



Australasian Association of Philosophy

AAP Statement on Gender (2014)

Philosophy has a poor track record with regard to gender balance, both in Australasia and internationally. Compared to other Humanities disciplines, Philosophy has a significantly smaller proportion of women in continuing positions (including, in particular, senior continuing positions). For instance in Australia in 2009, females comprised only 28% of full-time continuing Philosophy staff, and the largest group of female staff (~15) were employed at the lecturer B (Lecturer) level, while the largest group of male staff (~40) were employed at the lecturer D/E (Associate Professor/Professor) level (*Bishop et al, in Hutchison and Jenkins (eds.) 2013, pp. 232-3*). Moreover, compared to other disciplines, Philosophy has significantly higher attrition rates for women at all levels: end of first year; end of bachelor's degree; end of Honours year; end of higher degree by research; end of post-doctoral fellowship; and end of non-continuing position.

The AAP is concerned about this data, and is compiling a series of Notes designed to address different factors that may explain the drop off in women's participation at all levels of the profession.

AAP Note on Predatory Sexual Behaviour (2014)

One factor has been brought to particular prominence in the past twelve months by a series of distressing allegations in the UK and the US concerning predatory sexual behaviour by more senior, higher status male philosophers towards more junior, lower status female philosophers – allegations which are currently in various stages of investigation. Such behaviour can cause its targets to seriously doubt their own philosophical abilities and, in many cases, destroy their love of philosophy. The blog *What It Is Like to be a Woman in Philosophy* is playing a valuable role in raising awareness of how such behaviours can discourage women from pursuing our discipline. Although its evidence is anecdotal and submitted anonymously, the number and the consistency of the stories accumulating there invites serious reflection.

The AAP is extremely concerned about these matters and urges everyone engaged in philosophy in Australasia to educate themselves about the issues involved. It urges all Australasian philosophers not to engage in, or support, behaviour targeted at more junior or lower status philosophers that is (or may be perceived to be) sexually predatory. It particularly urges senior male philosophers to challenge any colleagues they feel might be engaged in predatory sexual behaviour, to offer support to any junior philosophers they perceive might be on the receiving end of such behaviour (with tact and sensitivity to their needs and wishes), and to show leadership in their own sphere of influence in creating a philosophical environment that is equally welcoming to any gender.

FURTHER RESOURCES:

- What It Is Like to be a Woman in Philosophy blog: <http://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com>
- APA Statement on Sexual Harassment: <http://www.apaonline.org/?harassment>
- Active Bystanders: Looking out for One Another (developed by MIT): <http://web.mit.edu/bystanders/index.html>
- British Philosophical Association/Society for Women in Philosophy Good Practice Scheme: <http://bpa.ac.uk/resources/women-in-philosophy/good-practice>
- Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins (ed.s), *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)