

Discipline Profile – Women’s Studies Revised March 2007

The Institute for Women’s Studies functions as a coordinating centre for research, teaching and community work in gender, feminist and women’s studies throughout the university. It offers interdisciplinary and research-led teaching programs at an undergraduate level. It also offers postgraduate research student supervision.

As a discipline, Women’s Studies can be imagined as a coherent field of study, as evidenced by meetings of international associations, active listserver, historical texts outlining the development of the discipline and debates in the field regarding, for example, the precise intersection between gender studies and women’s studies. Women’s Studies can also be imagined as an intellectual ‘turning platform’ – a place from which scholars can view and question their own disciplines, and exchange positions and information with scholars from other disciplines involved in similar exercises. Because of this interdisciplinarity, scholars can come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds: the social sciences, the humanities, and less frequently, the ‘hard sciences’, particularly health sciences. Long-standing links with sociology, history, anthropology, cultural studies and literary studies are worth noting. Recent developments in this field which move from a focus on women to a questioning of the category of gender itself has opened the field to studies on masculinity, as well as the important intersections of gender with sexuality and with race.

Professional associations in Australia include the Association for Women’s Studies in Australia (AWSA). It is worth noting, however, that it would not be entirely uncommon for a scholar to be more active in their own disciplinary association, in which they would likely advocate for research and teaching in the discipline to focus on gender and women, than to participate actively in AWSA. Moreover, successful research would be viewed as actively fostered by involvement in community (whether local, national or international) projects.

Given this heterogeneity, it is unlikely that one single path through to promotion could be identified for any given level. Adjudicating applications for promotion would have to be based on a comparison of the individual’s unique case with similar cases in Australia or internationally. While positive contributions in one area (teaching, research, administration or community service) might be emphasised in an applicant’s portfolio, a balance between the four would be most desirable.

Level and type of qualifications in the discipline currently expected

Appointees to Women’s Studies at Macquarie University at all levels must be research active and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to scholarly research and publication.

Women’s Studies adopts the definition of research active contained in the Macquarie University Research Strategic Plan 2006-2008 (Appendix 1):

- (a) Maintaining a minimum average rate of one authored or co-authored publication (defined as publications under the DEST categories A1, B1, C1, E1 and selected quality J1 and H1) per year over the past 6 years **or** one authored research monograph (A1) and three other DEST publications from the above categories over the past 6 years (requirements for Early Career Researchers are reduced pro-rata to take account of shorter appointment periods); **and**
- (b) Demonstrated capacity to translate research outcomes into teaching and learning in the University by way of measures approved by the Dean of Division including but not restricted to:
 - Higher Degree Research student supervision leading to completion
 - other participation in research training, including coursework and Honours programs with research training or preparation components
 - satisfactory progression towards completion of a Research Higher Degree
 - professional education and training; or
 - community service and enterprise

A PhD would be considered the norm among scholars in Women’s Studies and Gender Studies. It would be regarded as essential for promotion or appointment to the level of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor. In some rare instances, a visible history of successful book publication might be accepted in lieu of a PhD.

Qualification for the **Associate Lecturer** position would normally include a PhD, but an exceptional candidate awaiting conferral of the doctorate might be considered. A substantial publication list or extensive extra-muros professional experience or other substantial research contributions would compensate for a lack of a higher degree.

The interdisciplinary nature of Women’s Studies means that the formal academic qualifications of its staff are sometimes in another discipline, such as sociology, history, politics or philosophy. This reflects the discipline’s character as a synthesising science as well as a complex set of exchanges between disciplines within the broader universe of arts, humanities and social science.

TEACHING

Women’s Studies has an historical involvement with innovative pedagogy, and is more likely to integrate Freirian principles of pedagogy in its course design. The incorporation of students’ experiences into units as part of their subject matter is specific to teaching Women’s Studies. Issues raised in Women’s Studies courses can be quite challenging for students, and teachers at all levels must be able to cope adequately with this in their teaching, by showing flexibility and attentiveness to student needs. A commitment to small-group teaching naturally arises from this disciplinary history. Also important, given the department’s interdisciplinary profile, is a familiarity with a broad range of literature

and methodologies. Evidence of satisfactory levels in teaching skills and performance in Women's Studies would include student and peer assessment and the acquisition of formal teaching skills.

Since establishing the Institute for Women's Studies and appointing its first director, enrolments in postgraduate degrees have risen markedly. It is expected that there will be increasing need for postgraduate supervision.

It would be expected that postgraduate thesis supervisors would:

- Assist in the formulation of the research project by helping candidates develop (a) viable topic(s).
- Assist in planning the research.
- Discuss the overall structure and argument of the thesis with the candidate and offer general advice.
- Develop and maintain an effective working relationship with the candidate.
- Make themselves available for consultation by the candidate at regular (2-4 weeks) intervals.
- Ensure that some other suitable member of staff will act as supervisor where they plan to go on leave during the student's candidature.

A standard teaching load would be 8-10 contact hours, which would differ according to level in the nature of contact (rather than contact time). Different workload patterns (Teaching Weighted Pattern, Teaching and Research Pattern, Research Weighted Pattern or Administration Weighted Pattern) will apply as appropriate.

An **Associate Lecturer** would be expected to contribute to existing units, and primarily at the undergraduate level, by conducting tutorials, delivering seminars, and/or contributing lectures. An Associate Lecturer could convene and teach a 200 or 300 level course of modest size or a unit in the postgraduate coursework degree. Appropriate consultation with students, and marking associated with units taught would be standard. An Associate Lecturer might occasionally supervise an Honours student, or a student writing a postgraduate coursework thesis.

Lecturers would co-ordinate undergraduate units, including the production of study guides, the organisation of resources, the updating of content, and the administration of the unit. It would be expected that a Lecturer would initiate and develop new unit material. A Lecturer would participate in the development of new courses in collaboration with senior staff. It would be expected that a lecturer would be able to supervise one or two Honours and postgraduate research students.

In addition to the competence required at lower levels, **Senior Lecturers** would be expected to show evidence of leadership, innovation in design, and awareness of recent developments in knowledge in contributing to teaching. A Senior Lecturer would supervise a few hours of post-graduate research students. A Senior Lecturer might also be responsible for an area of study, or for convening Honours or shepherding a postgraduate

research program. Coordinating a group of staff to formulate overall teaching policy might also fall within the Senior Lecturer’s brief.

In addition to the requirements of the Senior Lecturer profile, an **Associate Professor** would usually be expected to be able demonstrate higher level abilities, which would be evidenced for example, in the development of whole programs of study, the successful supervision of substantial numbers of hours and post-graduate students, or the invitation to teach at other prestigious institutions. An Associate Professor would be expected to oversee the development of whole programs of study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, review the effectiveness of the discipline’s program from time to time, and plan for the long term teaching future.

Professional Development

All staff are expected to be able to demonstrate commitment to excellence in teaching. Regular evaluations of units via TEDs surveys and reflective self-reporting are part of the teaching and learning culture upheld by the Institute for Women’s Studies. Staff are actively encouraged to engage in Professional Development activities related to teaching and learning, and to pursue teaching awards in recognition of superior performance.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Because Women’s Studies is interdisciplinary, it would be prohibitively long to indicate every refereed journal that Women’s Studies scholar might target for their publications. Refereed journals in Women’s and Gender Studies, as well as journals which are discipline specific, or which combine two disciplinary approaches are all appropriate outlets for research. The following list is indicative.

Quality ranking: A regularly updated list of Women’s Studies Tier One preferred journals is available from the Macquarie University Institute for Women’s Studies. However, the interdisciplinary character of work in Women’s Studies and the range of genres it transverses suggest that such ranking of journals is not always a reliable guide to the quality of research. A variety of means (including peer and media comment and the use of research and publications in the teaching programs at other universities, as well as invitations to offer papers) might need to be employed to assess the quality and impact of research accurately.

<p><i>Journal of gender studies</i> <i>Gender, place and culture</i> <i>Gender & society</i> <i>Hypatia</i> <i>Differences</i> <i>Feminist forum</i> <i>Women’s studies international forum</i> <i>Feminist issues</i> <i>Feminist review</i> <i>Heresies</i> <i>Feminist studies</i></p>	<p>Ampersand journals</p> <p><i>Gender and Education</i></p> <p>Related journals <i>Social Identities: journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture</i> <i>Diacritics</i> <i>Critical Inquiry</i></p> <p><i>American Ethnologist</i></p>
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An **Associate Lecturer** would be expected to be developing publications from their doctoral thesis, and to have started considering their next three-year program of research and writing, whether based on their doctoral research or a new area. A good profile for an early career researcher in this category would include the delivery of one conference paper and one publication in a year.

A **Lecturer** would usually be expected to be developing an individual program of research and writing, as evidenced in the publication of articles in refereed journals, and/or the delivery of conference papers. Publication in other arenas (e.g. non-academic

journals, community publications, internet, etc) might also be appropriate (but would generally be in addition to scholarly publication). A good profile would be for appointees to qualify for Research Active status as per Macquarie University guidelines, with the emphasis on quality as much as quantity.

A **Senior Lecturer** would usually be expected have a number of publications in refereed journals, although there may be some cases where original work in the field takes a form other than scholarly publication, for example, creative writing, community journalism, government report production. A Senior Lecturer's research would go beyond established research paradigms (e.g. open up new problems, reconfigure existing problems or concepts, explore new methods, and so on.) It would be expected that a Senior Lecturer would have published a book: either a monograph with a good national press, or perhaps a jointly authored book with an international press (like Routledge, Macmillan, Cassells, Cambridge UP or Oxford UP). A basic level of production would include at least one state or national conference paper and a substantial journal article or book chapters per year (so as to qualify for Research Active status as per Macquarie University guidelines), within the framework of developing book projects. Again, the emphasis here is on quality as much as quantity.

For an **Associate Professor**, the basis of a claim for promotion should be evidence of real standing and authority in an academic field. This standing and authority should be manifested by a substantial number of publications in high quality, refereed journals, published (depending on the field) in Australia and overseas, as well as at least one substantial monograph in a press of recognised standing. Other things which could also be taken into account might include: success in both gaining and in producing substantial publications from ARC grants, the initiation and coordination of group research projects, participation in and organisation of conferences. Applied and other non-traditional research, and creative work, which have gained significant critical recognition, could also be taken into account. One book or monograph every three to five years would be a standard level of production.

Research grants and funding

Where appropriate, staff are expected to seek competitive research grants and funds for their research. However, it is worth noting that a considerable proportion of the discipline's research output requires little more than the staff member's time, dedication and skills. Thus, research grant activity needs to be weighed in relation to the quality and nature of publication output. Internationally recognised scholarship is valued for how it contributes to research-led teaching, and more broadly to the academic standing and quality of the discipline.

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

All staff are expected to contribute to the administration of the discipline. Staff at level C or above are expected to demonstrate from time to time academic and intellectual

leadership as indicated in, for example, the organisation of a special seminar series or the facilitation of visits to the Institute by distinguished scholars in the discipline.

Women's Studies is a field which highly values its connections with the community. Examples of professional and of community service might include: conference planning and organisation; involvement in the production and editing of journals, newspaper and journal reviewing of scholarly or creative work; service to educational groups associated with Women's Studies teaching in the community at large; the offering of expert opinion in the media; the organisation of community discussion; service on the boards of political organisations, non-profit organisations, or companies; and contribution to community development or women's services.

An **Associate Lecturer** would be expected to convene modest size courses and/or to assist in the convening of large enrolment 100-level units. He or she would also be expected to contribute to some administrative activities such as chairing conference sessions, library liaison, or timetabling.

A **Lecturer** would usually be expected to: coordinate undergraduate units; contribute to the planning and organisational work of the Institute and of the Division, for example, by serving on working parties on particular issues or on regular committees of the Institute and of the Division; and participate in academic advising.

Lecturers would usually be expected to have begun to participate in the activities of the profession outside the university. Examples of this might include: attendance at conferences, extra-mural teaching, active membership of scholarly associations, committee work related to their field, lecturing to HSC students and to secondary school teachers.

In addition to the requirements for a lecturer, a **Senior Lecturer** might be expected to convene committees of the Institute and the Division and to have begun to participate in administrative work at the University level. A Senior Lecturer might be expected to assume a broader, more active role in the committee life of the Institute, and the Division. He or she would likely assume responsibilities of departmental leadership, coordinator of postgraduate studies or research programs, or direct undergraduate studies. A Senior Lecturer would have begun to show executive and leadership roles in administration at the level of policy formulation.

An **Associate Professor** would be expected to demonstrate the abilities and skills appropriate to the leadership of the Institute or a whole section of it, and to have participated at a significant level in university committees as well as Divisional and Institute ones. It may also be expected of an applicant for promotion that he or she should have demonstrated concern for the careers of post-graduates and other staff through mentoring relationships. Evidence of professional development in management may also be an advantage, as would be the ability to assume senior administrative roles, such as Deputy Head of Division.

