

e-news

on higher education

Informing the Higher Education Sector—March 2001




Department of Education,
Training and Youth Affairs
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e-news 03

navigating
e-news 

publications
& websites 


to exit 


previous issues
of e-news 

 Greenwich
University

 triennium
released

 research
reinvigorated

 staff 2000

 postgraduates'
satisfaction



getting around

The front page of *e-news on higher education* features a set of icons that take you to the articles inside.

These icons are repeated at the bottom of every page, to guide you to other articles.

accessibility

A HTML 'text-only' copy of e-news has been posted onto our website.

www.detya.gov.au/highered/enews

pages

Articles that run onto the next page have a 'forward' icon at the bottom right hand corner of the page. Select this icon to move forward one page. Subsequent pages will have a 'back' icon that you can use to go back.

forward 

websites

e-news on higher education also has links to relevant websites. To access a website, simply click on the URL when the open hand cursor changes to a pointing hand.

back to cover 



Greenwich University



triennium released



research reinvigorated



staff 2000



postgraduates' satisfaction



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back 

back to cover 



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

Greenwich University

review report

The Greenwich University review report was finalised on 7 December 2000 and the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp, made the following statement on the report in the Parliament.

The review committee established by the Commonwealth to examine the academic and financial credentials of Greenwich University has reported to me today. The committee was set up following a request from the Norfolk Island government that Greenwich University be listed on the Australian qualifications framework register, the AQF. The committee has recommended that, one, Greenwich University not be listed on the register of the Australian qualifications framework, because the standard of its courses, quality assurance mechanisms and academic leadership fail to meet the standards expected of Australian universities. Two, while Greenwich University does not currently satisfy the criteria for listing on the AQF register, it is open to the university to reapply once it has

addressed the deficiencies identified in this report. Any such application should be made to MCEETYA, which will refer the matter to the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) to conduct a whole of institution audit.

I will recommend to my State and Territory Ministerial colleagues that they accept these recommendations. Prospective students should understand that we cannot vouch for the quality of universities not listed on the registers of the AQF. The principle of 'caveat emptor' therefore applies, not only to prospective students but also to employers or other tertiary education institutions accepting graduates from a university not listed on the AQF register.

A copy of the report was tabled in the Senate Estimates Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education Legislation Committee on 22 February 2001.

**back to
cover** 



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

triennium released

The 2000 *Higher Education Report for the 2001 to 2003 Triennium*, tabled in Parliament on 6 March 2001, shows that the Government continues to provide improved access to higher education and to enhance the income earning potential of universities.

The Report outlines progress with important new higher education policy initiatives, including the new research funding scheme, the establishment of the new quality assurance framework and additional supplementation for salaries linked to management reforms.

A major focus for the Government in 2000 has been the implementation of its *Knowledge and Innovation* White paper

reforms for higher education research and research training. The reforms are designed to build the critical mass needed to support world competitive research excellence, to increase technology transfer from universities, and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of research training.

To support the policy objectives of *Knowledge and Innovation* around half of the \$2.9 billion package of initiatives, *Backing Australia Ability*, announced by the Prime Minister in January 2001, will be directed to universities.

The report is now available on DETYA's website at:

www.detya.gov.au/highered/he_report/2001_2003

back to
cover ▲



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

an historic opportunity for universities to reinvigorate their research effort

research reinvigorated

In an address to the Group of Eight Policy Forum on 16 February this year, the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp, pointed out the great opportunity offered to universities by the Prime Minister's launch of Backing Australia's Ability: An Innovation Action Plan for the Future.

Backing Australia's Ability is a great vote of confidence in Australia's universities, scientists and other researchers. It has identified a broadly based world quality national research effort as fundamentally important to the future of our society and our nation. I need hardly point out that it offers to your institutions an historic opportunity to reinvigorate your research effort, to build new partnerships in the pursuit and practical implementation of new knowledge, to significantly upgrade your research and research training infrastructure and to substantially expand the role you have in providing skilled graduates for the ultimate benefit of the entire Australian community.

The government hopes that there will be many of Australia's best and brightest graduates who will look with renewed hope and expectation at the development of their careers in Australia, and who will feel deep satisfaction in seeing their ideas developed in Australia for the benefit of their community.

I want to thank those whose input has contributed to the development of this strategy, and to say that we look forward to continuing to work closely with you as Australia continues, in the Prime Minister's words that, long and unending journey ... to build our national capacity for innovation.

However, the Minister did sound a note of caution about the Backing Australia's Ability Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme.

Some have suggested that the uncapped nature of the loans will lead to profiteering, with universities moving rapidly to inflate their postgraduate course fees. I don't share that view. I am confident that universities will not want the adverse publicity from a round of fee inflation, and that competition between universities will ensure that fee levels remain reasonable.

I have asked my Department to monitor postgraduate fees and to report on these in the annual higher education reports. The relevant legislation will provide me with the power if necessary to impose a cap on student borrowings, but I trust that responsible behaviour by institutions will not require this power to be exercised.

www.innovation.gov.au/iap

www.detya.gov.au/ministers/Kempm+s.htm



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**



**back to
cover** ▲

staff 2000

selected higher education statistics

Staff numbers at Australian universities continue to grow according to a report soon to be released by the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp.

The report, *Staff 2000: Selected Higher Education Statistics*, shows that the total staff full-time equivalence (FTE) in 2000 was 82,232. This is 1.7 per cent higher than in 1999 and is the second highest FTE figure for the sector for the period 1991 to 2000, being only slightly lower than the peak of 82,888 FTE recorded in 1996.

While almost 30 per cent of this increase is due to an increase in full-time staff, with three-quarters of all staff employed in full-time positions in 2000, there has also been a significant increase in the number of casual staff, who now account for 15 per cent of all university FTEs.

This increase in casual staff is clearly important as it gives universities greater flexibility. Many of the casuals employed by universities are also currently working in industry which helps to ensure that university teaching remains relevant to the labour market.

The year 2000 saw a continuing trend towards a more even gender balance in all staff categories. Males continue to

account for the majority of staff in most categories (full-time; academic; lecturer, senior lecturer and above senior lecturer), but there have been substantial increases in the FTE for female staff in each of these categories.

Females account for most fractional full-time and non-academic staff, but in these categories there have been increases in the percentage of male staff. The largest percentage increase in female employment was at the most senior level of 'above senior lecturer' where, compared to 1999, there was an increase of 8.4 per cent in the number of full-time equivalent positions occupied by women.

Staff 2000: Selected Higher Education Statistics contains summary statistics about staff at Australian higher education institutions - including information about staff numbers, gender, employment status, and State based data, gained from the 2000 and 1999 statistics collected by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Previous editions of this report are available:

www.detya.gov.au/highered/statpubs.htm.

**back to
cover** ▲



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

postgraduates' satisfaction

1999 Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire - An ELP Project

The project's objective was to conduct the first national level survey measuring postgraduates' satisfaction with their research experience. The project was conducted by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia, and the Australian Council for Educational Research was commissioned to write the report presenting the findings of the survey.

A 28 item instrument, developed from earlier trial surveys, was sent to all research graduates completing their degree during the 1998-99 financial year. Thirty five Australian institutions and one New Zealand institution participated in the survey. In all, there were over 2,200 responses to the survey giving a response rate of 49 per cent. The characteristics of respondents broadly matched those of the population being surveyed indicating the results gathered

from the survey are likely to be applicable to the wider research graduate population.

The survey confirmed, through a range of testing procedures, that key dimensions of postgraduate research experience include supervision, intellectual climate, skills development, infrastructure, thesis examination and clarity of goals. The correlations between sub-scales were relatively low suggesting the sub-scales are measuring different constructs of research experience.

The findings of the report serve national accountability requirements concerning the quality of postgraduate research training. For example, the results from the 1999 national survey show that postgraduate research students are broadly satisfied with the quality of their training. In relation to the

forward 

back to
cover 



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



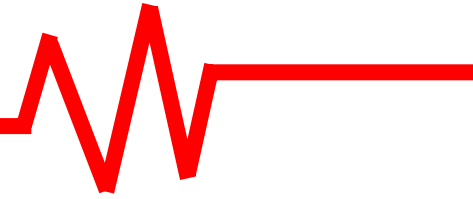
staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

postgraduates' satisfaction

(continued)



overall satisfaction item, 83 per cent of graduates stated they were satisfied with their training.

Nevertheless, the report highlights a possible need by institutions to apply closer scrutiny to some aspects of postgraduate research training to ensure they are meeting the needs of students. While research graduates demonstrated relatively high levels of satisfaction with regard to skills (90 per cent) and goals (88 per cent), they were less satisfied with the standard of supervision (69 per cent), infrastructure (67 per cent) and intellectual climate (55 per cent).

The results confirm findings from the earlier trial surveys that the PREQ instrument has the capacity to discriminate between the experiences of different groups in the research graduate population. For example, males, older, overseas, non-English speaking, full-time and PhD graduates tend to report that they are more satisfied with various aspects of their research

experience than are other relevant groups for comparison purposes.

Similarly, the PREQ has the capacity to discriminate by field of study since arts graduates report relatively lower levels of satisfaction in the areas of intellectual climate and infrastructure than do science based graduates.

There does appear to be some institutional variation, particularly in the area of intellectual climate. The report suggests that the discrepancy between best practice and institutional practices in some areas may warrant further investigation to provide a better understanding of the reasons for institutional differences.

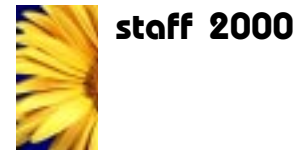
The report *1999, Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire* is due for release in April 2001.

For background on the PREQ see:

www.detya.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip99-10/99_10execsum.htm

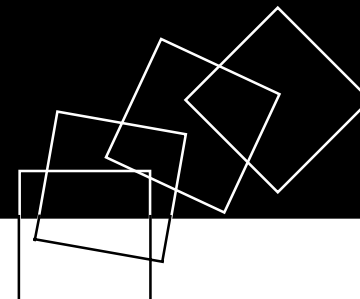
back 

back to cover 



publications

and websites



- recent releases
- due out soon
- favourites
- to grab a copy
- websites, links & updates
- copyright & contact

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ECU Service 2000: A client-centred transformation of corporate services (EIP 00/16)

This paper describes the process and final form of restructure to ensure the expectations and needs of students were met through the provision of high quality services, in which eight divisions with traditional and compartmentalised functions were transformed into four client-focused service centres. The

implementation phase of the restructure is described, including the important principles and processes used to manage change. The final section of the paper has the advantage of hindsight, and examines ECU's relative success, and some of the pitfalls, in moving to the new philosophical approach of a client-centred focus.

www.detya.gov.au/highered/eippubs/eip00_16/default.htm

forward 

back to cover 



Greenwich University



triennium released



research reinvigorated



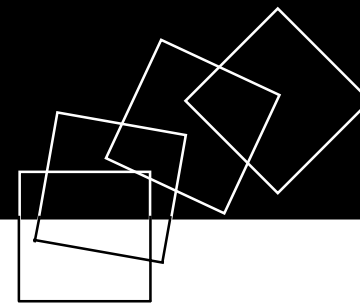
staff 2000



postgraduates' satisfaction

publications

and websites (continued)



due out soon

A Study to Develop a Costing Methodology for Library and Information Technology Activities for the Australian Higher Education Sector

This report highlights in its discussion and recommendations, that the framework and systems for studying costs through such methodologies as ABC should continuously be challenged to ensure relevance in the data and activities, and that the overall focus is informed as strategies change to meet competitive pressures and opportunities.

It is reported that ABC can assist managers and staff to better understand their actions and decisions by focusing attention on those activities that help them achieve their goals, through a structured and methodical process.

It is anticipated that *A Study to Develop a Costing Methodology for Library and Information Technology Activities for the Australian Higher Education Sector* will be released on the Internet within the next week.

favourites

- *Enabling the Virtuous Cycle: Identifying and removing barriers to entrepreneurial activity by health and medical researchers in the higher education sector*

(Ron Johnston et al)

www.detya.gov.au/highered/eippubs/eip00_14

- *e-news on higher education*

www.detya.gov.au/highered/enews

- *Backing Australia's Ability*

www.innovation.gov.au/iap

- *Higher Education Report for the 2001 to 2003 Triennium*

www.detya.gov.au/highered/he_report/2001_2003/

forward ►

back ◀

back to cover ▲



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



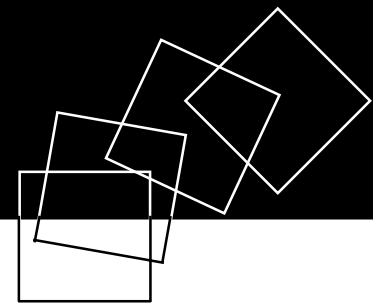
staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

publications

and websites (continued)



websites, links & updates

websites

Main page for DETYA's Higher Education Division
www.detya.gov.au/highered

HECS—higher Education Contribution Scheme
www.hecs.gov.au

Which Course? Which University?
www.detya.gov.au/tenfields

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
www.detya.gov.au/noosr

links

Higher Education Links can help you access ...

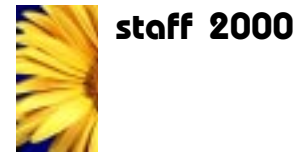
- Australian State and Territory Education Departments
- Australian Education Organisations
- Australian Universities
- Australian Universities - Admissions Centres
- Careers Information
- MCEETYA
- Overseas Universities and Organisations
- Research Organisations

forward ►

back ◀

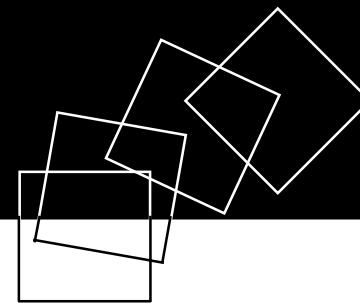
back to cover ▲

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publications

and websites (continued)



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websites, links & updates (continued)

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what it does

Once registered, subscribers will be sent a weekly email (usually on Monday evenings) with a brief description of any changes and the address for such pages.

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www.detya.gov.au/highered/repts.htm

hard copies

Copies of most of our publications can be purchased from AusInfo's Government Information Bookshops. Locations and contact details for the AusInfo bookshops are available at:

www.dofa.gov.au/infoaccess/infoaccess/ia_infoshops.htm

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forward ►

back ◀

back to cover ▲



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



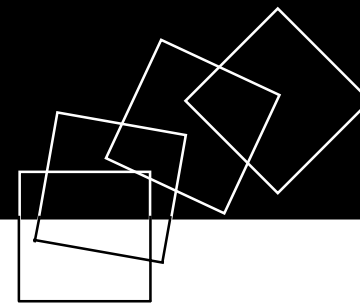
staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

publications

and websites (continued)



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forward 

back 

back to
cover 



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



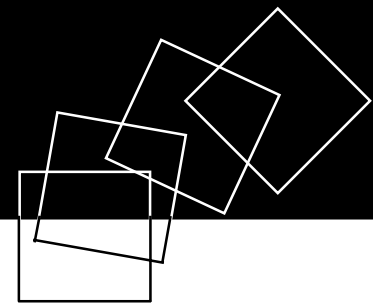
staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**

publications

and **websites** (continued)



previous issues of
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- ▶ background
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back to
cover ▲



**Greenwich
University**



**triennium
released**



**research
reinvigorated**



staff 2000



**postgraduates'
satisfaction**