



## Women researchers more likely to be bullied, less likely to report it

Vitae culture report finds women are less familiar with their institution's reporting process

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Female researchers are more likely than men to have felt bullied or harassed at work, but they feel less comfortable reporting those incidents to their institution, according to a survey.

The Vitae Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research survey found that 22 per cent of female research staff have felt bullied or harassed at work, compared with 13 per cent of their male peers. Among other academic staff, the proportions were 26 and 20 per cent respectively.

Despite this, the survey also found that just 47 per cent of female research staff were familiar with their institution's reporting process, compared with 61 per cent of males. Only 51 per cent of women would feel comfortable reporting bullying and harassment incidents compared with 72 per cent of men.

Women were also less likely than men to have a regular former career development review with their manager (36 per cent versus 42 per cent), and also less likely to find those meetings useful (72 per cent versus 85 per cent).

Janet Metcalfe, head of Vitae, said: "By identifying the successes and, importantly, the challenges of the researcher environment—especially during the current pandemic—we can collectively work towards creating improved support around culture, employment and the professional development of researchers so that research can continue to flourish and thrive."

Elsewhere, the survey found that less than a third of research staff believe promotion and progression processes are fair at their institution. Almost half of research managers (49 per cent), meanwhile, said they were not confident dealing with poor performance by their staff.

More than 3,000 people from 22 UK institutions took part in the survey.

The survey comes as the government has put together an expert taskforce to help advise on its upcoming R&D People and Culture strategy to improve the way academia operates.

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- By Chris Parr
  
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