

Who is delivering the Australian BA?



Trends in staff profiles of academics in the BA

AUSTRALIAN
LEARNING
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COUNCIL

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DEANS OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

SUMMARY REPORT 5

This summary report presents national staffing trends within BA programs across Australia. The project drew upon demographic data collected for DEST/DEEWR gathered during 2001 – 2006.

About the Project

The BA scoping project commenced in March 2007. Materials and resources developed as a result of the project launched on 30 July, 2008 on the DASSH website <http://www.dassh.edu.au/basp>

Materials Developed

The summary reports of the scoping study are particularly intended for decision makers for the Bachelor of Arts programs: those responsible for coordinating and managing Arts programs. The summary reports can be read independently or as a set of information. The set consists of:

- 1 The Bachelor of Arts scoping project:
Executive summary
- 2 What is the Australian BA?
Defining and describing the nature and role of the Arts in contemporary Australia
- 3 Mapping the terrain:
Trends and shared features in BA programs across Australia 2001–2008
- 4 Who is enrolled in the Australian BA?
Student uptake of the Australian BA 2001–2006
- 5 Who is delivering the Australian BA?
Trends in staff profiles in the BA 2001–2006
- 6 Future studies emerging from the BA scoping project

These summary reports are supported by resources developed as part of the project. These resources are available from the DASSH website and include:

- Case studies
- Data sets
- Institutional program profiles



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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

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1. Demographic data

The data in this section is presented cautiously as the strategies devised for the collection of this data for DEST/ DEEWR may not be comprehensively indicative of institutional practice. For example, it is not uncommon for staff members employed for sessional work to be recorded as both casual employees as well as FTE (Full Time Equivalent) staff. This makes it difficult to accurately identify individual sessionally employed staff, and to portray their presence in the data below. It also appears to be the case that in some institutions, some staff involved in sessional teaching functions are actually reported as research only staff or as staff funded on research grants.

Nevertheless, it is possible to detect trends of some significance for the sector. The extant data enabled the project team to validate some of the anecdotal information received, using the program definition described in the summary report titled “*What is the Australian BA? Defining and describing the nature and role of the Arts in contemporary Australia*”. Staff falling within this definition have been called “Arts” staff in this summary report.

1.1 Staff by Academic Organisational Units (AOUs) affiliation

The distribution of staff according to the AOUs described according to the DEST/DEEWR definitions of AOU is illustrated in **Figure 1: FTE Arts staff according to AOU 2001 – 2006**.

The DEST/DEEWR data available for this period supports the data about the quality of teaching that emerged in the gathered for this project. In this project, participants in the online surveys, round tables and interviews frequently noted a relatedness between the reduction of staff numbers and the quality of teaching.

Key findings

1 Staffing levels:

The smallest number of staff allocated to the AOU fall within the *Librarianship & Info Manage & Curatorial Studies*; while the greatest number of staff fall within *Society and Culture – General*.

2 Staff and student ratios:

The increase in student numbers evident in the society and culture coding and replicated in the DEST/DEEWR staff file indicates that student numbers increased by 4% between 2001 and 2006. The FTE staff numbers increased by 1.7%. In real terms this means that there was an increase of 47,622 students and an increase of 868 FTE academic staff over the same period. By filtering out positions defined by DEST/DEEWR as “other function” or “research only” the *actual* increase over the period is 120 FTE academic staff. This equates to a 0.24% increase.

3 Table 1 illustrates the percentage of staff employed across all functions (i.e. Other Function, Research Only, Teaching and Research, and Teaching Only) against the percentage of staff who can be described as teaching in Arts programs between 2001 and 2006. This table indicates a drop in the percentage of total staff who are actually teaching in the programs from 66% in 2001 to 60.6% in 2006.

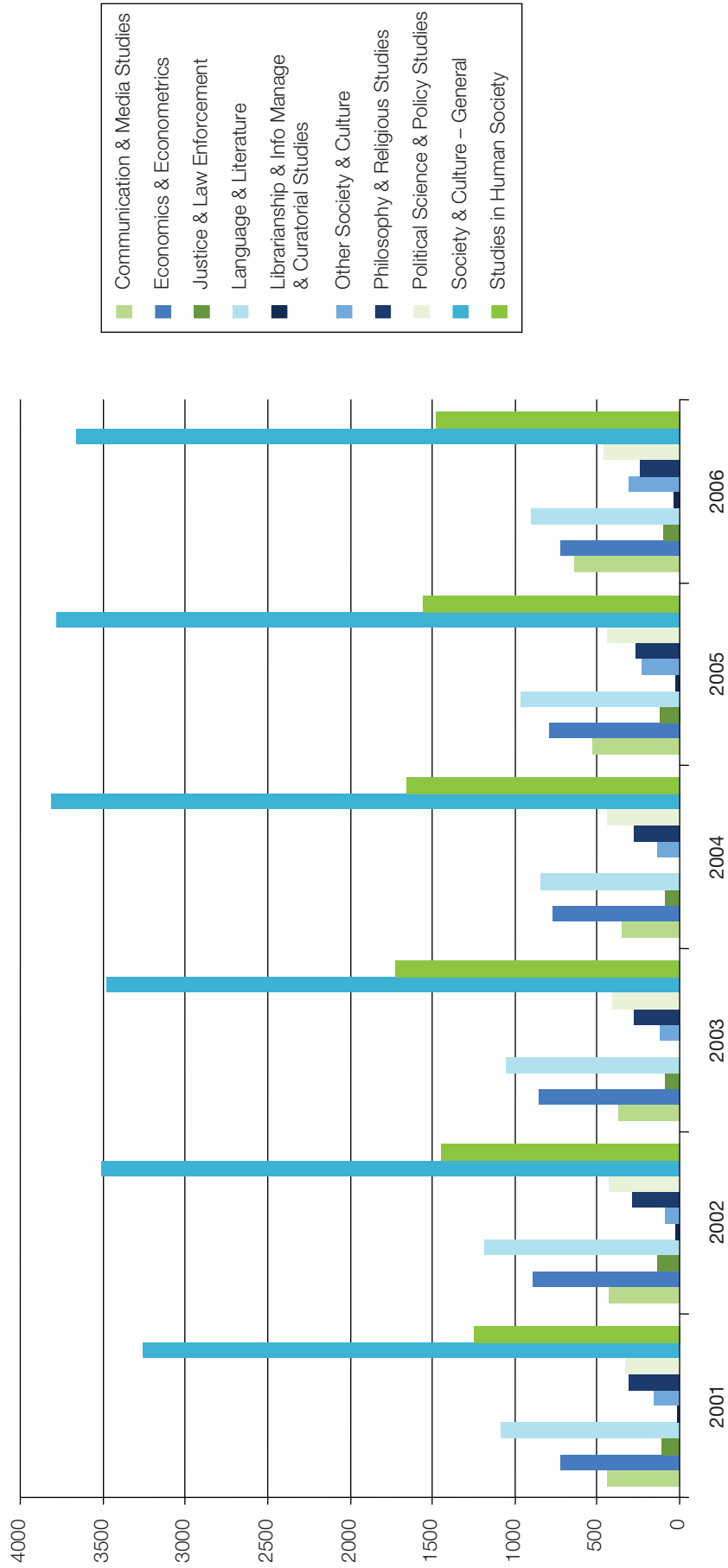


Figure 1: FTE Arts staff according to AOU 2001 – 2006 all functions

Table 1: Arts staff across AOU as percent of Total Staff in Arts programs and as percent of teaching only and research positions

AOU	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	All	Teach	All	Teach	All	Teach	All	Teach	All	Teach	All	Teach
Communication & Media Studies	5.8%	4.2%	5.0%	3.8%	4.5%	3.4%	4.2%	3.1%	6.1%	4.1%	7.4%	4.8%
Economics & Econometrics	9.5%	6.1%	10.5%	6.2%	10.2%	5.8%	9.1%	5.3%	9.1%	4.8%	8.5%	4.6%
Justice & Law Enforcement	1.5%	1.0%	1.6%	1.1%	1.1%	0.6%	1.0%	0.6%	1.4%	0.9%	1.2%	0.7%
Language & Literature	14.4%	9.8%	14.1%	9.9%	12.5%	8.9%	10.1%	7.1%	11.0%	7.5%	10.6%	7.4%
Librarianship & Info Manage & Curatorial Studies	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%
Other Society & Culture	2.0%	0.7%	1.1%	0.7%	1.4%	0.6%	1.6%	0.5%	2.6%	0.7%	3.5%	0.9%
Philosophy & Religious Studies	4.0%	2.5%	3.4%	2.3%	3.3%	2.1%	3.2%	2.2%	3.0%	2.2%	2.8%	1.9%
Political Science & Policy Studies	4.3%	3.1%	5.1%	3.1%	4.8%	2.9%	5.2%	3.1%	5.1%	3.0%	5.4%	3.0%
Society & Culture – General	42.5%	28.7%	41.6%	26.3%	41.6%	27.0%	45.6%	30.0%	43.5%	29.1%	42.8%	27.7%
Studies in Human Society	16.3%	9.8%	17.3%	10.0%	20.6%	11.6%	19.9%	10.6%	18.0%	8.8%	17.4%	9.4%
Total:	100%	66.0%	100%	63.5%	100%	62.9%	100%	62.5%	100%	61.1%	100%	60.6%

Source: DEST/ DEEWR data 2001 – 2006

1.2 Age

Participants in this project indicated a concern that the workforce is aging. This concern appears well founded as DEST/DEEWR data suggests that the workforce is not being renewed (See Table 2). This trend is illustrated in Figure 2: Age group of Arts teaching staff 2001 – 2006.

Key findings

- 1 The increase in numbers of 50+ years old academics in 2004 and 2006 coincides with an increase in the number of level D research only positions in some institutions during the same period. This supports anecdotal evidence that there has been an increase in the number of key researchers in preparation for RQF.
- 2 By 2006, teaching academics in the 50+ years old age group, as a percentage of the total teaching cohort, had increased from 43% to 49%. Conversely, the overall percentage of teaching staff in the 30–39 years old age group had dropped slightly over the same period – from 18.5% to 18.2% of the total teaching cohort. This is illustrated in Figure 2: Age group of Arts teaching staff 2001 – 2006.
- 3 If the trend illustrated in Figure 2 continues, the small numbers in 30–39 age group indicate that there is a crisis looming as those who fit into the 50+ age bracket move out of the workforce in 5 – 10 years time.

Table 2: Age group of teaching staff excluding casual staff*

Year	Age Group			
	< 29	30–39	40–49	50+
2001	149	852	1,577	2,016
2002	128	849	1,594	2,137
2003	120	825	1,549	2,220
2004	129	841	1,563	2,222
2005	130	865	1,561	2,244
2006	125	853	1,398	2,297

* Casual staff ages are not collected as casual staff details are reported as full time equivalence, not as individuals

Source: DEST/DEEWR data 2001 – 2006

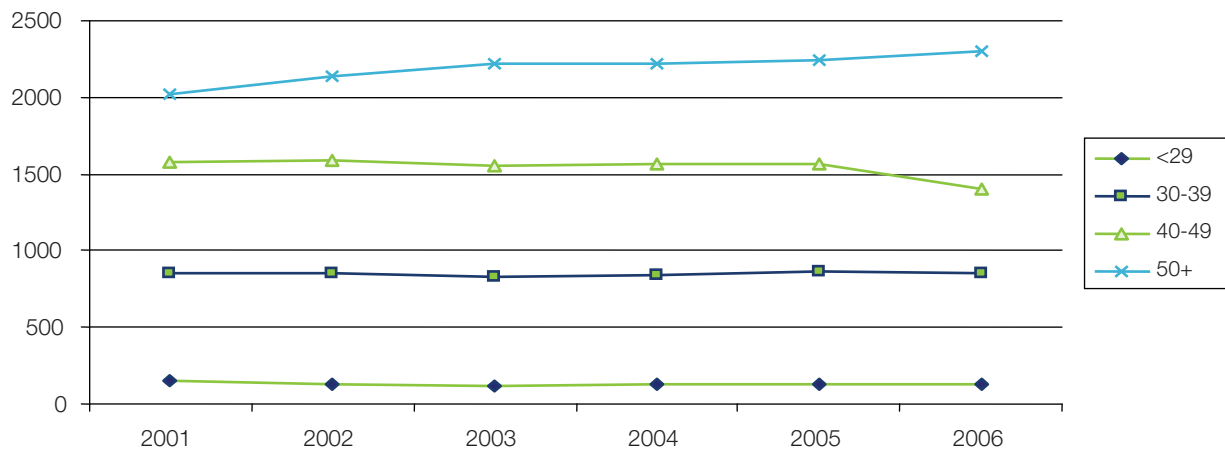


Figure 2: Age group of Arts teaching staff 2001 – 2006

1.3 Sex

Key findings

- 1 The majority of academic staff employed in Society and Culture codes are female. (See Figure 3: Sex breakdown of FTE academics teaching in Arts programs 2001 – 2006)
- 2 More males have full-time positions than females, although the percentage of female staff holding full-time positions has increased from 46.3% in 2001 to 49% in 2006. (See Table 3)
- 3 The majority of fractional full time staff are female. (See Table 3)

Table 3: Sex of academics in Society and Culture code 2001 – 2006 by contract type

Year	Contract Type	Female	Male
2001	Casual	415	389
	Fractional full time	935	450
	Full time	2,539	2,941
2002	Casual	566	554
	Fractional full time	1,005	455
	Full time	2,748	3,085
2003	Casual	504	494
	Fractional full time	1,093	444
	Full time	2,762	3,064
2004	Casual	469	451
	Fractional full time	1,126	482
	Full time	2,802	3,027
2005	Casual	490	461
	Fractional full time	1,162	551
	Full time	2,881	3,147
2006	Casual	477	462
	Fractional full time	1,206	620
	Full time	2,827	2,945

Source: DEST/DEEWR data 2001 – 2006



Figure 3: Sex breakdown of FTE academics teaching in Arts programs 2001 – 2006

1.4 Academic levels and types of contracts

Key findings

- 1 Between the period of 2001 – 2006, 24 institutions reduced the number of fulltime staff employed. Of the 40 institutions examined, only 7 institutions maintained a relatively steady number of full time academic staff.
- 2 Overall, figures reflect a reduction of 699 FTE staff at a variety of levels working in AOU's that are responsible for delivering programs in the field of Arts. Over the same time period, 9 institutions increased their full time staff by 423 academics, generally at level B level.
- 3 DEST/DEEWR defined those on a casual work contract as:
 - > *the member of staff is engaged and paid on an hourly or sessional basis; and*
 - > *the member of staff has no entitlement to paid annual leave, paid sick leave or paid long-service leave.*

Anecdotal evidence gathered from participants in this study suggests that a number of staff on short term contracts or *fractional full time* contracts are acting in the capacity of sessionally employed teachers but are not reported as casual. These anecdotes account for the more widely-held perception that the workforce is undergoing increasing casualisation. This appears to be at odds with the low numbers apparent in the DEST/DEEWR data. In addition, the numbers reported as casual contracts are also reported as Full Time Equivalent, meaning that each number recorded actually represents a number of individual work hours to equate to a full time work load. This distinction is not clear when related data is reported to the media.

In addition, as indicated in Table 5, a sizable portion of staff on casual contracts fill a function outside of teaching or research. This would include administrative staff assigned to a particular school or Faculty.

Table 4: Arts staff by type of contract

Type of Contract	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Casual	804	1,120	998	920	951	939
Fractional full time	1,385	1,460	1,537	1,608	1,713	1,826
Full time	5,480	5,833	5,826	5,829	6,028	5,772
Grand Total	7,669	8,413	8,361	8,357	8,692	8,537

Source: DEST/DEEWR data 2001 – 2006

Table 5: Arts staff by work contracts against work function 2001 – 2006

Year	Work Contract	Other Function	Research Only	Teaching & Research	Teaching Only	Total
2001	Casual	207	135	34	428	804
	Fractional full time	436	273	611	65	1,385
	Full time	1,184	378	3,800	118	5,480
2002	Casual	281	203	45	591	1,120
	Fractional full time	462	301	632	65	1,460
	Full time	1,311	511	3,887	124	5,833
2003	Casual	266	194	9	529	998
	Fractional full time	482	348	624	83	1,537
	Full time	1,261	558	3,863	144	5,826
2004	Casual	267	174	8	471	920
	Fractional full time	517	356	654	81	1,608
	Full time	1,237	572	3,891	129	5,829
2005	Casual	267	174	13	497	951
	Fractional full time	557	397	682	77	1,713
	Full time	1,336	651	3,947	94	6,028
2006	Casual	269	167	25	478	939
	Fractional full time	549	418	777	82	1,826
	Full time	1,339	619	3,732	82	5,772

Source: DEST/DEEWR data 2001 – 2006

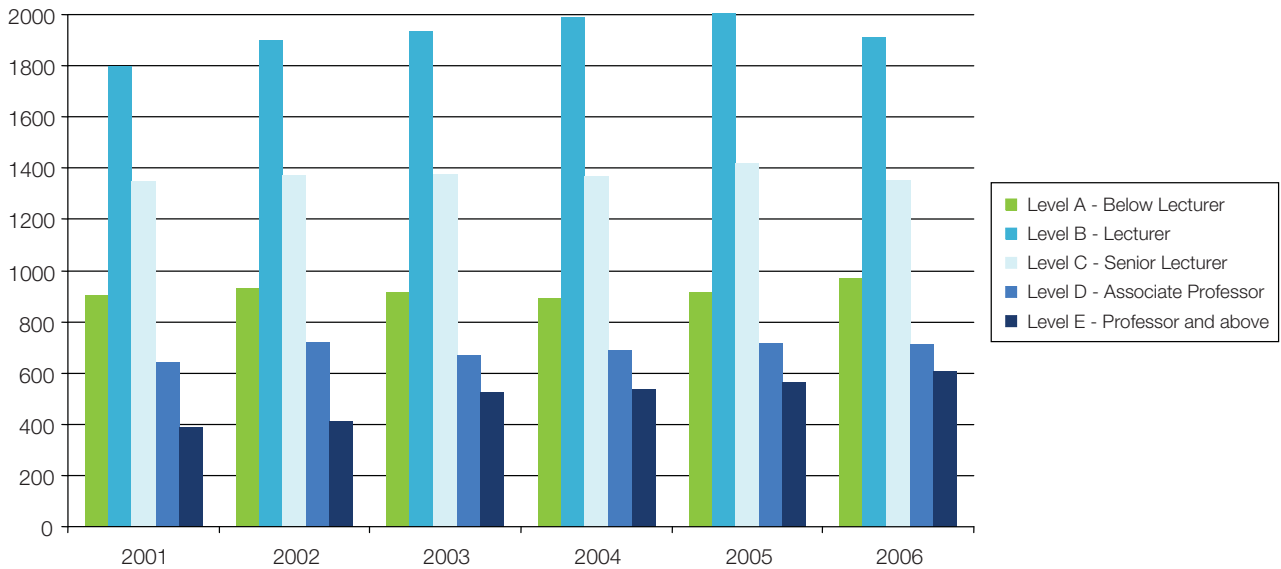


Figure 4: Levels of academics 2001 – 2006

2. Coordination and management trends

Project participants were interviewed about how the programs within the Arts field, and specifically the Bachelor of Arts programs, were coordinated or managed within their institution. The participants were asked to describe how coordination activities and processes were formatted. The information reported in the interview was then verified through a content analysis of the program profiles, and later as an item for discussion during the round table meetings.

Key findings

- 1 There are no uniform course management structure and funding structures. Each institution manages the program in a different way.
- 2 Degree programs within the field of Arts can straddle a number of schools or Faculties. This exposes the program curricula to different funding structures, management styles and curriculum philosophy. Students, however, experience the program directly and often have no concept of the internal structuring and associated issues.
- 3 In some institutions, programs are coordinated by a committee with no single individual holding sole responsibility. Some institutions allocate directors of study or program coordinators. Some of the project interviewees indicated that there is no workload recognition for this task and no continuity across the years. In some institutions the programs have no single body exercising overall responsibility. Some institutions have BA offices that have administrative and consultative functions designed for working with students. Data about how effective these offices are and whether they are utilised by students for the intended purpose is not available. Neither is there data that examines the congruency between students' perceptions about the purpose of these offices and the institutions' intentions and practice.
- 4 A common theme through the interviews was that academics teaching into programs in the field of Arts tend to operate in the silos of their discipline and have little sense of how they contribute to the degree program. Few institutions seem to have a discipline review which examines how the discipline contributes to the program. In many cases, there appears to be no agreed relationship between the disciplines and the program. It is not clear what the discipline's contribution to the program is – is it a way of thinking? Is it a body of coherent knowledge? It is not clear what the effects are of staffing changes on the program as a whole and whether the change in disciplinary expertise has a fundamental change in the program.
- 5 Most Arts programs are funded in ways that reflect perceptions that they are still delivered in a traditional “talk and chalk” model. However, Arts related programs are increasingly dependent on access to convergent communication technologies for teaching and learning, and as for graduate outcomes. Many Arts programs focus on an aspect of communication within a digital economy. The availability of technologies and access to the kinds of equipment that students can expect to use in their workplace are rarely available in universities. This is due to infrastructure costs, but the result is limited credibility and minimal opportunities to engage students in appropriate ways of working.

3. Current studies potentially impacting Arts programs

There are a number of institutional and national research projects that are currently under investigation that have potential implications for Arts programs. Please note that this list was developed in August 2008 before the announcement of further funding rounds.



3.1 Australian Teaching and Learning Council Projects

- Assessment: Media and Communication
- Innovation with quality assurance: Online curriculum development for the University of New England's multi-institutional collaborative programs in German at UNE, James Cook & Newcastle Universities
- Disseminating strategies for incorporating Australian Indigenous content into psychology undergraduate programs throughout Australia
- Peer instruction in the Humanities
- Benchmarking Archaeology Honours Degrees at Australian Universities
- Addressing the ongoing English language growth of international students
- Evaluation of teaching and learning resource delivery modes in Arts
- Making Research Skill Development Explicit in Coursework: Four universities' adaptation of a moodle to numerous disciplines
- Engaging with Learning: Understanding the impacts of practice-based learning exchange
- Investigating the application of IT generated data as an indicator of learning and teaching performance in higher education
- Developing and disseminating TEAM SKILLS capacities using interactive online tools for team formation, learning, assessment and mentoring
- The seamless integration of Web3D technologies with university curricula to engage the changing student cohort
- Strategies and approaches to teaching and learning cross cultures
- Articulating lifelong learning in Tourism: Dialogue between humanities scholars and travel providers
- Quality Assessment: Linking assessment tasks and teaching outcomes in the social sciences
- ReMarks PDF



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