



The unique ASSET survey: what it tells us about academic work and life

Amanda Aldercotte, PhD
Research Manager

Background

- First Athena Survey of Science, Engineering and Technology (ASSET) in 2003
- Multiple iterations 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2010
- Talented women working in STEMM can become invisible
- Survey designed to cover six aspects of academic working life

ASSET 2016 Method

- 43 institutions across the UK
- N = 4869 respondents (2374 women)
- Weighted sample by gender, ethnicity and academic field
- Variety of statistical approaches (eg ANOVAs, logistic regression)

Overarching finding

- Similar results as those from 2003:

From recruitment to promotion, female STEMM academics were more likely to perceive, experience or be exposed to some form of disadvantage compared with their male colleagues

Key results

- Gender differences clustered around three themes:
 - Teaching and administrative duties
 - Feeling supported and valued
 - Caring responsibilities
- Each area of working life has own set of recommendations for improvement

Teaching and administration

- Women spend more time on teaching, but this is not as valued by their department as research

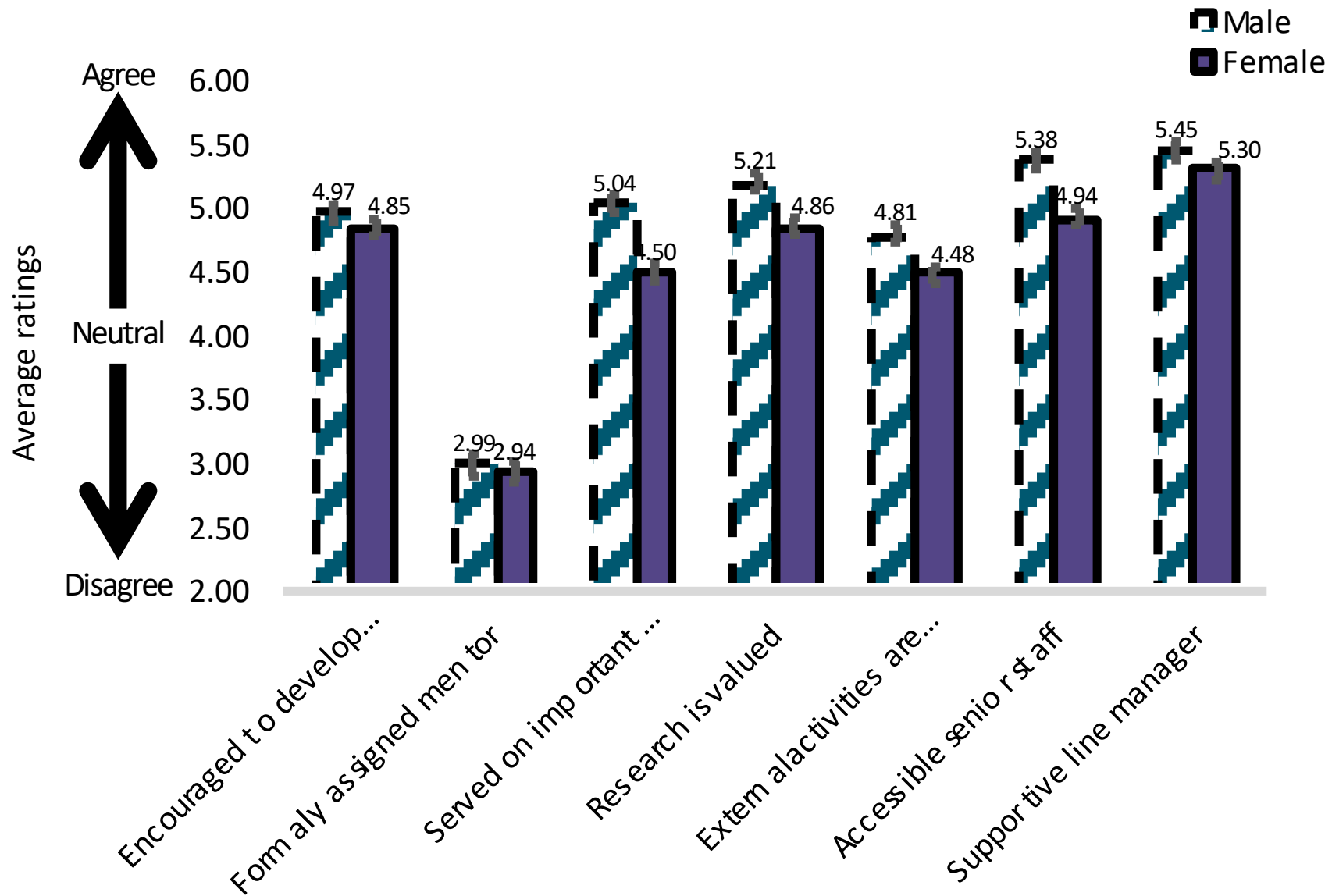
‘Allocation of teaching activities is disproportionately towards women carrying the burden, but this is [an] advantage for men.’

Female, planetary and space science

Recommendations

- ✓ Establish workload allocation models that balance teaching and administrative duties
- ✓ Make certain that promotion criteria include a specific focus on the quality of an applicant's work as well as their performance in other academic areas (eg teaching, pastoral and administrative duties)

Feeling supported and valued



Feeling supported and valued

- 59.7% of male respondents were encouraged or invited to apply for promotion, compared with 48.8% of female respondents
- 7.4% of female academics reported a desire to stay in STEMM but outside of higher education, compared with 5.4% of male academics

Recommendations

- ✓ Reduce variability in amount and type of support provided by line managers (eg line manager training, annual review criteria includes career development plan)
- ✓ Develop supportive and career progressing networks, and ensure all staff have opportunities to engage with senior departmental staff and important departmental committees
- ✓ Assign mentors or develop mentoring programmes for all staff

Caring responsibilities

- Negative impact of having a family remarked upon by both genders

‘I think once women have children, they have far less flexibility with their time (compared to men). For instance, meetings, events and conferences outside of the workplace have to be arranged with childcare in mind.’

Female, social engineering

- Disadvantages specific to women who had taken parental leave

Recommendations

- ☒ Ensure academic contracts accommodate flexible working policies
- ☒ Have options like keeping-in-touch days and flexible hours to help staff return from parental leave
- ☒ Encourage uptake of paternity and shared parental leave by male staff

Horizon 2020 ACT project

- Adapting the ASSET 2016 survey to different contexts and translating into 4 languages
- Providing EU institutions with a modular self-assessment tool to establish baselines and measure progress

Useful Publications & References

Equality Challenge Unit (2017). ASSET 2016: biosciences and medicine, engineering and physical sciences.

Equality Challenge Unit (2017). Equality in higher education: staff statistical report 2017.

Equality Challenge Unit (2017). ASSET 2016: experiences surrounding gender equality in STEM academia and the intersections with ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and age.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2017). Call for evidence for identifying sector-leading innovative practice in advancing equality and diversity.

Contact details

Amanda Aldercotte

Research Manager, Advance HE

amanda.aldercotte@advance-he.ac.uk @ECUAManda



For more information
www.advance-he.ac.uk
🐦 @AdvanceHE



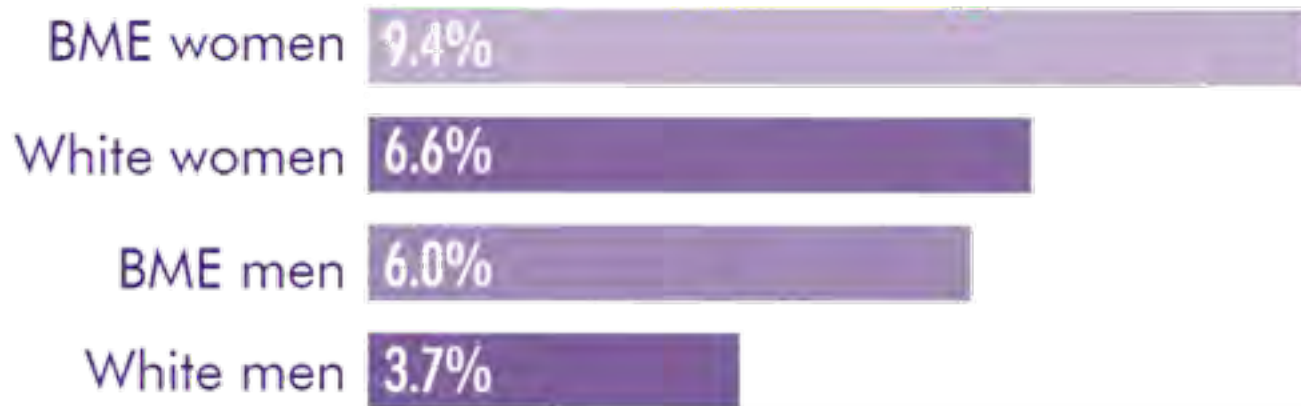
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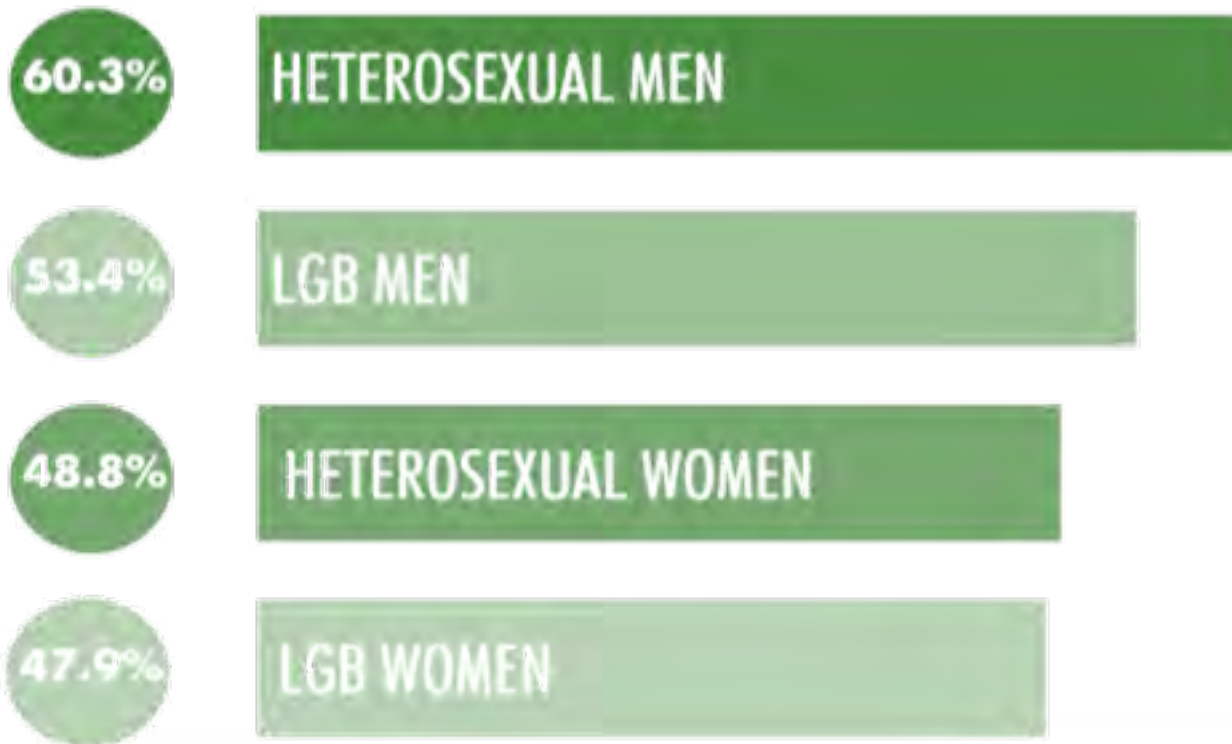
BME women are exposed to compounded disadvantage

BME WOMEN WERE MOST LIKELY TO REPORT THAT AN OBSTRUCTIVE OR UNHELPFUL LINE MANAGER HAD BLOCKED ACCESS TO TRAINING



Advantages of being a man are not unconditional

HETEROSEXUAL MEN WERE THE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN INVITED OR ENCOURAGED TO APPLY FOR PROMOTION



Disability is uniformly associated with disadvantage

THE PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO DISCLOSED AS DISABLED THAT DID NOT WANT TO CONTINUE A CAREER IN STEMM WAS TWICE AS LARGE AS THE PROPORTION WHO HAD NOT DISCLOSED AS DISABLED



Gender gaps are age-dependent and accrue across academic career

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRAINING BARRIERS EXPERIENCED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS DECREASED WITH AGE FOR MEN BUT NOT WOMEN

