WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

Vice-Chancellor's
GENDER EQUALITY FUND
Final Report 2017

Review and Improvement of Academic Induction and Orientation Pack (STEMM Focus)

Authors: **Prof Janice Aldrich-Wright**

School of Science and Health
Western Sydney University

Dr Kieryn McKay

Office of DVC and VP (Academic)
Western Sydney University

VC Gender Equality Fund Final Report: Review and Improvement of Academic Induction & Orientation Packs (STEMM focus)

Project lead: Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright
Report prepared by: Dr Kieryn McKay, SAGE Project Officer

Contents

Project Overview

This project aimed to consolidate recent improvements to induction processes at Western Sydney University. It worked to identify what information not already provided by induction and orientation processes remains essential to the successful integration of new academic STEMM recruits to the university and to provide a new resource (Induction Pack) to furnish new recruits with such information. The project was developed with a particular interest in the retention and promotion of women in STEMM disciplines at WSU, and aimed to identify how female staff might be better supported in their integration into male-dominated disciplines or work units. Ultimately, this project aims to address: lack of knowledge about resources available to support academics commencing their careers; lack of awareness of funding and facilities available to support research development, and; limited access to support services designed to help balance research development with the demands of undergraduate teaching; the particular obstacles women face in entering disciplines where their participation is currently lowest.

Existing WSU resources that support new academic careers were reviewed, and a brief survey of new STEMM staff about their induction experiences was conducted. Preliminary results from an additional survey of female academic staff in the STEMM disciplines about their career development needs was also provided to the project. A breakdown of survey responses and key findings are provided below. Findings were incorporated into the design of a new resource for inducting staff into STEMM disciplines at WSU: *STEMM Induction Pack for New Staff.* Much of the content of this Induction Pack could be easily transferred to non-STEMM disciplines with minor amendment.

Key findings – Survey of New STEMM Staff

A short survey of new STEMM staff about their induction experiences was conducted. The survey was sent to both professional and academic staff who had started a new role in STEMM disciplines at Western Sydney University in the past 18 months (earliest start date 01/07/2016). A total of 35 staff participated in the survey.

Reassuringly, the survey found relatively high satisfaction with current induction processes, with just over three quarters (77%) of all respondents rating their overall experience of current induction processes as either "excellent", "very good", or "satisfactory".

Reflecting on their experience of the induction process:
1. A strong majority (88.3%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that information was delivered to them clearly

2. Two thirds (67.7%) of all staff reported that they felt able to express their needs as a new employee
3. almost three quarters (74.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that their manager/supervisor was willing to dedicate the time necessary for effective induction
4. 83.3% of all staff agreed or strongly agreed that the induction process helped them to settle into their new role

Reporting on perceived outcomes of their induction process:
1. Just over two thirds (70%) of all staff felt that it helped them to feel well informed and comfortable in their new roles.
2. 100% of professional staff and 84.6% of academic staff were comfortable that they knew how to navigate the practicalities of their work environment
3. Three quarters (75.9%) of respondents agreed that they were "informed about training/development programs offered by the university"
4. Two thirds (66.7%) of all respondents felt that they had a "good understanding of University resources and services and know where to look for more information"

However, almost one quarter (23%) indicated that they believe current processes "need improvement". When analysed by gender, female staff were considerably more likely to report that current induction processes "need improvement". Female staff were also more disproportionately less likely than male staff to agree that they "felt able to express their individual needs as a new employee". When filtered for classification type, three further significant findings were reported:
1. Almost one third (30.8%) of academic staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they "knew where to seek guidance or assistance in the performance of [their] role"
2. Only half (53.8%) of academic staff indicated that they understood how to use HR systems related to their employment as a result of their induction process
3. As many as 23.1% of academic staff actively disagreed that they were "informed about training/development programs offered by the university" as a result of their induction

When comparatively analysed by classification type, further disparities were also discovered. Compared with professional staff, academic staff were:
- marginally less likely to reflect that information was delivered clearly during their induction
- marginally less likely to agree that their induction process helped them to settle into their role

- significantly less likely to indicate that the induction process helped them to feel well informed and comfortable in their new roles.
- significantly less likely to report that they understood HR systems related to their employment
- significantly more likely to *actively disagree* that they "knew where to seek guidance or assistance in the performance of [their] role"
- significantly more likely to *actively disagree* that they were "informed about training/development programs offered by the university" as a result of their induction, and
- significantly more likely to *actively disagree* that they had a "good understanding of University resources and services and know where to look for more information"

Sample sizes were too small to identify whether gender differences within classification types exist.

Open-text responses included several references to the need for improved communication about university resources available to new staff. Specifically, open-text responses generated the following suggestions for information to be provided at induction:

1. *Personal support*: better support for staff with disabilities; general description of how to use Staff Online; leave entitlements; information about staff networks
2. *Research Support*: including availability of research funds, grant submission support, library support for staff
3. *Teaching support*: tips for dealing with unit, assessment, and exam-related problems; basic training for Allocate+
4. Training and Development: outlines of training workshops, career development for professional staff,
5. *Organisational information*: explanatory details about School/Institute Committees; basic information about university structure; information about other campuses.

Survey finds are directly accounted for in the design of the project resource, *Induction Pack for New STEMM Staff*, a draft of which is provided with this report.

Additional Information – Preliminary Scoping Survey of Female Academics

Preliminary findings from an informal career development scoping survey conducted by Dr Lauretta Luck (School of Nursing & Midwifery and SAGE SAT Member) were also incorporated into the final project outcome.

Dr Luck spoke with 24 female academics from four STEMM Schools and Institutes (SCEM, SoM, SoNM & SSH) to determine:

1. What women specific strategies do you know of that Western Sydney University offers women to support their career development?
2. Are there are other career development strategies that WSU could offer to support the career development of women?

Three key findings were drawn from her results, specifically that:

1. 50% of Dr Luck's respondents were not aware of any female-specific career development strategies available at WSU
2. 33% of Dr Luck's respondents cited "flexibility regarding family commitments" as a key strategy that WSU could incorporate, indicating low awareness of existing entitlements
3. several of Dr Luck's respondents suggested that increased discussion about gender equity may contribute to improved opportunities for female academics

Dr Luck's preliminary scoping survey outline is appended to the end of this report.

Project Outcome – STEMM Induction Pack for New Staff

Key findings from the above processes were incorporated directly into the *STEMM Induction Pack,* which is designed to:

a) respond to project findings about additional information needs of new STEMM staff not already provided for by current induction processes
b) help to inform new STEMM staff about University process, support services and opportunities that improve their retention and progression
c) identify internal career development opportunities for new academic staff in STEMM disciplines
d) support supervisors/managers in the delivery of induction information
e) better inform new and existing staff about gender equality in STEMM and relevant initiatives underway at WSU

The Induction Pack collates introductory information and follow-up details for services and resources available to STEMM Staff at Western Sydney University. The Induction Pack comprises:

- Western Sydney University Overview (including campus information, outline of Securing Success 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan, key figures in WSU Leadership & Governance, and WSU Governance Structure)
- Working in STEMM at WSU (including outline of University's commitment to STEMM disciplines, details of STEMM Schools and Institutes, and Deans and Directors)
- Key Services for New Staff (including details for Orientation Sessions, HR, online services such as Staff Online, IT Services, Zoom, Policy DDS, Library Services, and Communications Services)
- Key Support Services for All Staff (including EAP, Disability Support, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Sexual Harassment and Assault Hotline, Campus Security Services)
- Flexible work entitlements
- Support for staff who are parents and carers
- Staff networks and communications
- Research development opportunities and support
- Career development opportunities for all staff (including Compass, Talent and Leadership, and Online Learning)
- Career development support for academic staff, specifically (including ADP, Epigeum, and overview details about Academic Promotion)
- Mentoring programs for all staff
- Scholarships and awards for academic staff
- The VC's vision for gender equality (including his VC's statement, the Gender Equality Committee, and VC Gender Equality Fund)
- Gender equality initiatives and support at WSU (including WGEA, ALLY, Respect. Now. Always.)
- Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) pilot
- WSU Superstars of STEM
- Key WSU staff data (including by discipline area and gender)

The induction pack is currently in draft form and requires final consultation with STEMM Schools and Institutes, and approval by the DVC & VP Academic. The SAGE Project will continue to work to finalise this document for release in 2018.

Appendix I. WSU STEMM INDUCTION SURVEY

**Survey Participants**

Survey Respondents by Gender
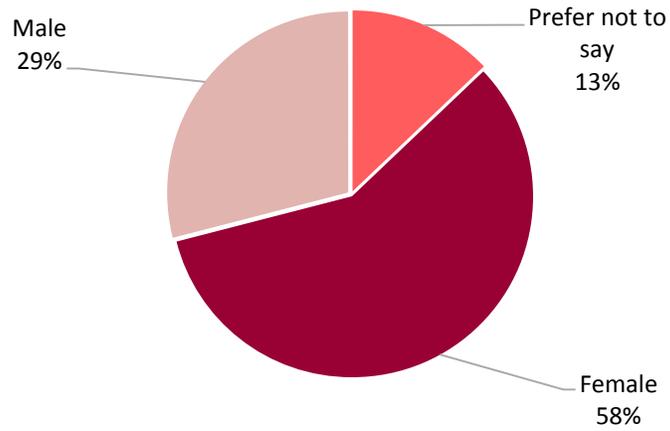
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Prefer not to say	13.33%	4
2	Female	56.67%	17
3	Male	30.00%	9
4	Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	30

Survey Respondents by Classification Type
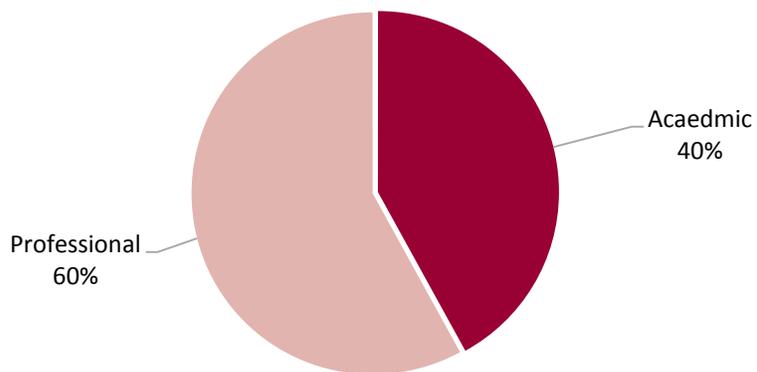
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Academic	40.00%	12
2	Professional	60.00%	18
3	Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	30

Survey Respondents by Employment Status
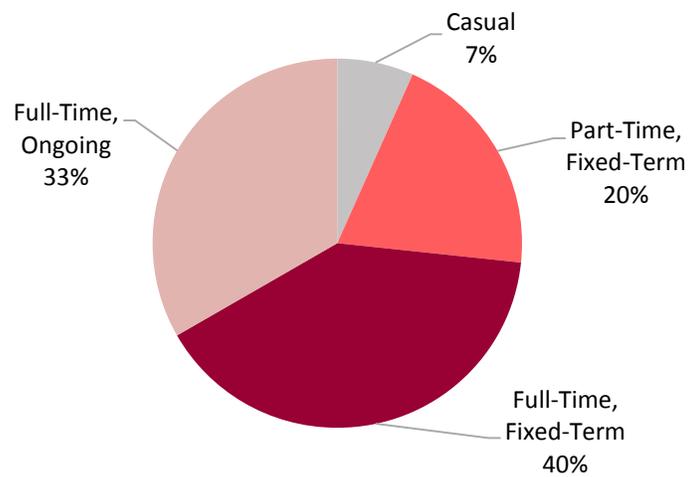
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Casual	6.67%	2
2	Part-Time, Fixed-term	20.00%	6
3	Part-Time, Ongoing	0.00%	0
4	Full-Time, Fixed-term	40.00%	12
5	Full-Time, Ongoing	33.33%	10
	Total	100%	30

Survey Findings

Overall, how would you rate your induction to Western Sydney University?
The survey found relatively high satisfaction with current induction processes, with 77% of all respondents rating their overall experience of current induction processes as either "excellent", "very good", or "satisfactory". However, almost one quarter (23%) indicated that they believe current processes "need improvement". No significant difference existed across classification type. However, a significant difference was identified when analyses by gender: of those who suggested that current processes "need improvement", 57% were female and 43% indicated that they "prefer not to say" their gender identity. 0% of respondents openly identifying as male suggested that induction processes required improvement.
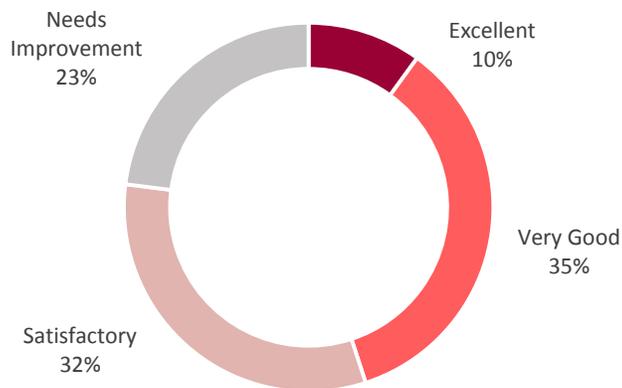

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	10.00%	3
2	Very good	33.33%	10
3	Satisfactory	33.33%	10
4	Needs improvement	23.33%	7
	Total	100%	30

New STEMM Staff Experience of the Induction Process

1. Information was delivered to me clearly

A strong majority (88.3%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that information was delivered to them clearly throughout the induction process. Some difference was detected across classification types, with Professional Staff more likely (88.2%) to agree with the

statement than Academic Staff (76.9%). Only one respondent strongly disagreed with the statement.
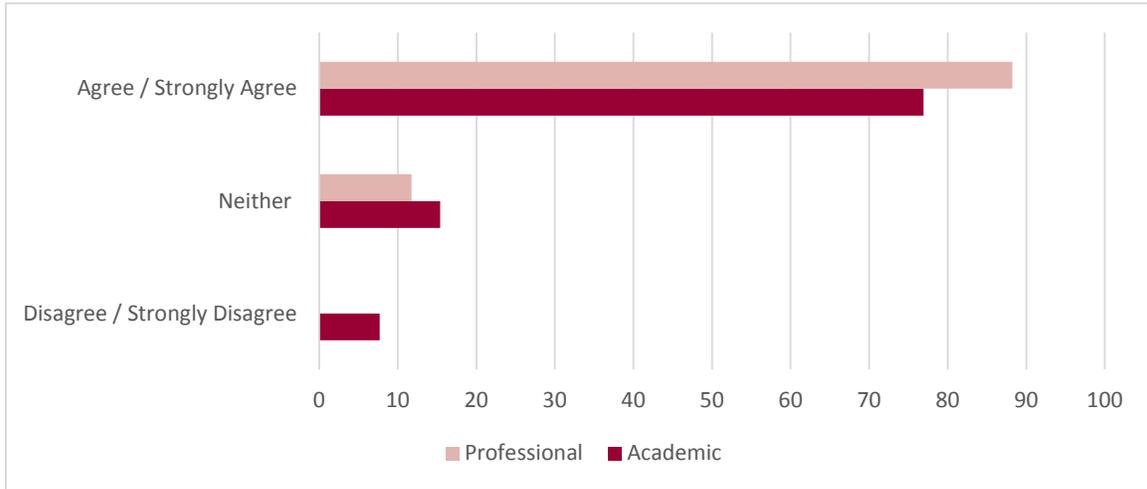

2. I felt able to express my individual needs as a new employee

Two thirds (67.7%) of all staff reported that they felt able to express their needs as a new employee throughout the induction process. Somewhat concerningly, 16.1% of staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. No significant difference existed across classification type. Women were disproportionately likely to disagree with this statement, with 22% of female respondents and 0% of male respondents indicating that they were not "able to express [their] individual needs as a new employee".
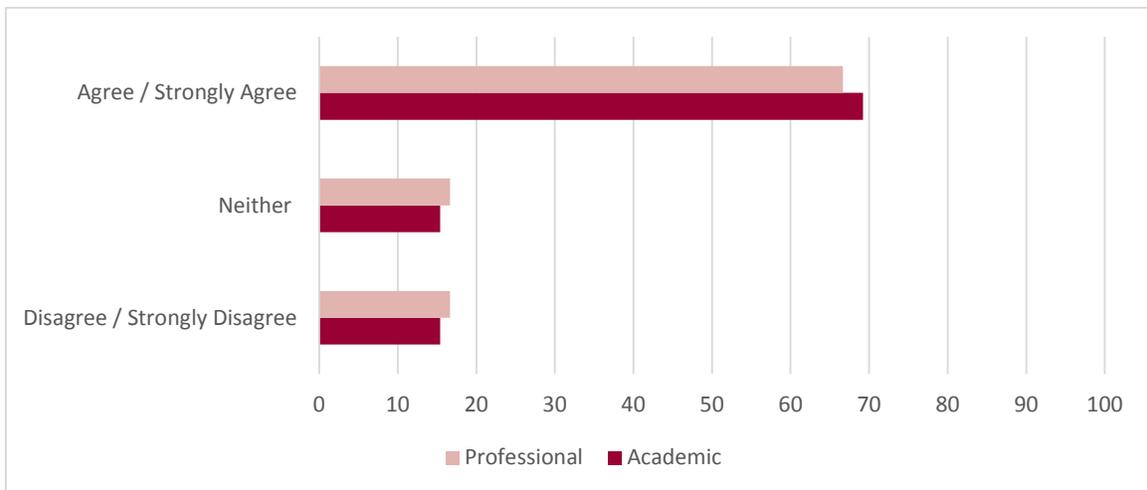
3. My supervisor/manager was willing to spend the time required to induct me effectively

Reassuringly, almost three quarters (74.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that their manager/supervisor was willing to dedicate the time necessary for effective induction and no staff disagreed with the statement. Academic Staff were twice as likely (38.5%) to be ambivalent about the statement than Professional Staff (16.7%).
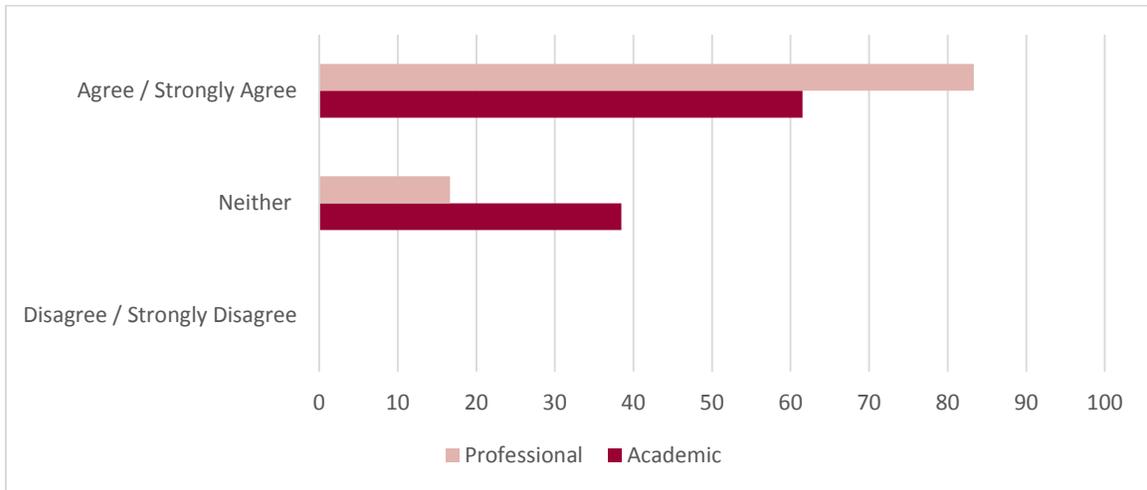
4. The induction process helped me to settle into my new role

83.3% of all staff agreed or strongly agreed that the induction process helped them to settle into their new role. Some difference was detected across classification types, with Professional Staff more likely (88.2%) to agree with the statement than Academic Staff (76.9%).
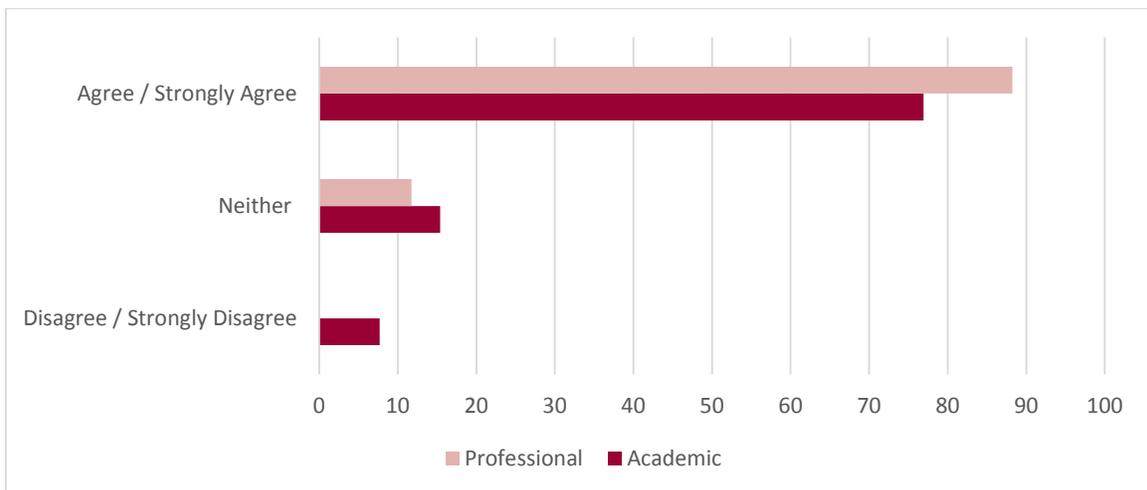
**Perceived Outcomes of the Induction Process**

1. I felt well informed and comfortable in my role

Just over two thirds (70%) of all staff felt that the induction process helped them to feel well informed and comfortable in their new roles. Professional staff (76.5%) were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement than academic staff (61.5%).
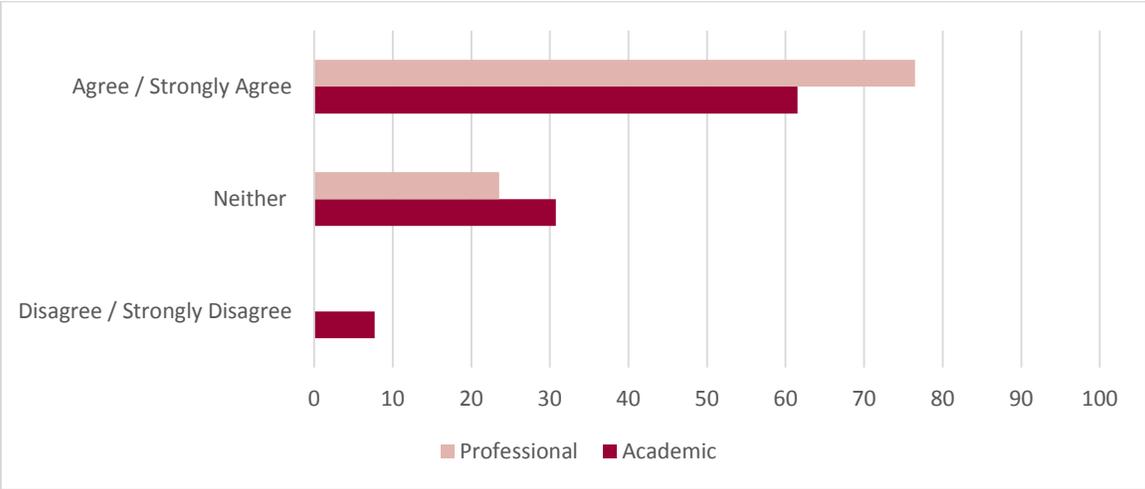

2. I knew where to seek guidance or assistance in the performance of my role

Almost three quarters (73.3%) of respondents indicated that they "knew where to seek guidance or assistance in the performance of [their] role" as a result of the induction process. Concerningly, almost one third (30.8%) of academic staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.
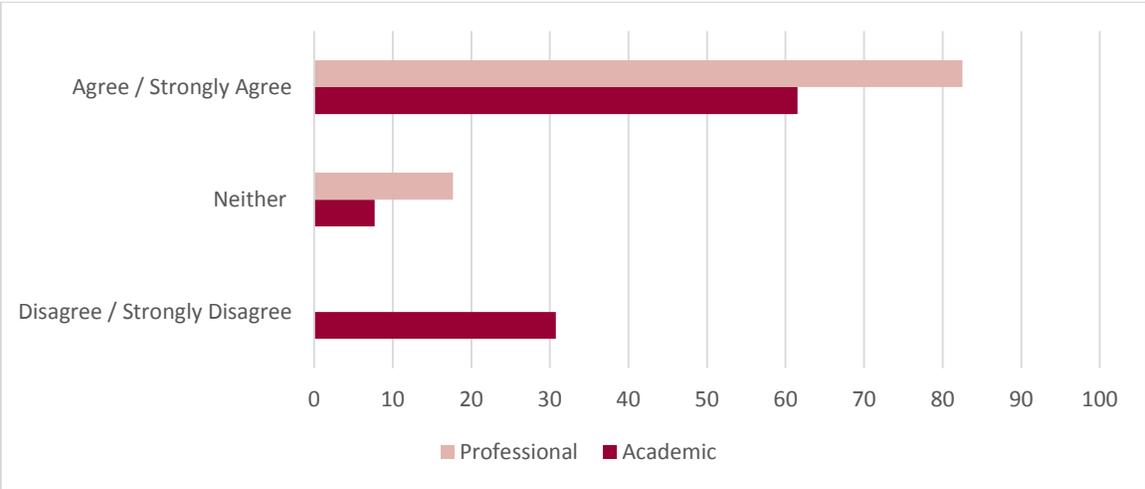
3. I knew how to navigate the practicalities of my work environment (e.g., printing and photocopying, bathroom and kitchen facilities)

A strong proportion (93.3%) of all staff were comfortable that they knew how to navigate the practicalities of their work environment. 100% of professional staff agreed with this statement, compared with 84.6% of academic staff.
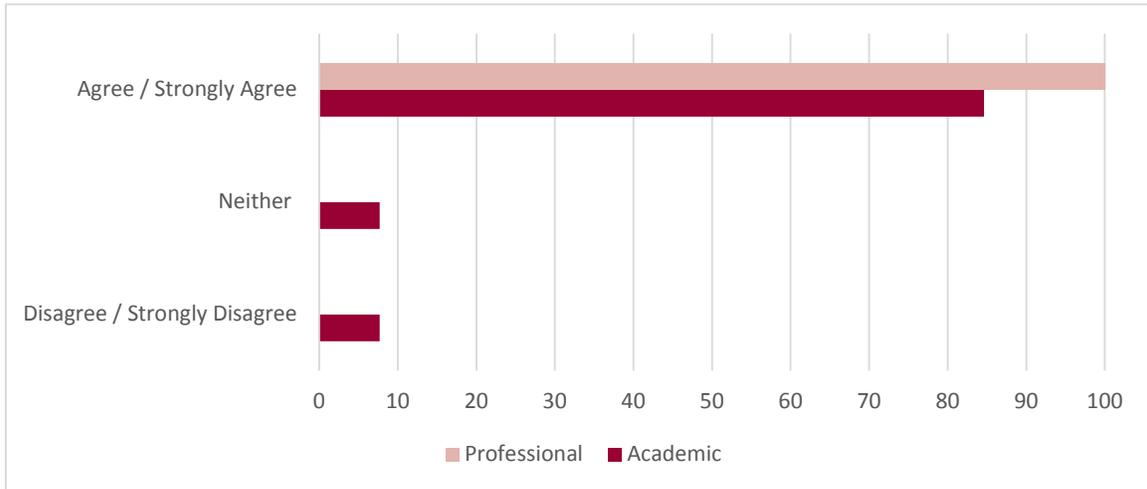
4. I understood how to use HR systems and processes related to my employment (e.g., timesheets, leave requests, etc.)

Only 62.1% of respondents indicated that they understood HR systems as a result of their induction process, with academics much less likely to agree (53.8%) compared with professional staff (68.8%).
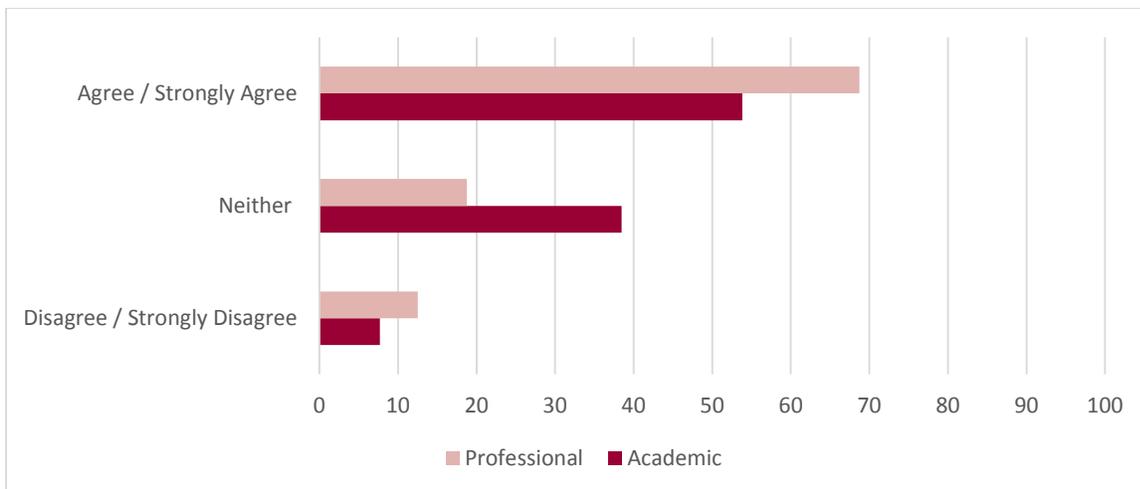
5. I was informed about training/development programs and workshops offered by the university

Three quarters (75.9%) of all respondents agreed that they were "informed about training/development programs offered by the university". Academic and professional staff were equally likely to agree, however academic staff were significantly more likely to actively disagree (23.1%) with the statement than professional staff (0%).
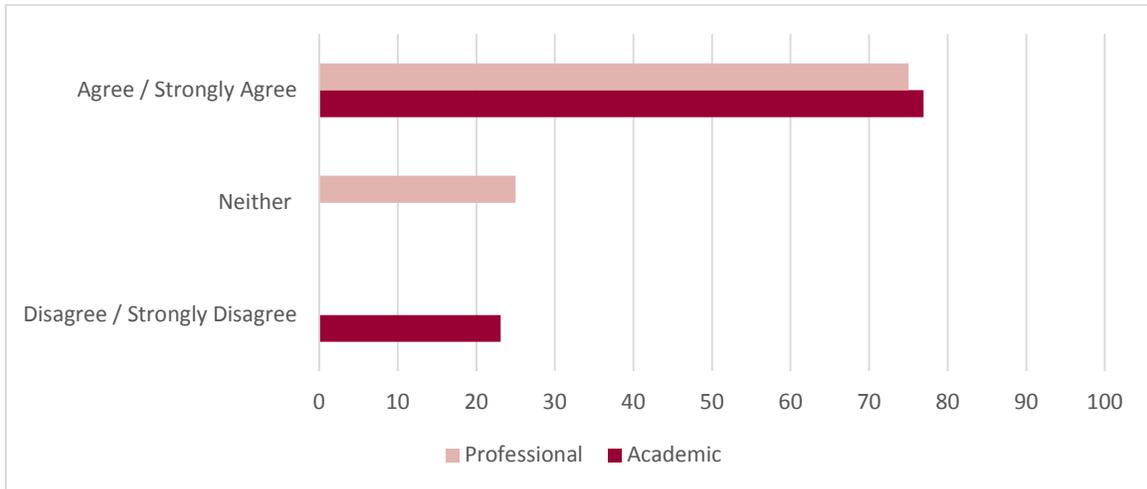
6. I was provided a good understanding of University resources and services and know where to look for more information

Two thirds (66.7%) of all respondents felt that they had a "good understanding of University resources and services and know where to look for more information", with academic staff more likely to actively disagree with the statement (23.1%) than professional staff (5.9%).
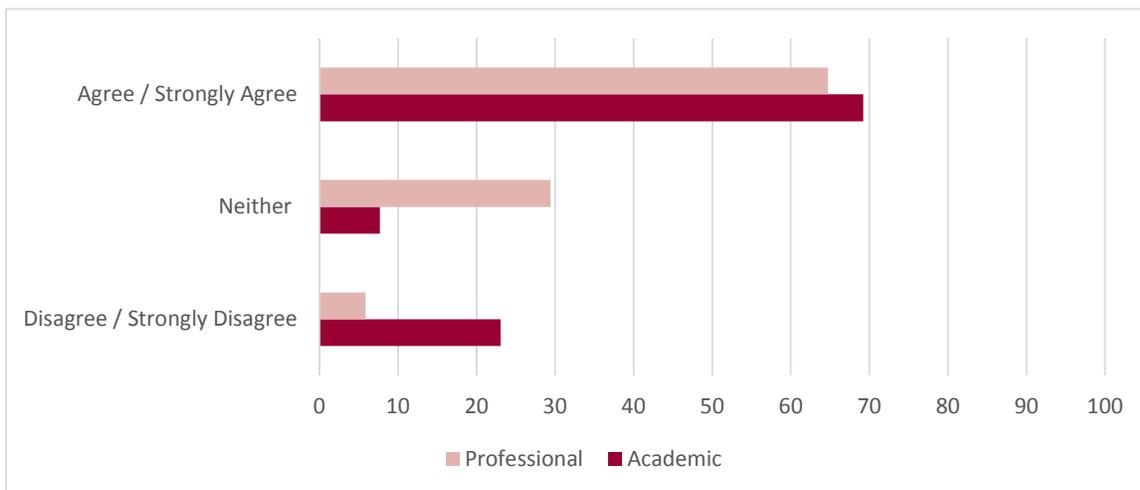
Open-Text Reponses

1. ***What other resources or information would you have liked to have been made available to you at your induction to Western Sydney University?***

perhaps more info about the other campuses

My induction was late for various reasons, and HR was not particularly 'all over it' as I indicated I had a disability when I signed the offer letter but I had to chase up about this after a couple of months as nobody had contacted me. Apparently HR was to notify Diversity & Equity but in the end - after about 2 months of work - I contacted Workplace Health & Safety about this issue and the told me to contact Diversity & Equity. I think this problem was likely due to under-staffing in the HR section - or people just not doing their job.

Proper information about career development for female professional staff (if there is any), details about extra resources available at the library for staff, a general description of how to use Staff Online, and - given that my role (and career goals) is both professional and academic - information about research support. I now also know that a lot of staff networks exist, it would have been helpful to be informed about that at the beginning so I could start to identify people in similar roles as me at the University.

An explanation of what SAC is, an explanation of unit templates and how they are meant to be used, how to access and use Allocate+ (all learnt eventually, but systems could have been introduced earlier during the induction process making work-life a little easier). A streamlined process for updating and associating the new academics name with associated units. Maybe even some heads-up tips for new academics such as common unit, assessment and exam related problems frequently encountered by academics and ways of addressing them.

Coming from a cut throat corporate background i feel that the university is well placed at providing new employees with access to rescources and information.

Understanding of how things work when you work rural and remotely

I started at the university just over 18 months ago. I received no information before I arrived on day one (they had to chase down my id number and other information so I could log on to computers). I never have attended any form of induction. I only completed online modules and the site-based induction by my direct supervisor. If there is an actual university-level induction into processes and programs, I've never heard of it.

As someone who came from another country, a very brief overview of the general setup of the university (schools, who the heads are, who the chancellor is, etc) would have been helpful (maybe just a one page printout?). I also think having more information about how academic staff is organized here would have been very helpful - I came not knowing anything about Levels or HEW and didn't know what was required for promotion from one level to another or

that we move up within levels automatically. It seems like very basic information but it's nice to know when you start working someplace!

There are limited admin who can assist when they are asked. The day to day things are not included in the orientation eg getting linked to the photocopiers. The systems at WSU are cumbersome and multilayered. Impossible to be orientated to things that only keep changing!

How to find out information about what is happening, who to talk to, who does what etc

How to utilise the Library?

2. *Would you like to add any further comments?*

I have felt very welcomed into the WSU community and really enjoy working here. The staff benefits are really good.

My line supervisors were a little paint-by-number. Some of the HR issues were glossed over, with the assumption that I would already know how to navigate staff online, flexitime sheets, etc. They did offer this support afterwards, but I had to ask for it. Same can be said for using acronyms and terms specific to Western that I was unfamiliar with. It would be more helpful to assume we know nothing on our first day. I also have a disability but wasn't asked if i needed workplace adjustments - my line supervisors just ticked the 'no adjustments' box and kept moving. It is difficult on your first day to express needs as an employee, and much easier to do so if you're asked directly if you have any. Greater awareness around invisible disabilities would help here, I think. My hand-over with the person previously in my role was very rushed and I was left with more questions than answers. On the other hand, my academic supervisor was fantastic throughout my induction. She gave me a large amount of support and offered a huge amount of her time to bring me up to speed and settle me in to my role. She made up for the others.

I never had a formal induction. Was there supposed to be one?

Being thrown in with no university-level information was pretty crappy, and makes things hard 20 months later.

I love working here but the systems need to be simpler and better communicated. Staff need to be looked after rather than over worked!

the new staff orientation was excellent - although note it is a long drive from Bathurst. The online induction courses were tedious and dint leave me with a felling of knowing who I should talk to about leave or matters like that.

Appendix II. SCOPING SURVEY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE (ACADEMIC STAFF) – DR LAURETTA LUCK

Strategy

60 participants were randomly selected from the WSU Staff telephone directory targeting women at levels A –D. Level E and Post Doctorate Fellows were excluded. Data were collected via telephone contact and two follow-up emails. Four (4) participants agreed to face-to-face interviews.

Questions

Participants were asked two questions:

1. What women specific strategies do you know of that Western Sydney University offers women to support their career development?
2. Are there are other career development strategies that WSU could offer to support the career development of women? (See appendix 1 for telephone and email script)

Participants

Sixty (60) women were contacted and 24 responded, a response rate of 40%. Women in the SoNM were over-represented in the sample (n= 14, 58%).

Sixteen participants had no voicemail activated, one extension was not activated, and two academics were on leave – all participants received two (2) emails.

Table 1. Response Rate

School	Number of Women contacted	Number of responses
Science and Health	25	8 (33%)
Computing, Engineering and Mathematics	9	1 (4%)
Medicine	7	1 (4%)
Nursing and Midwifery	19	14 (58%)

Findings

Responses were numerically categorised based on their frequency.

The following tables present the findings from questions 1 & 2.

Table 2: Supports identified by participants

Response	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Mentoring	2	8%
Early Career Researcher Fellowship	2	8%
Women's Research Fellowship Grant	6	25%
Career Interruption Grants	5	21%
Inspire Leadership	3	12.5%
Organisational Development Workshops i.e. Academic Women's Network	8	33%
Phased return to work	3	12.5%
Not aware of any	12	50%

Table 3. Other Recommendations

Response	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Decreased workload/increase flexibility	9	37.5%
Time to write/publish	5	21%
There are opportunities, be proactive	4	16%
Flexibility with family commitments/child care/holiday care	8	33%
No suggestions	6	25%

Open-ended Responses

Data that were divergent from the categories are presented below.

I think mid-career researcher support is an overlooked area. I think only having one bite of the cherry at the Women's Fellowship in particular needs to be re-assessed: most Category A grants allow teams to hold a certain number of grants in their lifetime and given the majority of us aren't competitive enough to ever get these Category A grants, we rely on the internal ones to help our research, especially now that RTS funds have been halved for HDR research. We should be able to reapply maybe 3 years after your first grant. Also, the length of time of these initiatives should be extended to 2 years, as in reality, we are being given 9-10 mths to

conduct the research, analyse AND submit for publication. It's unrealistic. Mentoring specific to mid-career females for the purpose of promotion and management; opportunities for conference/workshop attendance, - better networking and support amongst women, both campus specific and university wide. It should be regular, friendly, supportive.
After reading the news this week about men sweeping up nearly all research funding because they only work with other men, I think Western could do something around encouraging men to work more with their female colleagues (maybe there should be a scheme linking successful male researchers with groups of ECR women researchers to work on a project together or some sort of incentive that men involve their female colleagues more)
Support informal mentoring. More "push" and information from the School not just the University
More appreciation of what women contribute – women are valuable and intelligent and need other support
access to staff training courses and clear indications of the viability of pathways to ongoing academic careers would be useful.
Maybe have annual open discussions about gender equity in university forums and maybe present reports on the gender breakdown of positions within the university so that staff are aware (transparency). Have workshops and forums for women only relating to career development.
The only thing I know about is the inspiring women's awards and an online presentation by Professor Sharon Bell on staff online- Still Waiting in the Wings (and I am sure I have heard a lot of general rhetoric about gender equality). I guess the flexible options might also be seen as being a bit women specific. Not sure what more can be done……interesting that there were two men in the room at the SAC meeting last week- and one was the person chairing the meeting.
I have seen a women in academia course of some sort but not sure of others as they get lost in the email mass. Is there a woman specific group that provides support specifically to women who want to go up the career ladder? The mentor and mentee program is not gender specific and perhaps it needs to be
Deep structural inequities especially what is expected of women at different levels compared to men. WSU destroys careers of early women academics. If trying to keep young women academics more equity is needed especially when women have children. There are privileges available to D & E (mostly men) not to women. None of the policies seem to filter into the schools and they are not applied. Vulnerable when on probation.
Perhaps writing groups and other training programs ie how to be more assertive and sell your career and research (perhaps not the correct words but something similar).

The offer of an office space at a campus close to home to use in evenings or on the weekends

Weekend writing retreats at a campus close to their home, with access to a printer, kitchenette and discounted campus accommodation

Paid (6 month) leave for the writing up of a PhD (as identified above)

Flexible work arrangements beyond work at home opportunities. Some suggestions may include having the option of longer work days so that only 3-4 days are worked in the week (but still add up to 35 hours). This may free up some days for children activities, may assist with juggling multiple responsibilities or can be used for research/PhD study.

Telephone Script

Hi, My name is Lauretta Luck and I am from the SoNM. I am a member of the Science in Australia Gender Equity Program - Self-Assessment Team here at Western and have been tasked to explore women academics' career development. I would like a couple of minutes of your time to find out what women specific strategies Western offers for career development and if you think there are other strategies that could be offered. I would be very grateful if you could call me back on extension 9685 or email me on Lauretta.luck@westernsydney.edu.au. Thank you very much for your time.

Email

My name is Lauretta Luck and I am a Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. I am emailing you in my role as a member of the Science in Australia Gender Equity Program (SAGE) Self-Assessment Team here at Western Sydney University. I have been tasked to explore women academics' career development. I would like a couple of minutes of your time please to help with this task. I have two questions and I would appreciate your views;

     Q1   What women specific strategies do you know of that Western Sydney University offers women to support their career development?

     Q2   Are there are other career development strategies that WSU could offer to support the career development of women?

     I would be very grateful if you could either call me on extension 9685 or email me on Lauretta.luck@westernsydney.edu.au with your thoughts.

I appreciate this is a busy time of the year so thank you very much for your time, I look forward to hearing from you.