the nature of the relevant labour and capital markets. No doubt there will be some responsiveness, but the degree of responsiveness will depend on the ease with which academic labour can be moved around and additional capital to expand facilities acquired.

"For a market system to work effectively, the incidence of tenure needs to be reduced. Many might support such a move but the reality of the industrial relations situation has to be faced."

Academic staff are highly specialized and the supply of staff in certain fields is relatively inelastic. Moreover, the existence of tenure, which makes staff reductions difficult, will inhibit the flow of academic labour. Tenure is an almost universal condition for employment in universities. In Australia (leaving aside the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Australian National University, which has relatively fewer tenured staff) something like 70% of full-time equivalent university and college staff are tenured, and the proportion of the more senior staff (senior lecturer and above) who are tenured is over 97%. Australia is not peculiar in this. In the United States of America, for example, according to recent figures, approximately 65% of the teachers in public institutions are tenured, and for associate and full professors the figure is over 90%. For a market system to work effectively, the incidence of tenure needs to be reduced. Many might support such a move but the reality of the industrial relations situation has to be faced. Moreover, in competing for staff, there is a high price to be paid for not offering tenure; competition for academic staff is not only among Australian universities, but against the rest of the world whose universities generally offer tenure in senior positions.

Present salary arrangements are inconsistent with a free market. I do not support these arrangements, which I believe need to be more flexible. But, as they stand, it is almost impossible for public institutions to pay attraction salaries in order to obtain additional academic staff. The capacity to operate flexible salary arrangements will be a major advantage of private institutions.

If institutions in high demand are to respond they will need access to capital. It may be difficult for many institutions to raise money on the market without government guarantees, but once the government is involved the putative benefits of privatization may evaporate. But suppose capital is reasonably accessible, so that there is some chance of expanding plant, what will be the effects on particular institutions? A prestigious institution like the University of Melbourne will face very high demand. It may respond by expanding its facilities, borrowing money to do so; if the high-ranking institutions follow this course, some low-ranking institutions will almost certainly face bankruptcy. Alternatively, a prestigious institution could charge higher fees and offer a better menu of courses, becoming more attractive. It is interesting to observe that the prestigious institutions in the United States do not grow indefinitely: Harvard is not a huge university. Such universities earn rents because they are in a favoured market position. That process does not create more university places; it creates select, high-quality institutions. Institutions with low ranking would almost certainly have problems in filling their classrooms; in particular, regional institutions might go to the wall.

A shift to a market mode would, to the extent that labour and capital markets permit, tend to diversify the product and diversify the institutions. It would tend to adjust course enrolments to student demand. It would act as a spur to academic efficiency and effectiveness. However, all these advantages would be limited by the state of academic industrial relations, by the fact that the capital market is not likely to be readily accessible to academic institutions, and by the lack of market knowledge and mobility among students. There is no evidence that students are greatly influenced by the objective assessment of the quality of the faculties of particular institutions. Certainly they are not highly mobile; indeed, there is a demonstrable lack of mobility among Australian graduate students, let alone among undergraduates.

Undoubtedly, some advantages would flow from a shift to a market mode. On the other hand, the higher education system would become much more unequal in terms of social and geographical access. Some institutions would go to the wall, and the geographical balance of the provision of higher education would be upset. In fact, I believe that governments would not allow this to happen, particularly if institutions or students in marginal electorates were threatened.

Government intervention might also be necessary for manpower reasons. For example, in a free market system, there would be an expansion in the number of places in medical schools. In circumstances in which medical services are underwritten from the public purse and medical schools make demands on publicly funded teaching hospitals, it is unlikely that governments will allow the output of medical graduates to expand greatly; at present Commonwealth and State Governments, as well as the professional bodies, are all pressing for restricting the number of places in medical schools. Another case in which governments might wish to intervene for manpower reasons relates to the current promotion of engineering and science, particularly in relation to women. If full-cost fees were introduced, fees for engineering and science courses would be higher than those for arts. This would militate against an expansion of engineering and science enrolments.

To sum up: the imposition of full-cost fees together with vouchers or free places has pluses and minuses. The minuses occur because the institutional structure within which higher education operates cannot be made to simulate an atomistic competitive model: academic labour is not mobile, institutions do not have ready access to capital, students are neither mobile nor well-informed. Moreover, governments will not be able to wash their hands of the responsibility for providing access to higher education for the whole community, or for ensuring rising levels of skill in the work force. Nor will they be able to ignore the manpower implications of higher education.

In the real world the introduction of full-cost fees is unlikely to be the panacea some predict. Indeed, the effects on institutional management may be quite small, unless there are radical institutional changes which are seldom spelled out by the proponents of full-cost fees; in particular, I have in mind arrangements relating to tenure, salary scales, and so on. A scheme of full-cost fees and vouchers could probably be made to work; but its effects on efficiency and effectiveness would be unlikely to be anywhere near as dramatic as those predicted by its supporters, and its consequences for social and geographic access and for the skills of the work force might be drastic.

Conclusion

I have attempted to present a balanced view of these issues. I am not opposed to fees *per se*. Indeed, I can see some merit in charging relatively modest nominal fees in order to assist the funding of an expanding system. What is modest is a matter of opinion, but a return to fees at the level of 1973 (which, although far from full-cost, might not be regarded as modest by many) would be equivalent to an indirect tax on the value of higher education of the order of 15 to 20%. In itself, this would not significantly improve the efficiency of institutions, but it would enable some expansion of the system and help maintain the quality of a system which, for a decade, has been starved of funds. Internal reforms, many of which are already under way, are much more likely to yield returns in efficiency and effectiveness: the periodic review of departments and faculties; the regular review of individual staff; a more vigorous and deliberate effort in academic staff development on both the teaching and managerial sides; more fixed term appointments; more flexible salary scales; arrangements for redundancy and early retirement with reasonable compensation; and a commitment to strategic planning whereby objectives are specified, strategies enunciated and results evaluated.

These reforms, with perhaps a nominal level of fees in order to allow the system to expand and maintain its quality, and some release from central regulation, seem to me to be a much better program for reform than one which postulates that the market will *per se* operate to produce more efficient and effective institutions if full-cost fees are charged. Finally, the kind of program that I have outlined is compatible with the government's responsibilities for balanced access to higher education, for equity in dealing with different social groups, and for the quality of the Australian workforce and the useful occupation of our youth.

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The changing conditions of academic employment*

Peter Karmel

1. Context

When members of academic staff are appointed, the terms and conditions of their employment (as enshrined in their contracts) define their formal relationship with the employing institution, their salaries and other compensation. My purpose today is twofold: first, to discuss the context in which the changing relationships between scholar and institution, and between institution and society, need to be viewed; and secondly, to consider changes to the conditions of academic employment that might with advantage be made.

The relationships with which we are concerned can be epitomised in the following schema:

scholar ⇆ institution ⇆ society

Traditionally, the university is conceived as a self-governing corporation of scholars — a community of scholars. The foremost implication of this is that the university sees itself as a kind of private club, resistant to outside intervention. The members of the club know what is best for the club — they determine who shall join and what shall be done within it. A second implication is that the scholars do not see themselves as employees of the university: in their eyes there is no employer-employee relationship. In terms of the above schema the left hand branch alone exists, and

scholars ≡ university.

The present situation is far from this. The collegiality of the community of scholars has given place to an employer-employee relationship in which the obligations and duties of both sides are spelled out. Industrial relations began to enter the university in the 1950s and have impinged on more and more aspects of university life ever since. They are now manifest in the registration of university and college of advanced education employer and employee organisations with the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission.

To a large degree the development of an employer-employee stance in institutions of higher education has been due to the growth in size of the institutions. Forty or fifty years ago universities operated in a largely collegial fashion. Academic staff consisted of a number of full professors assisted by relatively few junior staff. Collegiality did not extend to all staff, but it certainly included all the professors.

At the same time, the increasing dependence of the institutions on government funding and the much larger number of institutions have inevitably made more explicit the relationship between the institutions and society. Forty or fifty years ago the six universities each received relatively small grants from the State Governments. For the rest they were financed at modest levels, by tuition fees, donations and income from investments. This state of affairs began to change in the 1950s as the institutions expanded. In 1973 the elimination of State Governments from university and college funding meant that one government — the Commonwealth — was alone responsible for providing a large volume of funds to 60 to 100 institutions, which were almost totally dependent on those funds. This inevitably raised questions of co-ordination and led to intervention by the funding authority. It also placed on the institutions accountability requirements of a kind alien to the concept of a community of scholars. Moreover, if society insists on the accountability of the institutions, the institutions will have to insist on the accountability of the scholars that comprise their academic staffs.

Higher education in the 1980s reveals a startling contrast when compared with the pre-war world or even with the 1950s and 1960s. The institutions are expected to respond to external forces; they are subject to pressures from governments embodied in guidelines laid down by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission; they are called to account for the expenditure of their funds; they are expected to be ever vigilant of the efficiency with which they use their resources and the effectiveness with which they pursue their goals.

"The relationships between scholar, institution and society have been transformed from a collegial to a managerial mode."

Moreover, the decline in Commonwealth Government funding relative to student numbers from 1976 onwards has moved the institutions themselves to put pressure on individual scholars who are now being held accountable for the quality of their teaching and the productivity of their research. The relationships between scholar, institution and society have been transformed from a collegial to a managerial mode.

2. Changing relationships between scholars and institutions

Much of the debate on the conditions of academic employment revolves around the question of tenure. Academic tenure is an expression of the relationship between scholar and institution; it implies the security of employment until retiring age. It has two justifications. First, it is a guarantee of academic freedom — the freedom to determine what one teaches and what one researches. Given tenure, the threat of dismissal cannot be used to direct the activities or to moderate the opinions of individual scholars. The concept of academic freedom should not be confused with that of institutional autonomy which relates to the manner in which institutions manage their affairs. Academic freedom can be preserved in institutions that are run as government departments and hence are not autonomous — indeed the case for tenure as a means of academic freedom is, perhaps, strongest in such institutions.

Secondly, academic tenure is an attractive employment condition. Permanent employment is more desirable than employment which is terminable or for a fixed period. Most senior appointments in institutions of higher education throughout the world are tenured. It is difficult to attract top scholars without the offer of tenure. Nevertheless, there would, presumably, be some salary package that would make non-tenured employment as attractive as tenured employment. Indeed Bond University is at present exploring what this might be.

Although tenure is a key element in the relationship between individual scholars and their institutions, it should be emphasised that tenure is neither universal nor absolute. A significant proportion of academic staff of universities and colleges are on fixed term appointments (although few at senior levels); and in most institutions tenured appointments can be terminated on certain grounds (incapacity, inefficiency, misconduct, redundancy) after due process.

Quite apart from questions of salary and other benefits, in the formulation of the conditions of academic employment there is clearly a tension between the interests of the institution and the interests of the individual scholar. The institution must be concerned with efficiency in the use of its resources and effectiveness in the pursuit of its goals. The former implies systems of incentives to encourage good performance and of sanctions to discourage poor performance. The latter implies an ability to respond flexibly to changes in external conditions. Taken together they seem to imply flexible salary scales and terminable contracts of employment.

While such arrangements may be in the interest of some individual academics, particularly the most able and those working in disciplines in short supply, the interest of the typical academic may best be served by uniform salary conditions and the maintenance of tenure. The notion of equal treatment extends, of course, beyond salaries and tenure to access to research resources. In this connection there is a tension between two contrasting positions: on the one hand, that all academics should be more or less equally involved in research and have more or less equal opportunities to undertake it; and on the other hand, that research resources should flow only to the most productive workers in the areas deemed to be of national importance and that the balance of teaching and research activities should depend on the relative capacities of individual scholars.

These tensions between individual and institutional interests are evidenced in the views expressed recently in reports of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission[1], of the Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education[2] and of the Australian Science and Technology Council[3]. There is no doubt that in the contemporary world governments, and the bodies which advise them on these matters, stand firmly on the side of efficiency and effectiveness and against the protection of the "rights" of individual scholars.

"The unionisation of academic staff ... is partly cause and partly effect of the development of a managerial philosophy within scholarly institutions ..."

In Australia, while external pressures on institutions of higher education have been growing, there have not, as yet, been structural changes in the institution-society relationship, although these appear to be on the way. In the United Kingdom external forces have impinged to a marked degree on the internal mission of the universities and fundamental changes are being made in the way in which the institutions are funded, in the conditions attached to funds and in the role of government and governmental agencies.

There have, however, been significant changes in the relationships between individual scholars and their institutions. Significant developments during the past few years, which affect these relationships, include strategic planning, departmental reviews and individual performance evaluation. Generally these have been accompanied by some strengthening in the hierarchies of the institutions. This strengthening seems to be taking place at all levels, so that, in the chain of central administration to faculty to department to individual scholar, the superordinate levels in the hierarchy are strengthening their positions vis-a-vis the subordinate ones. Incidentally, this is not necessarily inconsistent with a decentralisation of decision-making and budgeting, but it does represent a strengthening of "management".

The unionisation of academic staff that has taken place over the last thirty years, of which the apotheosis has been the recent shift into the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission, is partly cause and partly effect of the development of a managerial philosophy within scholarly institutions with emphases on performance, evaluation, accountability, strategic planning, staff development and so on.

3. Shortcomings of present arrangements

It is not difficult to produce a list of criticisms commonly levelled at the way in which universities and colleges of advanced education operate. To a large extent these relate to employment conditions. They fall under three broad headings:

- reward system
- resource use
- accountability.

Of the reward system it is said that:

- it lacks incentives, having scant capacity to reward merit. There are only four tenurable academic grades, and movement from one to another is difficult. Within a grade few incentives for better performance are offered;
- it lacks sanctions. Once tenured, members of the academic staff may rest on their laurels for many years making a relatively small contribution to the work of the institution;
- it provides little recompense for undertaking administrative responsibilities. In particular, becoming a departmental head may reduce the prospects of academic promotion since it will reduce research output;
- it lacks the capacity to pay attractive salaries in fields of short supply;
- there is no recompense for contract staff for their poorer conditions of employment.

The main criticism of the way resources are used in higher education institutions relates to their inflexibility:

- ageing work force. The big expansion of the higher education system in the 1960s and the early 1970s and the subsequent slowing down has resulted in a demographic profile in which middle-aged academics predominate. The system is thus clogged up with many academics of senior lecturer status who see few career opportunities ahead of them;
- few opportunities for the young. By the same token there are relatively few opportunities for able young people to obtain tenurable posts in universities and colleges, and therefore little new blood entering the institutions. This is because of a combination of relatively slow after rapid growth, reduced resources per enrolment and relatively low rates of retirement and resignation;
- inflexibility. The slow rate of turnover of the academic workforce combined with tenure to the age of 65 years makes it difficult to reallocate staff resources in proportion to changing demands for courses and community needs. Moreover, as a result of the rising average age of academic staff, staff members themselves are less responsive to change. Therefore, in higher education institutions change is, at best, likely to be marginal.

Accountability implies the specification of goals and the testing of efficiency and effectiveness in pursuing the goals. Criticisms of institutions in relation to this stem from perceived inadequacies in:

- specification of goals;
- evaluation of the performance of individual academics;
- evaluation of the goals and performance of academic units (e.g. faculties, schools and departments);
- provision of staff development, aimed at improving academic performance (teaching and research) and managerial capacity for those who have managerial responsibilities (for example, deans of faculties, heads of departments).

4. Possible changes

The report on efficiency and effectiveness in higher education which was published in September 1986, directed particular attention to conditions of academic employment.[4] It made recommendations for a package of reforms. Since some of these would breach national wage guidelines and would involve additional expenditure, it seems unlikely that they will be implemented in the near future. Moreover, some of them have evoked strong union opposition. Nevertheless, they are worthy of careful consideration.

It is important to emphasise that the reforms were conceived of as a package. The principal elements were:

- **Salary bars.** Salary bars, which already exist in the corresponding scales in colleges of advanced education, should be introduced into university salary scales for lecturer and senior lecturer. This is to insert efficiency tests in what are long incremental scales.
- **Salary loadings.** Temporary (three year) loadings of 5, 10, 15 or 20 per cent of substantive salary should be introduced, relating to exceptional performance, administrative responsibilities or the state of the market. This is intended to provide incentives for performance, to increase the willingness to undertake administrative responsibilities and to make it possible to obtain suitably qualified staff in disciplines in short supply.
- **Outside activities.** Outside professional activities should be controlled by time rather than by earnings on the basis of a maximum of 13 approved days per quarter. This is to encourage individual academic staff to engage in consulting and other relevant activities in order to allow academic expertise to be more widely available to the community, to provide academics with real world experience, and to give an incentive for staff to undertake these activities.
- **Limited term appointments.** A minimum of 10 to 20 per cent of full-time equivalent staff positions at the level of lecturer and above should be as limited term appointments. This is to ensure adequate flexibility to adjust to changes in student demand or community need. There should be compensation for limited term appointments by payment of a salary loading of up to 10 per cent.
- **Termination of appointment.** Tenured staff appointments should be terminable on grounds of misconduct, incapacity, inefficiency or redundancy. Provision should be made for compensation for termination on grounds of redundancy.
- **Appointment to tenurable positions.** A staff member should not be given tenure until three years of service have been completed such that the member can demonstrate clearly his or her capacity to fill the tenured position.
- **Staff assessment procedures.** A system of regular assessment of performance of individual academics should be introduced.
- **Staff development.** Staff development programs should be given high priority.
- **Early retirement.** An early retirement scheme should be established to assist institutions in responding to academic priorities and community needs.

The above package is hardly a radical one. However, the Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness believed it to be both desirable and workable within the Australian context. There are other possibilities. I shall conclude by giving a few examples.

"One suggestion which has received a good deal of support is the tenuring of staff at one grade lower than that of the actual appointment ..."

One suggestion which has received a good deal of support is the tenuring of staff at one grade lower than that of the actual appointment, for example, senior lecturers would hold tenure at lecturer level, professors would hold tenure at reader level. Every five or seven years, say, the performance of staff members would be reviewed and a decision would be made as to whether they should stay in their present positions or revert to the lower rank. This was explored by the Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness but the Committee was unable to agree on it. It has three serious disadvantages:

- in some cases it would involve a loss of a title which, although superficially trivial, would be bound to create great difficulty;
- it would result, from time to time, in actual reductions of salary;
- it would involve complex systems of review in which the onus would tend to fall on the institution to prove poor performance rather than on the individual to prove good performance.

Another option would be to divide salaries into two components: one for teaching which would be tenured and one for research which would depend on the individual's capacity to attract research funding. Such an arrangement would involve a radical restructuring of the funding basis for universities. It does, however, bear some resemblance to the North American system of paying academics for nine months of the year and leaving them free to earn additional income in the remaining three months.

There is also the possibility of reducing substantially the proportion of staff on tenure and moving towards a contract system. One difficulty in this is that, as mentioned earlier, tenure is widespread in the academic world. In Australia almost 70 per cent of full-time equivalent academic staff is tenured but the proportion tenured amongst senior lecturer and above exceeds 97 per cent. The United States is often quoted as a model to which Australian universities and colleges might aspire. However, in public universities in the United States 65 per cent of academic

staff is tenured; this includes 97 per cent of full professors and 87 per cent of associate professors. If Australia were to shift away from tenure on any substantial basis there might be difficulties in recruiting staff.

Associated with the notion of hiring staff on contracts is that of a shift towards a free market. This would probably involve fixing academic salaries on the basis of a minimum rate but allowing an individual to negotiate a supplement on top of that. The supplement could be varied from year to year in relation to performance, responsibilities and market conditions. This is broadly the American system although a very high proportion of the more senior academic staff of American universities are tenured. It appears to be what Bond University is proposing.

5. Conclusion

In spite of the changing context in which individual scholars now interact with their institutions and the institutions with society, and in spite of the shift from a collegial towards a managerial operating mode, there has been little change in the formal conditions of academic employment. If anything, the conditions have become more, rather than less, rigid; for example, in the appointment and employment of tutors, in the prohibition by the State Grants legislation of paying above recommended salary levels. It would, therefore, be rash to predict change.

Nevertheless, the pressures for change are there, and they are strong. Criticisms of the conditions of employment in institutions of higher education from political, official and business circles are strident. Although these criticisms are often grossly exaggerated, the institutions have not succeeded in mounting a convincing defence, largely because the criticisms have some validity and the institutions do not have in place sufficient processes of accountability.

Pressures for change also come from the bodies that advise governments on these matters. In particular, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, which is an expert body that should be seen as sympathetic to the aspirations of the institutions, is arguing for change, even if at a gentle rate.

From within the institutions themselves governing bodies, vice-chancellors and principals are increasingly concerned about accountability and flexibility and the need to improve management. Moreover, there are now many scholars who themselves favour change and a shift towards a more flexible, entrepreneurial style.

As we move into the 1990s, the vital question that we face, both as administrators and academics, is how to react to these pressures while preserving in our institutions their essential mission to conserve, transmit and extend knowledge. We can, of course, man the ramparts and pull up the drawbridge. But if we do this, we shall, at worst, be starved out; at best, we shall become isolated — ineffectual and irrelevant. Some response in the directions that I have indicated is necessary. We should all be prepared to make it.

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An early retirement option for Australian academics?

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Staffing levels in universities in Australia, as well as in Europe and North America,[1] peaked in the mid-1970s after 20 years of unprecedented growth. Between 1956 and 1975 the number of universities in Australia increased from nine to 19, and there was almost fivefold growth in student enrolments and full-time academic posts. In contrast, enrolments rose by only 18 per cent between 1975 and 1985, while the number of academic staff increased by merely 5 per cent.[2] It seems reasonable to assume that the Australian university system will experience, at best, only modest expansion over the next decade.

The majority of academics appointed during the period of expansion were recent graduates, and hence relatively young. With limited turnover in positions and few new jobs being created, the age distribution of Australian academics is shifting.[3,4] The Australian universities will carry into the 1990s a labour force that was recruited mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. The median age of tenured academics will probably soon exceed 50, and there will be more elderly academics than ever before. Almost all academics at senior lecturer or above hold tenure. They will be displaced prior to retirement at 65 only if tenure conditions are changed or incentives are offered for early retirement. The concern in the following commentary is with issues relating to whether early retirement options should be generally available to Australian academics.

Consequences of the end to growth

In 1982, the most recent year for which detailed statistics have been published, 21 per cent of professors in Australian universities were under 45 years of age, as were 38 per cent of readers and associate professors, 58 per cent of senior lecturers, and 84 per cent of lecturers. In 1985 the turnover in tenured jobs through resignation, retirement, or death was less than 5 per cent. Unless many young graduates become academics, which could occur only if new jobs are created or there is a high turnover in currently tenured posts, the median age of tenured academics will increase cumulatively until the first decade of next century, when many reach the mandatory retirement age.

Academics recruited in the 1960s were the lucky generation. By entering an expanding system at a time when the supply-demand relationship is quite different from what it is now, they enjoyed rapid advancement. The career development of academics recruited in the 1970s has been adversely affected by the end to university growth. In an analysis covering four disciplines, Over and Lancaster[5] showed that only 48 per cent of men appointed as lecturers in 1975-1976 had advanced to a senior lectureship within seven years, in contrast to 68 per cent of the men appointed as lecturers in 1962-1964. The career asymptote for many among the recent cohort of academics will be a senior lectureship, since the number of chairs and readerships has increased only slightly over time and many existing appointments at these levels are held by academics who are still relatively young.

The end to university growth has meant that graduates who became academics in the 1960s have been advantaged over subsequently appointed academics not necessarily on the basis of qualifications, skill, and merit, but through labour market conditions. Overall, however, tenured academics have been favoured over the many recent graduates who cannot gain lectureships even though they bave the credentials that would have virtually guaranteed such a job a decade or two earlier. The university system encourages intergenerational competition, but discourages, and even prohibits, evaluative comparison between individuals who differ in rank and status. Thus graduates from the same generation compete among themselves for entry to an academic career, but a person cannot gain appointment or promotion through displacement of a tenured academic.

"The end to university growth has meant that graduates who became academics in the 1960s have been advantaged over subsequently appointed academics not necessarily on the basis of qualifications, skill and merit, but through labour market conditions."

Under current conditions tenure is maintaining a labour force constituted of earlier cohorts of graduates. In addition, the large majority of academics are male. The sex ratio among academics in the late 1970s, when university expansion had ceased, was much that which would be expected in terms of the relative participation rates of men and women in postgraduate training a decade or so earlier.[6] In 1968, for example, women gained only 5 per cent of all PhD degrees, and 17 per cent of all Masters degrees, awarded by Australian universities, and they trained primarily in education, humanities, and the social and behavioural sciences, the disciplinary groupings in which women are found in largest numbers as academics. Whereas few women qualified when many positions were being filled, many women completed postgraduate qualifications in the 1980s, at a time when few academic jobs were available. Further, substantial numbers of women have qualified in fields where women traditionally were underrepresented. The sex ratio of academics would shift markedly if labour market conditions in the 1980s were as they had been in the 1960s. However, in a static system in which many academics (mostly men) are