

GENDER SALARY PATTERNS AT JCU

May 2026

Academic and Professional Staff at JCU

JCU applies a consistent base salary framework for academic and professional staff. Observed differences in average and median salaries by gender are therefore driven by individual salary loadings and gender representation across seniority levels, not by underlying pay scales.

Academic Staff

Among academic staff, the average salary for men is \$165,298 (up 7.4% from 2025), compared with \$148,177 for women (up 6.8% from 2025) — a difference of \$17,121. These figures continue to be shaped by both discretionary loadings and the structural overrepresentation of men at senior academic levels.

An expanded analysis reveals deeper differences in loading patterns: 11 male academic staff received loadings (4% of male academics) a reduction on 2025 when 19 male academics (6.85%) received loadings, with an average loading percentage of 14.9% (slightly up from 2025's 14.7%), while 7 female academic staff received loadings (1.9% of female academics) a reduction on 2025 when 11 female staff or 2.85% received loadings), with an average of 12.1% (up from 2025's 8.4%). This shows that men are not only given access to loadings more frequently, but also at higher rates, and that this worsened over the past 12 months

However, loadings alone do not fully account for the observed disparity. A key structural factor is the distribution of staff by academic level. At Level E (Professor), there are more than twice as many men (54) as women (24). In 2025 there was 52 men and 27 women, so the addition of 2 male professors overall, and the loss of 3 female professors overall has increased the difference between male and female representation at professorial level by 20% in the past 12 months. These senior levels command the highest base salaries and are also the most likely to attract loadings. This imbalance in representation is a major driver of the average salary gap, compounding the effects of discretionary payments.

- Average remuneration pay gap for academic staff: 12% (up from 9.9% in 2025)
- Median remuneration pay gap for academic staff: 11% (up from 4.3% in 2025)

Professional Staff

Among professional staff, average salaries for men are also higher, \$108,952 (up 7.3% from 2025) compared with \$101,271 for women (up 6.5% from 2025, with women predominantly represented at HEWL 6 and below.

In this group, 20 women received loadings (3.4% of female professional staff), (down from 4% /24 women in 2025) with an average percentage of 12% (up from 7.4% in 2025). Seventeen men received loadings (7.03% of male professional staff) – this was 19 men/7.03% in 2025, averaging 12.3% (the same rate as 2025). Loadings are similar for men and women (12% women, 12.3% men), but men are more likely to receive a loading, even while more professional women than professional men receive them in total.

Representation also plays a critical role here. Women outnumber men across most higher-level HEWL classifications at almost 2:1 (Levels 8–10).

- Average remuneration pay gap for professional staff: 7.6% (up from 6.4% in 2025)
- Median remuneration pay gap for professional staff: 8% (up from -3.5% in 2025)

Conclusion

This updated analysis confirms that salary differences at JCU are not driven by base pay, but by access to and value of loadings, and structural differences in representation. Among academic staff, higher-value loadings and more men at senior levels reinforce the gender pay gap. Among professional staff, broader representation and access to loadings among women result in more balanced outcomes.

To support fairness and inclusion, JCU should:

- Maintain visibility over loading allocations.
- Support pathways for gender-balanced promotion to senior roles.
- Support retention of women in senior academic roles.

Loading Percentages by Gender and Staff Type

Staff Type	Gender	2025 Staff who receive a loading, and as a percentage	2026 Staff who receive a loading and as a percentage	2025 Average Loading	2026 Average Loading
Academic	Female	11 (2.85%)	7 (1.9%)	8.4%	12.1%
Academic	Male	19 (6.85%)	11 (4%)	14.7%	17%
Professional	Female	24 (4.01%)	20 (3.4%)	8.4%	12%
Professional	Male	19 (7.03%)	17 (7.03%)	12.3%	12.3%

Appendix A: Academic Staff Salary Table

Level and Step	Female	n	Male	n
AC-A				
10	\$80,372	1		
20	\$84,665	2		
30	\$88,996	1		
40	\$93,327	2		
50	\$96,843	1		
60	\$100,361	3	\$100,361	2
70	\$103,880	3	\$103,880	1
80	\$107,396	6	\$107,396	4
AC-B				
10	\$112,811	10	\$112,811	5
20	\$116,874	15	\$116,874	4
30	\$120,928	21	\$120,928	10
40	\$124,991	21	\$124,991	6
50	\$129,545	26	\$129,049	3
60	\$133,541	57	\$133,800	29
AC-C				
10	\$137,167	18	\$137,167	16
20	\$141,230	16	\$141,230	14
30	\$145,286	16	\$145,286	12
40	\$149,347	19	\$149,347	7
50	\$153,400	18	\$154,474	10
60	\$158,614	47	\$158,295	38
AC-D				
10	\$164,232	12	\$164,232	13
20	\$169,640	9	\$171,049	4
30	\$175,055	7	\$175,055	11
40	\$181,211	34	\$182,804	31
AC-E				
10	\$212,835	24	\$224,366	55
		389		275

Salary = gross annualised salary and loadings

Appendix B: Professional Staff Salary Table

Level and Step	Female	n	Male	n
HEWL02				
30	\$63,037	1		
HEWL03				
10			\$66,061	1
20			\$66,061	1
30			\$68,473	2
40			\$71,189	6
HEWL04				
10	\$72,702	6		
20	\$74,213	10	\$74,213	3
30	\$75,722	1	\$75,722	1
40	\$77,230	23	\$77,230	6
HEWL05				
10	\$78,741	35	\$78,741	4
20	\$82,362	28	\$82,362	5
30	\$85,992	28	\$85,992	6
40	\$89,545	107	\$89,311	12
HEWL06				
10	\$90,822	18	\$90,822	7
20	\$93,237	23	\$93,237	8
30	\$95,653	20	\$95,653	14
40	\$98,636	74	\$98,721	42
HEWL07				
10	\$99,879	14	\$99,879	4
20	\$103,506	9	\$105,724	7
30	\$107,126	17	\$107,126	10
40	\$110,447	36	\$110,447	30
HEWL08				
10	\$111,961	11	\$111,961	7
20	\$117,396	11	\$117,396	3
30	\$124,197	9	\$122,832	5
40	\$128,754	56	\$132,330	27
HEWL09				
10	\$130,116	4	\$130,116	2
20	\$132,491	4	\$132,491	3
30	\$134,906	4	\$134,906	2
40	\$139,346	12	\$139,127	11
HEWL10				
A	\$142,895	10	\$141,184	7
B	\$165,089	12	\$180,794	3
HEWL10C				
10	\$166,488	1		
40	\$239,683	2	\$214,869	5
		586		244

Salary = gross annualised salary and loadings

Executive-level Staff at JCU

This analysis reviews salary and loading data for 28 Executive Level Staff. (DVCs, and Chief Operating Officer, Chief of Staff and Chief Financial Officer; Heads of Colleges for CHS, CMD, CSE, CBLG, CASE and Pathways; Heads of Directorates; and Heads of Institutes -Tropwater and Cairns Institute. The Vice-Chancellor is excluded from this analysis.)

Gender Distribution and Salaries

The executive cohort in 2026 includes 11 women and 17 men (10 and 18 respectively in 2025).

- Average salaries in 2026 are higher for men, at \$350,919 (down from \$367,670 in 2025) compared with \$335,633 for women. (Men's average salaries are down from \$367,670 in 2025, and women's are up from \$328,737).
- Median salaries for women in 2025 are \$320,000 (\$335,633 in 2025) and men \$314,992 (\$335,634).

These figures reflect the presence of women in several of the top-salaried roles (e.g. Senior BAND3) and suggest that, at the executive level, base salary parity is structurally built in through the use of defined salary bands.

Loading Usage

Two women (18% of female senior staff) and 4 men (23.5% of male senior staff) in this group received an identifiable salary loading.

- Female executives averaged a loading of 9%.
- Male executives averaged a loading of 8.6%.

Although the sample of staff receiving loadings is small, the data suggest a pattern similar to that observed across broader university staffing — namely, that men are more likely to receive loadings, but at Executive level the percentage loading paid is comparable..

Observations

- The average gender pay gap at executive level is 4.3%; the median is -1.6%, with men earning more on average.
- Loading percentages favour men in frequency, and match women in magnitude .
- The relatively small number of loadings applied suggests that most executives are remunerated at the fixed band level, without significant discretionary variance.

Conclusion

At the executive level, JCU demonstrates strong structural equity in base salaries. Ongoing monitoring of loading patterns is recommended, especially as discretionary elements have the potential to reintroduce gender-based disparities if left unchecked.

Representation of women at executive level needs to be carefully monitored over time. JCU currently has 39% women, while the target range is between 45% and 55% for women or men.