necessarily happening.”

“I feel that the HR processes are not clearly described in relation to certain processes e.g secondments, recruitment. There seems to be different processes for different people.”

“The University’s financial system has no way to prevent charging to accounts by unauthorised people. Anyone can charge to any account code, and no one will check anything if it is less than \$10,000. I am astounded that I cannot prevent people from charging to my accounts.”

However, there were also 103 respondents who reported the existence of some forms of integrity control and 33 respondents reported that integrity or integrity related processes were improving.



“Any corruption or inappropriate conduct that does occur seems to be at the more local/individual staff level, as the organisation as a whole has some very sound policies and protocols.”

“The university has a strong integrity framework for its research based on the Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and its supporting Guides.”



“Research Integrity Advisors have been appointed across the University to field questions regarding all levels of inappropriate behaviour. These advisors are trained to be able to direct complaints to the appropriate person. This process works quite well, although complaints are rare.”

Fifty-four respondents provided comments describing their university or their workplace as being pro-integrity.



“I am confident my organisation takes corruption seriously and addresses corruption without fear or favour.”

“the level of integrity at [redacted] is very high and here is a great place to work as employees perspective.”

Ninety-one respondents commented that they had not personally observed corruption of the type being queried by the qualitative questions, for example ‘Inappropriate conduct or practices relating to student enrolment, assessment and grades’ or ‘The workplace culture regarding reporting and addressing corruption or inappropriate conduct’.



“Not encountered even though I have these connections”

“as far as I am aware there is no such inappropriate conduct”

Inappropriate conduct

Many respondents described specific forms of inappropriate conduct. For ease of reference these are roughly grouped into similar themes.

Bullying and Harassment

The most frequently raised conduct was bullying or harassment (202).



“Bullying - witnessed - was not actioned - because the person doing it was bringing in large amounts of research funding (NHMRC [National Health and Medical Research Centre] and ARC [Australian Research Council]”

“In the past three years a culture of bullying has developed among the senior Executive of the University.”

“Bullying is the norm. Everyone knows that there will be a massive personal cost and victimisation if issues are raised.”

There were some comments describing physical abuse (7) or sexual harassment or assault (20).



“A colleague groped me on the bottom very deliberately in the university hallway...”

“I was absolutely powerless, and frightened. My employer did next to nothing about it, so I had to send an email to [redacted] to ask that he stop touching me or my clothing. He’s tried to (touch) me multiple times, and even when I physically turned my body away he continued. It was disgusting.”

All public officers and authorities should be aware that sexual misconduct may not just be a matter of breaching an organisation’s policies but could constitute criminal conduct or a breach of legislative requirements (e.g. *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)*). For example, to touch, or even threaten to touch, another person’s body without their genuine consent could amount to indecent assault for the purposes of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA)*.

Sexual harassment or sexual misconduct in the workplace is intolerable and must be eradicated.

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Favouritism or discrimination

Another area of conduct frequently raised by respondents were varied aspects of favouritism and nepotism. General concerns regarding favouritism and nepotism were raised by 84 respondents, with 98 respondents reporting favouritism concerning hiring decisions, and 16 comments on favouritism based on intimate or inappropriate relationships.



“Aware of many situations involving staff engaging with family and personal connections for paid university business without an appropriate statement of Col [Conflict of Interest] or procurement process. For many staff it does not even register it is inappropriate to do so.”

“Recruitment - I have heard who will be the successful applicant from panel member/s before applications received.”

“There are serious systemic issues with nepotism, involving personnel being recruited who have worked with Senior Management before, and being promoted directly to a fixed permanent position when other recruited staff are placed on contracts.”

Discrimination was raised by 47 respondents, either in general terms or specifically related to sex, race or age.



“...not allowed a change in role that others were and not given professional development opportunity because [redacted] was pregnant.”

“...having endured bullying and racism for over 6 years...”

“Subtle Racism and gender harassment issue not addressed properly or encouraged by management.”

Hiring and employment contracts

In addition to comments on nepotistic hiring practices described above, 70 respondents described concerns with inappropriate hiring more generally.



“Internally advertised positions and secondments: the number of times that people have been ‘magically’ appointed without an official process or any advertising of the roles is astounding.”

“Senior staff are now commonly recruited without transparent processes in order to buy-in ‘academic talent’.”

“I am of the opinion, that in comparison to the merit-based public service promotion regime, the university instead relies on nepotism, favouritism, and a whole range of undisclosed criteria to decide who is given fixed-term contracts of any valid duration.”

Sixty-eight respondents described problems with work contracts or employment types.



“It would seem [redacted] are there at the whim of management and not the workers. I have seen position descriptions changed to suit a lower pay level while the job remains the same.”

“The same goes with being paid overtime and penalty rates when working outside of normal working hours, being told you have to take time off in lieu rather than being paid.”

Financial matters

General financial misconduct was raised by 48 respondents and 71 respondents raised financial misconduct specifically relating to grants or other funding. Twelve respondents mentioned the misuse of non-monetary university resources.



“At the end of the year there was a frenzy to waste money on anything and everything and this was preferred to leadership realising we did not need as much annual funding”

“Staff writing consulting projects for themselves to be paid out of university funds. A professor in [redacted] who writes invoices to himself to deliver a workshop. Former [redacted] writing consulting contracts to himself paid out of university funds.”

“funds given by specialist societies to specialist areas of [redacted] are not used for research.”

“The attitude of some senior managers is that inappropriate behaviour in regards to financial management of grant income, while acknowledged privately, will be overlooked in favour of an overall positive financial outcome for the university.”

Relating to expenditure, 42 respondents raised concerns around procurement processes or the hiring or management of consultancy services.



“Issues around procurement / EOFY [End of Financial Year] spend. Money paid to vendors for ‘credit’”

“There seems to be an outsource at any cost mentality. The management team in [redacted] were completely not utilising the technical knowledge within the [redacted], instead outsourcing for this information.”

“The university has done weird deals with software companies where there is no clear benefit.”

Conflicts of interest, policies and performance issues

Conflicts of interest among university staff that were not being appropriately identified, declared or managed were raised by 45 respondents. Forty-six respondents raised problems with staff connections to industry and professional associations.



“Conflicts of interest arise often, but are not necessarily addressed in all areas of the uni”

“Conflict of interest is a major issue, with administrative staff and researchers establishing their own companies, with which the University subsequently trades while said individuals are still on the University payroll.”

“One gentleman was running a very profitable consultancy in [redacted], using an academic there to funnel the money through that university to avoid our levies.”

A failure to follow policy, procedure or what could potentially infer a failure to abide by legislation was noted by 81 respondents.



“at [redacted] there always seemed to be a process which was used or said to be used and transparent but it was clear time and time again that this was not the case when [redacted] leadership/managers wanted something else.”

“A particular Level E Academic in [redacted] willfully, knowingly, and repeatedly infringes upon the copyright and trademarks of industry partners and re-commercialises their equipment”

Twelve respondents raised concerns with poor records management, while 23 described confidential information as being breached or not properly secured.



“Lack of filing of information and decisions in confidential and secure formats. Verbal and email decisions are made and not appropriately filed for safe, secure record keeping.”

“There are no security checks for people working in the IT department that have access to ALL stored information, personal data for everyone in the university.”

Twenty-two respondents discussed a failure to fulfil contracted duties and 12 respondents made reference to staff who they considered unprofessional or incompetent.



“why certain staff members are in certain high level roles as they are not fulfilling their duties and their tenure gets extended possibly because of personal connections or their name. They may be good in their area of expertise but that doesn’t automatically make them a good leader/manager.”

“It is extremely common that staff appropriately use their time to not fulfil their academic responsibilities. (ie not turning up to work). In my area this is commonly being used to attend private practice and/or simply not fulfilling their responsibilities.”

Impact of inappropriate conduct

The impact of various inappropriate conduct was described by 23 respondents as negatively affecting staff members’ health and wellbeing and 13 respondents described people leaving or losing their jobs as a consequence of these types of behaviour.



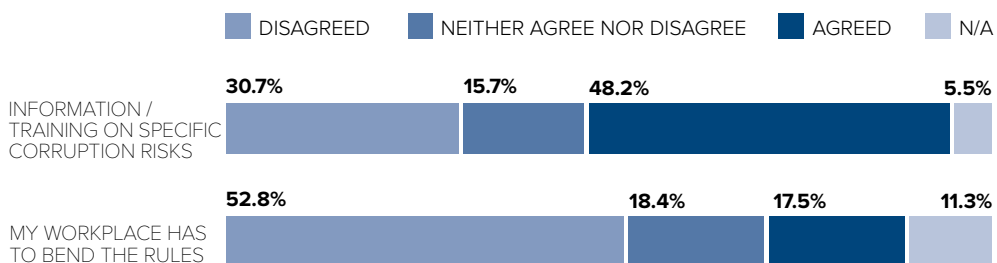
“...in an unnecessarily harmful manner, which has led to serious mental illness issues with a significant number of staff members.”

“...are told that that is the way it works now and really the inference is ‘suck it up’ - to the extent staff have taken stress leave”

“Valued and experienced staff ended up in resigning, Dozens of people leave every year through illness gained by the toxic [redacted] culture.”

TRAINING AND BENDING THE RULES

Respondents were asked whether they had received information or training on specific corruption risks and whether their workplace had to ‘bend the rules’ to achieve its goals.



Fewer university public officers than those in broader public administration agreed they had been provided information or training on corruption risks (48% compared to 60%). This gap suggests there is an opportunity for universities to improve their employees' awareness of corruption risks through training and education. Employees should receive continuous education about corruption risks and integrity matters that are both general to the workplace, as well as specifically targeted to risks within their individual role or work unit. Employees being aware of the various corruption risks within their workplace are also placed in a much better position to identify and report on improper conduct when it is encountered.

Slightly fewer university public officers than those in broader public administration agreed their workplace had to 'bend the rules' (18% compared to 22%). Regardless, having almost one fifth of employees admit to this is concerning and should be addressed.

The reasons that may explain why employees are driven to 'bend the rules' are complex. Circumventing policies and procedures may occur because those policies and procedures are overly restrictive or prescriptive to allow for work to occur smoothly and effectively. The rules and protocols may have been poorly implemented and / or communicated to staff. Work pressures, resource or staff shortfalls, heavy deadlines and skewed incentives may also encourage employees to find workarounds. The culture within the workplace, as well as the dispositions of certain individuals may also be factors driving disregard for conventions and expectations. The reasons will undoubtedly differ from work unit to work unit, so it is important for universities to assess where compliance with policy is poor or deteriorating, and to assess the reasons for any divergence from expectations.

STATISTICAL FINDINGS

Information / training on specific corruption risks

- ▶ Professional staff and senior staff were more likely (51.0% and 82.9%) and academic staff were less likely (42.4%) to agree they had received information / training on specific corruption risks.⁹⁵
- ▶ Permanent staff and fixed term staff were more likely (49.7% and 50.9%) and casual staff were less likely (36.6%) to agree they had received information / training on specific corruption risks.⁹⁶
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for less than one year were more likely (58.1%) to agree they had received information / training on specific corruption risks.⁹⁷
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for less than one year were more likely (56.5%) to agree they had received information / training on specific corruption risks.⁹⁸

My workplace has to bend the rules

- ▶ Men were more likely (20.7%) than women (14.7%) to agree their workplace sometimes has to bend the rules to achieve its goals.⁹⁹
- ▶ Academic staff were more likely (20.5%) and professional staff and senior staff were less likely (15.7% and 3.6%) to agree their workplace sometimes has to bend the rules to achieve its goals.¹⁰⁰
- ▶ Permanent staff were more likely (20.2%) and fixed term staff were less likely (12.2%) to agree their workplace sometimes has to bend the rules to achieve its goals.¹⁰¹
- ▶ Those aged 55 years or more were more likely (19.7%) to agree their workplace sometimes has to bend the rules to achieve its goals.¹⁰²
- ▶ Those who had worked at their university for 11 to 20 years were more likely (23.9%) and those who had worked at their university for less than one year or 1 to 5 years were less likely (7.3% and 15.3%) to agree their workplace sometimes has to bend the rules to achieve its goals.¹⁰³
- ▶ Those who had worked in the sector for 11 to 20 years or more than 20 years were more likely (20.6% and 20.7%) and those who had worked in the sector for less than one year were less likely (4.7%) to agree their workplace sometimes has to bend the rules to achieve its goals.¹⁰⁴

Academic staff had less positive responses on both questions. Academic staff are increasingly involved in areas with clear corruption and integrity risks: hiring and recruitment, teaching, procurement, contractual agreements with industry or other third parties, management of research funding, and management of staff and resources. Training academics to understand the integrity risks that exist in their profession, and the relevance of policy and procedural controls to protect against those risks is of utmost importance. Risk management and integrity systems should aim to be integrated into standard practice and not an 'additional' task or burden to already busy staff.

Academic staff are increasingly involved in areas with clear corruption and integrity risks...

Lower agreement among casual staff on the question of having received training on corruption risks reflects a potential need for universities to review their induction policies. The induction of casual staff can be challenging as they may be employed short term or be hired in response to an urgent need. It is understandable that 'investing' in the training of temporary staff may not be considered economical. However, casual staff may still have access to highly sensitive systems such as IT or financial management systems, and may otherwise be involved in business functions with high corruption risk. Casual staff also make up a considerable and increasing percentage of university employees. The need for casual staff to be trained in corruption risks is a responsibility that universities should not dismiss as uneconomical.

The need for casual staff to be trained in corruption risks is a responsibility that universities should not dismiss as uneconomical.

Older and longer term staff's higher level of agreement that their workplace had to bend the rules may be due to a more relaxed view of the 'rules' or having had more opportunities to observe such behaviour in the workplace. Potential complacency among this cohort of employees regarding compliance with policy and procedure should be monitored.

Corruption / inappropriate conduct vulnerability

A total of 39.5% of respondents answered 'Yes' their organisation was vulnerable to corruption / inappropriate conduct, 27.6% answered 'No' and 32.9% answered 'Don't know / not sure'. The proportion of staff who thought their organisation was not vulnerable to corruption or inappropriate conduct is slightly higher than that observed in broader public administration (27.6% compared to 22.5%).

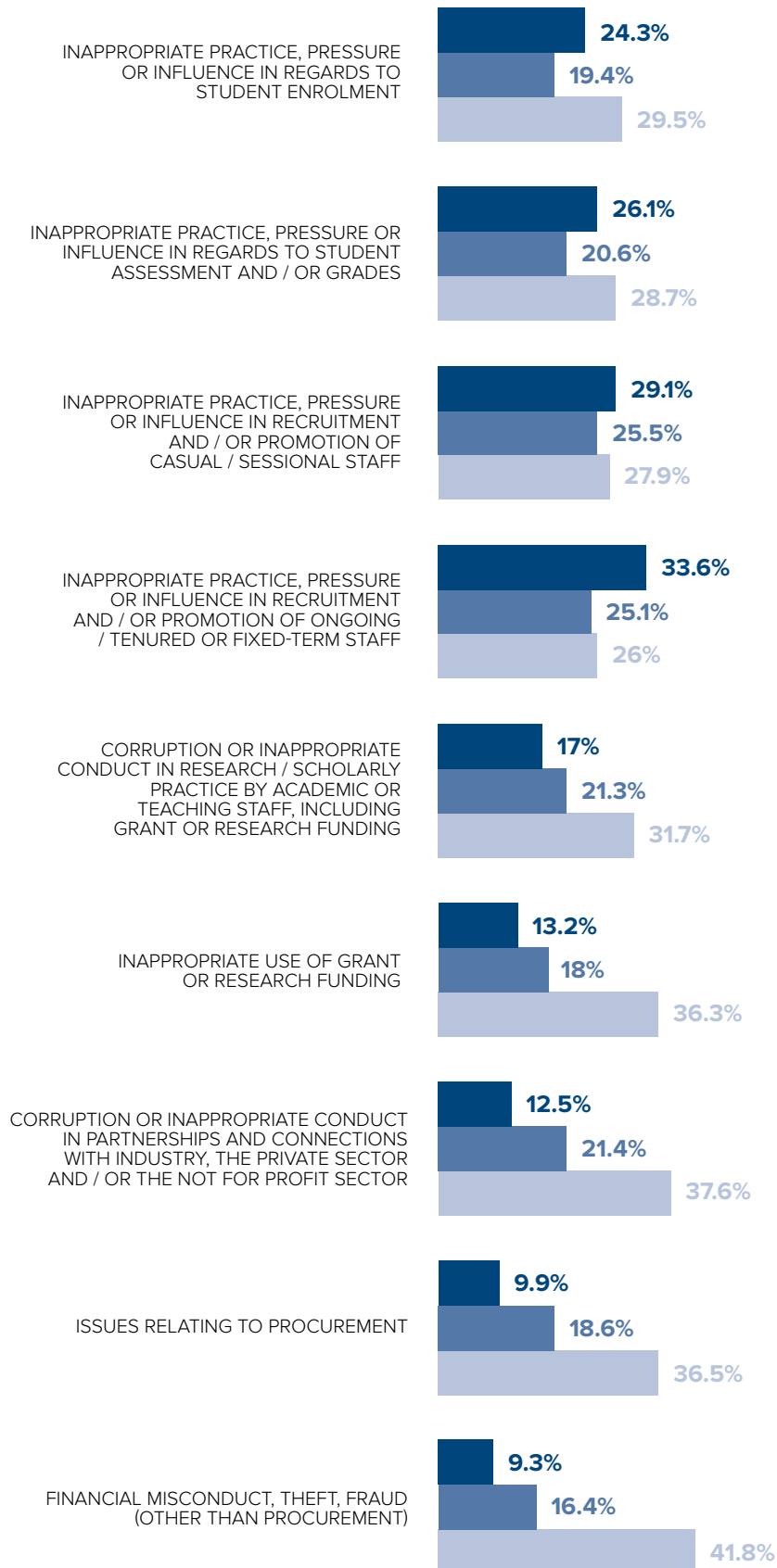
Academic staff were more likely to agree their university was vulnerable to corruption / inappropriate conduct (45.0% of academic staff compared to 35.2% of professional staff and 32.9% of senior staff). Permanent staff, older staff and longer term staff (within their university and the sector) were also more likely to agree their university would be vulnerable.

Those who agreed their organisation was vulnerable could review a list of 18 categories of corruption / inappropriate conduct and state how vulnerable they felt the organisation was. The response categories available were 'Not at all vulnerable', 'Somewhat vulnerable', 'Moderately vulnerable', 'Highly vulnerable', 'Extremely vulnerable' or 'Not Applicable'. The categories of 'Highly' or 'Extremely vulnerable' have been combined in the following table and 'Not at all vulnerable' and 'Not Applicable' are not shown. Hence, the percentages do not equal 100%.

Respondents have identified broad areas of vulnerability, particularly bullying and harassment, nepotism / favouritism, student enrolment and assessment, and recruitment and promotion. These vulnerabilities should be further explored with staff so that sound strategies to address them can be developed.

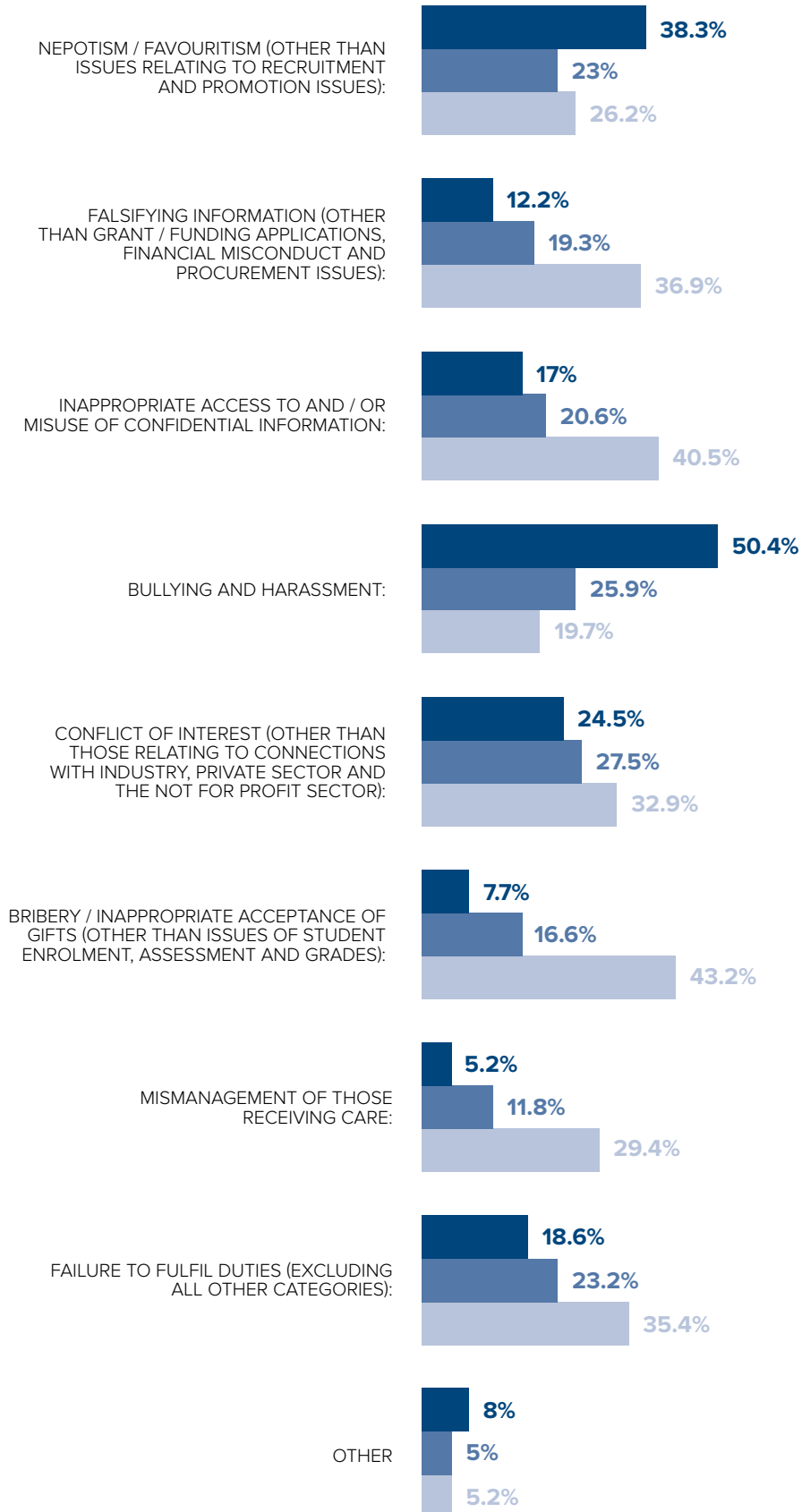
VULNERABILITY TO CORRUPTION / INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

■ SOMEWHAT VULNERABLE ■ MODERATELY VULNERABLE ■ HIGHLY OR EXTREMELY VULNERABLE



VULNERABILITY TO CORRUPTION / INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT CONT.

■ SOMEWHAT VULNERABLE ■ MODERATELY VULNERABLE ■ HIGHLY OR EXTREMELY VULNERABLE



SPECIFIC RISKS OF CORRUPTION AND INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Generic or shared login details

Respondents were asked whether their workplace had databases or systems storing sensitive information, such as financial data or people's personal details, which could be accessed with generic or shared login details. A total of 21.1% replied 'Yes', 61.6% answered 'No' and 17.3% answered 'Not Applicable'. It is an integrity risk that one in five respondents agreed sensitive information could be accessed with generic or shared logins. Generic logins increase the risk of misuse of information, by providing more opportunities for others to learn the password and preventing audits of whom has accessed the information. Professional staff were slightly more likely to say their workplace had such databases / systems (23% of professional staff compared to 19% of academic staff).

The universities are encouraged to review the extent and prevalence of databases / systems that are accessible via a generic login and the sensitivity of the data they contain. Appropriate controls to prevent the misuse of information should be applied.

The universities are encouraged to review the extent and prevalence of databases / systems that are accessible via a generic login and the sensitivity of the data they contain. Appropriate controls to prevent the misuse of information should be applied.

Verification of qualifications

Respondents were asked whether as part of the recruitment for their current job, they had to provide evidence of their qualifications. More than three quarters (78.5%) replied 'Yes'. The remaining responses were 15.2% 'No' and 6.3% 'Not Applicable'. 'No' was a more common response for professional staff (21.7% of professional staff compared to 7.4% of academic staff and 9.9% of senior staff). There may be valid reasons for not having to provide evidence of qualifications, such as evidence having been provided for a previous position within the same organisation or specific qualifications not being deemed necessary for the current role. The ICAC has seen examples in public administration where qualifications listed on an application proved to be either non-existent or exaggerated; sometimes with serious consequences for the employing authority.

Organisations are encouraged to apply due diligence in their recruitment practices, including various employment screenings appropriate to the position which is being recruited for. Where qualifications are required for a position, verifying the legitimacy of degrees, qualifications or required professional memberships of preferred applicants should be standard.

The ICAC University Integrity Survey 2020 has provided useful information and commentary from public officers working in South Australian public universities. Much of this feedback has been negative, and areas for improvement have been specified for the consideration of university leadership. Viewing the data as a whole, several themes emerge.

Responses are not homogenous

It is clear that the experiences and attitudes of university public officers can vary markedly between different areas of a university. This is reflected in contrasting responses regarding the presence or absence of integrity controls, certain areas of universities being repeatedly mentioned in the qualitative comments and, when examining responses from a university in isolation, quantitative differences between departments, schools or colleges.

Universities are formed of diverse academic and professional staff working in numerous divisions, institutes and administrative bodies. The relative autonomy of these varied areas can naturally facilitate the development of distinct local cultures. Some areas are displaying more problematic behaviour or differing integrity risks. The survey data strongly suggests respondents in some areas of the universities may be feeling particularly vulnerable or insecure. As described by a respondent:



“Different areas of the University experience varying workplace cultures. Reporting is considered safe in some areas but not in others.”

The differences in culture between the diverse areas of a university presents a challenge for any strategies designed to address integrity risks or poor behaviour. University wide strategies may have limited impact on strongly entrenched local cultures. Consequently, universities may benefit from investigating these local cultures and tailoring strategies accordingly.

Education standards

Recent years have seen increasing claims and debate about the potential lowering of educational standards at Australian universities.^J A financial reliance on international students, often from non-English speaking backgrounds, has been discussed as a key factor in this presumed decline. Universities staunchly refute these claims.

^J Foster, G., *The Conversation*, “The slide of academic standards in Australia: a cautionary tale”, 21 April, 2015. See, <https://theconversation.com/the-slide-of-academic-standards-in-australia-a-cautionarytale-40464>

Worthington, E., O'Neill, S. and Selvaratnam, N., *ABC News*, “Universities Ignoring Own English Standards To Admit More High-Paying International Students”, 6 May 2019. See, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-06/universities-lowering-english-standards/11063626?nw=0>

The survey highlights that some university public officers share these concerns of falling academic standards. Overall, the percentages of those respondents who encountered corruption or inappropriate conduct relating to student enrolment (6.6%) and / or grades (10.7%) were arguably low. However, when considering only the academic staff responses, concerns over student enrolment rise to 9%, and concerns over student assessment and / or grades rise to 17%. The qualitative responses on this point should also not be dismissed. Qualitative responses were in the main highly measured and considered. To dismiss these stories of lowered academic standards and pressure to pass students as being misrepresentative or malicious seems unjustifiable. The New South Wales ICAC made similar observations of New South Wales universities:

"A significant gap remains between the capabilities of some international students and the academic standards demanded by universities. The equilibrium between student capability, financial security of the university, course rigour and reputational standing has been disrupted."^K

This feedback may not reflect the reality across the whole of a university or the sector generally. Problematic practices and behaviour may be isolated to certain sections and courses.

A discussion of educational standards may seem outside the remit of an integrity agency. However, the universities surveyed are public authorities. It is important that such authorities fulfil their public purpose which includes ensuring graduates have met agreed upon standards of knowledge and skill. This is particularly the case for those qualifications leading to jobs involving the health and wellbeing of others or public safety. Standards of knowledge cannot be compromised. Also it is within the remit of an integrity agency to highlight opportunities and pressures for students and staff to engage in corruption, misconduct and maladministration. Educational standards present such risks and should be managed effectively.

Universities are encouraged to review their programs and identify which courses may exhibit gaps in students' competence or knowledge or are experiencing pressure to lower assessment standards or inflate grades, and address these problems. The survey feedback would suggest there are likely many willing assistants among teaching staff who could highlight such problems. Responses also suggest the issue would then be one of management being consistently willing to both acknowledge and address these problems in the face of financial incentives to maintain the status quo.

Impact of finances on leadership

Related to the above, a stand out theme in the qualitative responses was the focus of leadership on student fees and other revenue sources. University finances and revenue streams are complex and contentious subjects. This report is not seeking to comment on the funding models of Australian universities but it must be acknowledged that financial vulnerability and sustainability are considerable challenges for the sector.

Leadership focus on student fees and revenue was negatively described as impacting on integrity within universities, encouraging poor behaviours and contributing to work cultures where people were unwilling to speak up.

^K New South Wales ICAC, "Learning the Hard Way: Managing Corruption Risks Associated with International Students at Universities in NSW", April 2015, p. 9.

The survey delineated two major issues raised by respondents regarding the focus on student fees and revenue:

- income and status was placed above education and research standards, increasing workload and stress, and decreasing morale
- leadership saw a need to suppress ‘threats’ to revenue streams, which pushed them to suppress anyone or anything that may have impacted on their positive public image.

Two comments are illustrative of these perceptions:



“The Government funding of Universities is so inadequate that they have to operate in desperation for their survival. At the same time they erode employee conditions (because of their own desperate position) which drives distrust and desperation in the employees.”

“However, core to the problems is that the University do not seem to genuinely care...there is a clear reluctance to act because the consequences may lead to bad public relations...The problems rarely go away, but part of the solution becomes issuing staff with gag orders so that knowledge of the issues do not make it to the community.”

The corruption, misconduct and maladministration risks which arise from these issues manifest themselves in:

- declining teaching and course quality and potential granting of awards to unsuitable / unqualified persons
- excessive work pressures on staff to accommodate high student intakes and required research output
- a distrustful workforce unable or unwilling to report impropriety
- potential breaches in research integrity to secure funding
- the threat of unidentified, undisclosed and unmanaged conflicts of interest between academics and external funding bodies
- turning a blind eye to the conduct of favoured employees who bring the university prestige and money

Ensuring financial sustainability while maintaining an organisation’s integrity could be seen as a delicate balancing act. However, there does not need to be a trade-off between the two. Integrity helps ensure sustainability. Financial insecurity may explain some of the behaviours and attitudes described by respondents, but it does not excuse them. Inappropriate conduct is simply inappropriate, regardless of how it is rationalised. Despite present challenges, universities must ensure activities are consistently carried out with integrity, across all areas of the organisation.

Management

As highlighted in the preceding discussion, management typically did not fare well in the feedback. Some managers were praised as being highly effective, but the majority of comments were negative, particularly complaining of management disinterest in staff problems, immunity from criticism, freedom to engage in wrongdoing, and tightening control over behaviour and dissent.



“The current workplace culture actively discourages ‘speaking truth to power’, particularly with respect to senior managers...Management professes that people are the most valuable resource, but every action they take contradicts this sentiment.”

It is not unusual in surveys of this type for management to be criticised. Having to balance the wants and needs of their teams with the goals and directives of the broader organisation can leave some staff dissatisfied and managers open to criticism. However, the qualitative feedback, as well as the large disconnect between the attitudes and opinions of senior staff compared to those of other employees, suggests there is a need and opportunity to consider how management behaviour, decisions and some managers' accountability for their actions are being viewed by university staff.

A focus on ‘high achieving’ staff and management failing to address the poor behaviour of such staff should also be raised. Tolerating poor behaviour from high value employees represents a false economy. The negative impact on colleagues outweighs the ‘value’ those staff are considered to bring to the organisation. An on-going failure to act on poor behaviour, especially when this poor behaviour affects the wellbeing and productivity of others, corrodes the team and ultimately the broader organisation.

Some responses suggested a lack of leadership training and management expertise was a potential cause of these problems:



“I think the main problem at universities (and most other large bureaucracies) is poor management skills which leads to bullying and harassment usually when a manager is insecure in their role and skills set. There needs to be a much greater focus on setting up a culture of good management with the expectation that all managers and team leaders will be properly trained in people management, team building, dealing with difficult people and in the policies and procedures that apply to their roles.”

This is sound advice which the universities would do well to reflect on.

Academic staff

An obvious theme from the quantitative data was a consistent difference in the experiences and attitudes of academic staff. Their responses were consistently less positive, and this difference was largely driven by less senior academics (levels A to C). Comments specifically relating to academic staff included the pressures associated with teaching workloads, increasing pressure to publish more articles and to publish in top journals, inappropriate authorship practices, gaining ongoing funding from a potentially diminishing supply of grants or funding opportunities, and more insecure employment.



“Worldwide, increasing pressure to publish ever increasing numbers of publications is leading to more instances of academic fraud/poor scholarly practice. Why would my institution be any different, particularly given performance indicator metrics based around simplistic metrics...”



“There is far too much pressure and negative consequences for staff who do not win grant funding or publish sufficient numbers of high quality publications. Inevitably, this pressure will lead to inappropriate conduct and/or extreme stress and mental health problems.”

Australia experienced its first criminal prosecution for academic research fraud in 2017. It involved fabricated research data on Parkinson’s disease by two academics at the University of Queensland.^L The case demonstrated the dangers of academic incentive structures based on the relentless need to secure publications and research funding, and the job insecurity it breeds. Those pressures and incentives have not gone away, and it would be naïve to believe corrupt conduct by academics does not happen.

While a low proportion of staff agreed they had encountered inappropriate practice in research or scholarly practice, qualitative responses described instances of encountering this conduct, or the workplace becoming at increasing risk of such behaviour. Respondents did say that there were appropriate integrity controls within the institutions to address such matters, but other feedback suggests this may not be the case across all areas of the universities.

Academic responses were also more negative across a range of questions relating to the management and culture of their workplaces. Worries were reported over the ability to speak up safely, and that protection of reputation would be prioritised above solving problems. Academic staff, especially less senior ones, are clearly a cohort in need of more consideration and support, and the distinct cultures within some departments may also require attention.

Policies

Failing to adhere to policies was explicitly raised by some respondents but is also strongly implied by other feedback.



“In the main I believe the procedures and policies are quite strong however believe we could improve compliance with the procedures and policies.”

Unlike some organisations the ICAC has either investigated or evaluated, the feedback does not suggest that there is a dearth of policies or procedures in the universities. Rather, policies may not be followed or are being interpreted differently in differing situations. Some of this failure may be a lack of understanding of the policies by staff and management, whereas other comments describe this as deliberate in situations relating to student admission or grades, academic output or in relation to ‘high achievers’.

It is also important to be aware of when, where and how policies and procedures are being implemented. Organisations should ensure they are not unduly focusing their policy regime on only some levels of an organisation.

^L Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission, “Australia’s first criminal prosecution for research fraud: A case study from The University of Queensland”, December 2017. See, <https://www.ccc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/Docs/Publications/CCC/Australias-first-criminal-prosecution-for-research-fraud-Case-study-2017.pdf>



“I fear that if corruption measures are implemented, it will be a the lower staff level, and we will be controlled and distrusted even more.”

Universities are invited to review where and when policies do not represent the experience of staff and to question if, when and for whom those policies are being circumvented.

Reporting

Staff who feel safe and empowered to speak up are an organisation’s greatest asset ensuring integrity. Despite reporting obligations or policy directives to do so, an individual’s decision to make a report is typically a complicated one. Respondents raised numerous concerns around the culture of reporting, such as adequate protections for those who speak up, their university placing reputation over addressing the problem, feeling intimidated to report, and being worried about their job. Examples were provided where reporting was ineffective or had resulted in punishment or adverse consequences. Given this negative feedback it was surprising that as many as 75% of respondents agreed they would be willing to report to someone inside their organisation. The survey feedback would suggest that some of these respondents may speak up in fear of the consequences of doing so, or with an acceptance that this may not result in any change.

Ultimately, staff are employed for their expertise. If an organisation engenders an environment where that expertise is not listened to, this seems both wasteful and unproductive. Staff should feel safe to raise concerns or alternate points of view and speaking up should be seen as facilitating the team’s and the broader organisation’s success. The survey would suggest there are areas within universities where this is the case and others where it clearly is not.

Universities should review how they can improve the culture of reporting across the breadth of their organisations, how to frame speaking up as appropriate and how to ensure it can be done safely.

Final thoughts

The survey responses have highlighted that public officers in South Australian public universities are typically intelligent, articulate, thoughtful and dedicated. While certainly not true for all staff, some are unlikely to trust their university to have their best interests at heart and may be unhappy, overworked and disenfranchised.

South Australian public universities have demonstrated great achievements, excellent staff and a positive impact on the community. Based on feedback from some public officers, the universities may also have demonstrated negative behaviour arising from financial uncertainty and various forms of poor conduct which can multiply if not addressed.

University leadership is encouraged to consider this report as a potential tipping point at which to consciously step back and appraise how they could best promote integrity in all areas of their organisations. As stated by one respondent, this is a matter of considering broader cultural norms and behaviour, not simply policy frameworks:



“The University has worked hard on many of these matters over the years [redacted] sometimes to point of being overly risk adverse in some areas, while failing to truly address the cultural change required to create a robustly ethical and respectful environment. Less tightening of policy (which people can get ‘around’) and more focus on culture.”

Appendix one: Question wording

QUESTION TOPIC	SPECIFIC WORDING	RESPONSE SCALE
RESPONDENTS		
Gender	Do you identify as a particular gender? (remembering no questions are mandatory)	Female; Male; I do not identify as a gender; Other (if you wish, please describe in the field below)
Age	What is your age?	20 years and under; 21-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55 years and above
Workplace	Where do you work? (remembering ICAC cannot identify you and your data will not be passed on). If you work in multiple universities and / or in multiple roles within a university, please answer the following questions in relation to the university and role where you spend the most time. Please only complete the survey once.	The University of Adelaide; the University of South Australia; Flinders University
Role	How would you describe the level of your current role?	Academic levels A to C (Tutor / Associate Lecturer through to Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow); Academic level D or above (Associate Professor, Professor, Pro Vice Chancellor, Executive Dean, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Registrar); Other Academic position; HEO1 to HEO6; HEO7 to HEO10; Senior Manager / Senior Staff or above; Other Professional position
Employment	How would you describe your current employment?	Permanent / tenured / ongoing; Fixed term (minimum one year contract); Casual / sessional / short fixed-term (less than one year contract)
Time with the university	How long have you worked with this university?	Less than 1 year; 1-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-20 years; More than 20 years
Time in the sector	How long have you worked in tertiary education?	Less than 1 year; 1-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-20 years; More than 20 years
AWARENESS OF THE ICAC AND THE OPI		
Aware of the OPI	Have you heard of the Office for Public Integrity?	Yes; No; Don't know / not sure
Aware of the ICAC	Had you heard of South Australia's Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC) before receiving this survey?	Yes; No; Don't know / not sure

QUESTION TOPIC	SPECIFIC WORDING	RESPONSE SCALE
PERCEPTIONS OF THE ICAC		
(Questions were presented in randomised order)		
The ICAC's decisions are made free from interference	ICAC's decisions are made without interference from any person or agency	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
The ICAC is trustworthy	ICAC is trustworthy	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Important for the ICAC to have appropriate power	It is important that ICAC has the power to effectively address high level corruption and inappropriate conduct	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Important to have the ICAC	It is important that South Australia has an ICAC	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
The ICAC treats people fairly	ICAC treats people fairly	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
REPORTING TO THE ICAC AND THE OPI		
Have reporting obligations to the ICAC / OPI	Anyone working with or for the university is required to report corruption or inappropriate conduct to the Office for Public Integrity / Independent Commissioner Against Corruption	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Willing to report to the ICAC / OPI	If I encountered corruption or inappropriate conduct I think I would report this to the Office for Public Integrity / Independent Commissioner Against Corruption	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
REPORTING INTERNALLY		
Willing to report internally	If I encountered corruption or inappropriate conduct I think I would report this to someone inside my organisation	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
My organisation discourages reporting	My organisation discourages reporting	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
My organisation provides information about reporting	My organisation provides information about reporting	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
My organisation has policies / procedures for reporting	My organisation has policies and procedures for reporting	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Confused about what to report	I'm confused about what conduct should be reported	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Confident my organisation would take action	If I make a report in my organisation, I am confident that appropriate action would be taken	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
My organisation places reputation over addressing the problem	My organisation prioritises maintaining its reputation over appropriately addressing problems	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Consider negative consequences to the organisation before reporting	It is important to consider the potential negative consequences to your organisation before reporting	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Adequate protections for those who report	I feel there are adequate protections in my organisation for those who have reported	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure

QUESTION TOPIC	SPECIFIC WORDING	RESPONSE SCALE
EXPERIENCES WITH REPORTING INTERNALLY		
Have reported	Have you previously reported corruption or inappropriate conduct to someone inside your current university?	Yes; No
Whom reported to	For the most recent occasion where you reported corruption or inappropriate conduct who did you report to? (select as many as apply)	Supervisor or Manager; Head of Department, School, College, Faculty etc; Human Resources; Other (please describe); Not certain / can't remember
The following questions were presented in a randomised order:		
How would you describe this most recent report?		
Informed	I was informed of the process that would occur	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Anonymity	My anonymity was maintained	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Looked into	My report was looked into	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Serious	I feel my organisation took my report seriously	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Satisfaction	I was satisfied with the process	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
ATTITUDES TO REPORTING		
Code of Conduct	I am confident I know what is required of me under my Code of Conduct or equivalent organisation policies and procedures	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Report with clear evidence	In general, corruption or inappropriate conduct should only be reported when you have clear evidence	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Not serious it's ok not to report	If corruption or inappropriate conduct is not too serious it's ok to not report it	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Prefer anonymity	If I was reporting I'd prefer to remain anonymous	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Know of others who had experienced negative consequences from reporting	I know of others who have had negative consequences when they have reported within my organisation	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Worried about their job	If I reported I would be worried about my job	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Reporting causes troubles with colleagues	If I reported I would likely be in trouble with my colleagues	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Not responsibility to report	It's not my responsibility to report	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
Feel intimidated to report	I would feel intimidated to report	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure

QUESTION TOPIC	SPECIFIC WORDING	RESPONSE SCALE
CORRUPTION / INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT ENCOUNTERED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS		
Corruption / inappropriate conduct encountered in the last three years	In your work for this university have you personally encountered any of the following corruption or in the last three years ? (There will be an opportunity to provide detailed qualitative feedback on your experiences later in the survey.)	Selected; Not selected (List of different forms of corruption / inappropriate conduct)
Information / Training on specific corruption risks	My organisation has provided me with information / training on specific corruption risks, such as conflicts of interest, procurement risks, information security etc.	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
My workplace has to bend the rules	My workplace sometimes has to bend the rules to achieve its goals	Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know / not sure
SPECIFIC RISKS		
Vulnerability to corruption	Considering your current workplace's practices and policies, how vulnerable do you think your workplace is to the following corruption or inappropriate conduct?	Not at all vulnerable; Somewhat vulnerable; Moderately vulnerable; Highly vulnerable; Extremely vulnerable; Not Applicable (List of different forms of corruption / inappropriate conduct)
Qualitative feedback	Please provide any further comments you would like to make or concerns you may have regarding corruption or inappropriate conduct within your university in the last three years on the topics below. Remember, no questions are mandatory but this is an opportunity to have your say if you wish to do so: (Please note there is a 10,000 character limit for each response, the equivalent of approximately two A4 pages of text.)	
	Inappropriate conduct or practices relating to student enrolment, assessment and grades	(Open text)
	Inappropriate conduct or practices relating to research / scholarly practice, grant / funding applications and use of those funds	(Open text)
	The workplace culture regarding reporting and addressing corruption or inappropriate conduct	(Open text)
	Inappropriate conduct or practices within the university's corporate areas, management and administration	(Open text)
	Inappropriate conduct or practices relating to partnerships and connections with industry, the private sector and not for profit sector, including relevant conflicts of interest	(Open text)

QUESTION TOPIC	SPECIFIC WORDING	RESPONSE SCALE
	Any other comments you would like to make on corruption or inappropriate conduct within your workplace	(Open text)
SPECIFIC RISKS		
Generic or shared login details	Does your workplace have any databases or systems storing sensitive information, such as people's personal details or financial data, which can be accessed with generic or shared login details?	Yes; No; Not Applicable
Evidence of qualifications	As part of your recruitment for your current job, did you have to provide evidence of your qualifications?	Yes; No; Not Applicable
OTHER		
Other	Do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding the points raised in this survey?	(Open text)

Appendix two: Statistical results

- 1 Statistical tests in this report are typically chi-square tests for independence. Response categories of 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' were combined to 'Agree' and responses categories of 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' were combined to 'Disagree'. The chi-square test shows whether there are significant differences in responses between demographic groups. These differences may exist in any of the 'Agree', 'Don't know / not sure' or 'Disagree' response categories. For brevity significant differences on 'Agree' responses are typically shown in the report. Where a difference did not exist in the 'Agree' category but did exist in the 'Don't know / not sure' or 'Disagree' category then this will be highlighted in the text. For roles in the university, 'Academic levels A to C', 'Academic Levels D or above' and 'Other Academic position' were combined into 'Academic'. 'HEO1 to HEO6', 'HEO7 to HEO10' and 'Other Professional position' were combined into 'Professional' and 'Senior Manager / Senior Staff or above' was relabelled as 'Senior'. Only results which were statistically significant are reported. Not all questions were subject to statistical analysis of demographic differences. As some respondent's demographic information is missing, the percentage agreeing or disagreeing to this question may differ slightly for each specific demographic test, typically plus or minus 0.1%. Due to the differences being so small, for ease of reading the revised percentages of agreement or disagreement to each question are not shown. Effect size is calculated as phi divided by the square root of the degrees of freedom (guidelines of .1 small effect, .3 medium effect, .5 large effect size). Correlations used were Spearman rho, two-tailed. For calculating correlations, 'Don't know / not sure' responses were temporarily suppressed. A positive correlation shows that as responses increase in one question, responses will also tend to increase in the correlated question. A negative correlation shows that as a response increases in one question, responses will also tend to decrease in the correlated question. The 'strength' of a correlation is shown in the 'r' score. This score ranges from r=.00, no relationship at all, to r=1.0, a perfectly matching relationship. Only correlations of medium (r=.30 to .49) or large (r=.50 to 1.0) are reported.
- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 2 | x ² (4) = 48.6, p<.001, phi=.124 (small effect size) | 36 | x ² (12) = 40.8, p<.001, phi=.119 (medium) |
| 3 | x ² (4) = 81.3, p<.001, phi=.160 (medium) | 37 | x ² (3) = 15.4, p=.001, phi=.073 (small) |
| 4 | x ² (6) = 217.6 p<.001, phi=.263 (large) | 38 | x ² (6) = 31.1, p<.001, phi=.104 (small) |
| 5 | x ² (8) = 138.3, p<.001, phi=.209 (large) | 39 | x ² (6) = 31.8, p<.001, phi=.105 (small) |
| 6 | x ² (8) = 116.9, p<.001, phi=.193 (large) | 40 | x ² (9) = 51.0, p<.001, phi=.133 (medium) |
| 7 | Respondents who were not aware of ICAC were provided a brief summary of the ICAC and OPI's function prior to answering this question. | 41 | x ² (12) = 25.1, p<.05, phi=.093 (medium) |
| 8 | x ² (3) = 9.0, p<.05, phi=.056 (small) | 42 | x ² (12) = 28.7, p<.01, phi=.100 (medium) |
| 9 | x ² (6) = 49.4, p<.001, phi=.131 (medium) | 43 | x ² (6) = 75.8, p<.001, phi=.162 (medium) |
| 10 | x ² (6) = 17.9, p<.01, phi=.078 (small) | 44 | x ² (6) = 49.4, p<.001, phi=.130 (medium) |
| 11 | x ² (9) = 21.7, p=.01, phi=.087 (small) | 45 | x ² (12) = 104.8, p<.001, phi=.190 (large) |
| 12 | x ² (12) = 59.2, p<.001, phi=.143 (medium) | 46 | x ² (12) = 85.4, p<.001, phi=.172 (large) |
| 13 | x ² (12) = 66.4, p<.001, phi=.152 (large) | 47 | x ² (6) = 72.3, p<.001, phi=.158 (medium) |
| 14 | x ² (3) = 48.2, p<.001, phi=.130 (small) | 48 | x ² (6) = 32.1, p<.001, phi=.105 (small) |
| 15 | x ² (6) = 16.8, p=.01, phi=.076 (small) | 49 | x ² (12) = 69.3, p<.001, phi=.155 (large) |
| 16 | x ² (6) = 15.5, p<.05, phi=.073 (small) | 50 | x ² (12) = 49.5, p<.001, phi=.131 (medium) |
| 17 | x ² (12) = 82.3, p<.001, phi=.169 (large) | 51 | x ² (3) = 14.5, p<.01, phi=.071 (small) |
| 18 | x ² (12) = 68.8, p<.001, phi=.155 (large) | 52 | x ² (6) = 17.3, p<.01, phi=.077 (small) |
| 19 | x ² (6) = 16.6, p<.05, phi=.076 (small) | 53 | x ² (9) = 22.3, p<.01, phi=.088 (small) |
| 20 | x ² (12) = 31.0, p<.01, phi=.103 (medium) | 54 | x ² (12) = 30.8, p<.01, phi=.104 (medium) |
| 21 | x ² (12) = 25.0, p<.05, phi=.093 (medium) | 55 | x ² (3) = 14.1, p<.01, phi=.070 (small) |
| 22 | x ² (3) = 28.8, p<.001, phi=.100 (small) | 56 | x ² (6) = 114.0, p<.001, phi=.198 (medium) |
| 23 | x ² (6) = 64.2, p<.001, phi=.149 (medium) | 57 | x ² (6) = 28.9, p<.001, phi=.099 (small) |
| 24 | x ² (6) = 48.0, p<.001, phi=.128 (medium) | 58 | x ² (9) = 17.7, p<.05, phi=.078 (small) |
| 25 | x ² (9) = 27.1, p=.001, phi=.097 (small) | 59 | x ² (12) = 73.6, p<.001, phi=.159 (large) |
| 26 | x ² (12) = 91.5, p<.001, phi=.177 (large) | 60 | x ² (12) = 61.2, p<.001, phi=.146 (large) |
| 27 | x ² (12) = 67.1, p<.001, phi=.152 (large) | 61 | x ² (6) = 38.3, p<.001, phi=.115 (small) |
| 28 | x ² (6) = 58.7, p<.001, phi=.142 (medium) | 62 | x ² (6) = 22.2, p=.001, phi=.087 (small) |
| 29 | x ² (6) = 27.4, p<.001, phi=.097 (small) | 63 | x ² (9) = 30.5, p<.001, phi=.103 (medium) |
| 30 | x ² (12) = 56.2, p<.001, phi=.139 (medium) | 64 | x ² (3) = 12.8, p<.01, phi=.067 (small) |
| 31 | x ² (12) = 36.3, p<.001, phi=.112 (medium) | 65 | x ² (6) = 21.7, p=.001, phi=.087 (small) |
| 32 | x ² (6) = 45.3, p<.001, phi=.125 (medium) | 66 | x ² (9) = 26.6, p<.01, phi=.096 (small) |
| 33 | x ² (6) = 32.4, p<.001, phi=.105 (small) | 67 | x ² (12) = 26.6, p<.01, phi=.096 (medium) |
| 34 | x ² (9) = 23.4, p<.01, phi=.090 (small) | 68 | x ² (6) = 16.4, p<.05, phi=.075 (small) |
| 35 | x ² (12) = 32.6, p=.001, phi=.106 (medium) | 69 | x ² (6) = 16.7, p<.05, phi=.076 (small) |
| | | 70 | x ² (3) = 19.6, p<.001, phi=.083 (small) |
| | | 71 | x ² (6) = 45.3, p<.001, phi=.125 (medium) |
| | | 72 | x ² (9) = 74.6, p<.001, phi=.161 (medium) |
| | | 73 | x ² (12) = 41.2, p<.001, phi=.120 (medium) |

74	$\chi^2(6) = 30.4, p < .001, \phi = .103$ (small)
75	$\chi^2(6) = 35.4, p < .001, \phi = .110$ (small)
76	$\chi^2(9) = 28.1, p = .001, \phi = .099$ (small)
77	$\chi^2(12) = 91.3, p < .001, \phi = .177$ (large)
78	$\chi^2(12) = 64.5, p < .001, \phi = .150$ (large)
79	$\chi^2(3) = 10.2, p < .05, \phi = .060$ (small)
80	$\chi^2(6) = 75.0, p < .001, \phi = .161$ (medium)
81	$\chi^2(6) = 23.1, p = .001, \phi = .089$ (small)
82	$\chi^2(9) = 34.7, p < .001, \phi = .110$ (medium)
83	$\chi^2(12) = 42.9, p < .001, \phi = .122$ (medium)
84	$\chi^2(12) = 49.8, p < .001, \phi = .132$ (medium)
85	$\chi^2(6) = 49.5, p < .001, \phi = .131$ (medium)
86	$\chi^2(6) = 15.2, p < .05, \phi = .072$ (small)
87	$\chi^2(12) = 40.7, p < .001, \phi = .118$ (medium)
88	$\chi^2(12) = 41.0, p < .001, \phi = .119$ (medium)
89	$\chi^2(6) = 14.5, p < .05, \phi = .071$ (small)
90	$\chi^2(3) = 29.8, p < .001, \phi = .102$ (small)
91	$\chi^2(6) = 48.5, p < .001, \phi = .129$ (medium)
92	$\chi^2(9) = 31.1, p < .001, \phi = .104$ (medium)
93	$\chi^2(12) = 32.3, p = .001, \phi = .105$ (medium)
94	$\chi^2(12) = 32.5, p = .001, \phi = .106$ (medium)
95	$\chi^2(6) = 68.7, p < .001, \phi = .154$ (medium)
96	$\chi^2(6) = 40.2, p < .001, \phi = .118$ (small)
97	$\chi^2(12) = 29.5, p < .01, \phi = .101$ (medium)
98	$\chi^2(12) = 23.2, p < .05, \phi = .090$ (medium)
99	$\chi^2(3) = 21.7, p < .001, \phi = .087$ (small)
100	$\chi^2(6) = 45.0, p < .001, \phi = .124$ (medium)
101	$\chi^2(6) = 63.5, p < .001, \phi = .148$ (medium)
102	$\chi^2(9) = 18.9, p < .05, \phi = .081$ (small)
103	$\chi^2(12) = 76.5, p < .001, \phi = .162$ (large)
104	$\chi^2(12) = 56.1, p < .001, \phi = .139$ (medium)

