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Australian higher education researcher between 2020-2024: Open-access fees, authorship, editorships, and institutional analysis

Dr Joseph Crawford
University of Tasmania, Australia

Abstract

The Australian higher education research landscape is constantly changing, although Australia's involvement in higher education research is consistently globally ranked – often third behind the US and UK. Indeed, in some areas of higher education, Australian researchers like Boud and institutions like Deakin University rank first globally. However, less is known about the make-up of the contemporary higher education landscape (2020-2024). In this bibliometric analysis, I explore Australian authorship across 1,241 instances of authorship and 112 Australian editorship roles in the top 20 higher education journals alongside examining current ownership structures of those journals (noting other forms of publications like books, chapters, and articles outside the top 20 are much larger in volume). Editorships across the top 20 journals are also considered, noting that there are three Australian-based chief editorial appointments, and nine deputy or senior editorial appointments. Individual rankings and summaries of performance are highlighted further in this paper. I also explore current Australian institutional contributions and comment on possible pathways to increase national performance in higher education research. This paper highlights the essential role of transparency in open access fees in higher education research.

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Practitioner Notes

1. Australian higher education research represents 14 percent of global top higher education research and 11 percent of Australia's total journal output.
2. Policy settings associated with medium and long-term research strategies ought to consider more deeply the possible globalised change in output and what Australia may need to do to retain its competitive research positioning.
3. Open access higher education research is costly and concentrated.

Keywords

Higher education research, Australian SoTL, bibliometric, citation analysis.

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Introduction

Australian higher education has seen its fair share of change in recent years, in part from institutions seeking to pre-emptively respond to the Australian Universities Accord (2024). More likely, the COVID-19 pandemic (see Carnegie et al., 2022; Eri et al., 2021; O'Shea et al., 2021) exacerbated existing tensions of an unsustainable system not well primed to adapt as quickly as society expects to a growing myriad of global environmental, social, and governance challenges. And then we add in generative AI (Crawford et al., 2023). Yet, the extent to which these institutions are meeting expectations of Scholarship of Learning and Teaching through publications is unclear. The Tertiary Quality and Standards Authority (TEQSA, 2022) expects that universities will be engaging with scholarship that "advances knowledge or professional practice in a field, or transmits advances through contemporary approaches to teaching and learning, or research and training" (p. 1). TEQSA expects an environment of scholarly activity that includes peer reviewed scholarly outputs. And the Australian Universities Accord (2024) final report articulates that Australia needs to be at the forefront of learning and teaching developments.

Higher education represents a substantial proportion of Australian research, yet we know little about it at times, with its impact bundled in with broader educational domains. In a brief presentation of selected years, Phelan and colleagues (2000) indicate that research coded to higher education systems and institutions comprised between 211-274 publications for the selected years between 1984-1997. Budd (1988) documents some 569 higher education articles were published between 1982 and 1987, particularly across *Research in Higher Education* (*n* = 260), *Journal of Higher Education* (*n* = 182), *Review of Higher Education* (*n* = 117). These three were argued as a useful scope because of their general limitation primary to the United States. In Silverman (1985), *College and University, Educational Record, Higher Education, Journal of College Student Personnel, Journal of Higher Education, Liberal Education, Research in Higher Education,* and the *Review of Higher Education* were considered core higher education journals for a seven-year analysis between 1975-1981. Since these, there is actually a reasonable dearth of clearly accessible documentation on current movement in higher education research. There are, however, no shortages of bibliometric analyses for areas of higher education in recent years, but few clear views of global or Australian higher education. For example, Sun et al. (2024) conducts a bibliometric review of publications published in *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.* The purpose of this review is to fill that gap, asking the research questions: What is the current representation of Australian authors and editors in top higher education journals; and what is the current state of publishing for Australian higher education.

Method

This study adopts a bibliometric analysis (Donthu et al., 2021; Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015) of contemporary higher education, alongside where possible supplementary analyses using publicly available information. To complete this search, a simplified Web of Science search was conducted using the 2024 Top Higher Education journal list in Google Scholar (see Table 1). While not a perfect list, this is one of the few higher education-specific listings. The search was conducted for all 20 journals, with filters set for an author address in Australia, and a 2020–2024-year range for Web of Science[1] and an equivalent search in Scopus. As can be seen in Table 1, I report on the

[1] See Web of Science search here.

20 journals and their current total publications (globally) against the proportion which are Australian. I also include a January 2025 update to the Scopus Live CiteScore 2024, with a note in brackets as to any changes observed since the 2023 full year release in June 2024. This offers a balance between recent historical performance alongside some indicative emergent trends.

Table 1

Top 20 higher education journals

Journal (Google Scholar rank)	Aust. *n*	Aust %	Global Total	Scholar h5-index	Scopus CiteScore
Higher Education Research & Development (4)	270	41%	661	59 (86)	7.5 (^.2)
Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice (18)	183	44%	417	34 (61)	5.7 (^2.1)
Higher Education (2)	118	13%	940	71 (110)	10.5 (-.2)
Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education (3)	109	25%	434	65 (102)	11.7 (^.5)
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management (17)	101	41%	244	35 (60)	5.5 (^.2)
Studies in Higher Education (1)	100	12%	867	81 (111)	10.7 (^.5)
Teaching in Higher Education (5)	90	18%	487	50 (83)	9.2 (^1.4)
Journal of Further and Higher Education (6)	57	13%	447	49 (74)	6.1 (^.9)
Innovations in Education and Teaching International (8)	50	9%	528	42 (57)	7.6 (^2.8)
Journal of International Students (14)	44	10%	457	37 (61)	3.0 (^.1)
Journal of Studies in International Education (16)	30	16%	183	36 (54)	7.1 (^.2)
Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning (19)	29	8%	380	33 (57)	4.1 (^.3)
Journal of Marketing for Higher Education (20)	21	13%	168	33 (53)	7.9 (^0.1)
Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education (9)	17	2%	687	41 (53)	4.4 (-.1)
Research in Higher Education (13)	8	3%	257	38 (68)	4.0 (-.4)
Journal of College Student Retention […] (10)	5	2%	311	40 (58)	5.9 (^1.1)
Journal of Diversity in Higher Education (7)	4	1%	438	47 (83)	7.9 (^1.5)
Journal of Higher Education (15)	3	1%	231	37 (56)	6.1 (^.4)
Journal of College Student Development (11)	2	1%	323	39 (58)	2.5 (-.4)
Review of Higher Education (12)	0	0%	126	39 (58)	3.0 (-1.1)

Analysis of the data was conducted in RStudio largely using bibliometrix (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The bibliometrix tool struggles to deal with row.name conflicts, and supplementary code was used to allow for analysis where a first author published multiple papers in the same journal and same year. The data analysis tracks where possible both Web of Science and Scopus, although institutional analysis is limited to Web of Science as institutions coding outputs poorly in Scopus. Specific exclusions at the analysis-level are noted at the point of each analysis being presented. Madden et al.'s (2020) analysis of gender across medical education authorship and editorships was used as a guide for some parts.

Results

Australian representation

The results highlight that Australia, generally, is a highly competitive country as a proportion of global higher education research. To better understand the representation of Australian higher

education researchers and research, I contrast the total Australian research output in the top 20 journals and contrast this to the total published in these journals globally, as well as considering the total corpus of Australian (not specific to higher education) publications. As can be observed, Australian higher education represents around 14 percent of the total higher education research, and 9-14 percent of the annual Australian disciplinary publications since 2020. A further read of the top five countries by education is indicated by Scimago listing United States, United Kingdom, Australia, China, and Canada by volume. Australia performs at a clear third place in global higher education research, although has plateaued around the 220-240 range since 2021, whereas China has seen steady increases in the past three years.

Table 2

Higher education publications globally

	Higher Education Publications							Aust. Total	
Year	**Global**	**Aust.**	**%**	**US**	**UK**	**China**	**Canada**	**All**	**HE %**
2024	1,681	238	14%	533	440	217	62	1,930	12%
2023	1,686	233	14%	448	282	165	71	2,349	10%
2022	1,502	237	16%	511	288	121	44	2,277	10%
2021	1,709	223	13%	574	275	129	64	2,429	9%
2020	2,161	310	14%	563	297	192	75	2,285	14%

It is possible the proposed reintroduction of national infrastructure to support teaching and learning as part of the University Accord may support strengthening the national higher education agenda, although it is proportionally evident that a small number of effective researchers contribute substantially to this corpus (i.e., 10 authors contribute around 20% of the Australian output, see Table 4).

Key research output and themes

In Table 3, there are 10 publications that have yielded 84 or more citations since 2020. Across the most performant specific keywords (i.e., excluding higher education (*n* = 233), education (*n* = 61), and Australia (*n* = 56)), employability (*n* = 62) was the most used keyword. This was alongside COVID-19 (*n* = 54), assessment (*n* = 52), international students (n = 44), feedback (*n* = 39), work-integrated learning (*n* = 32), and learning (*n* = 31). When contrasting these to the top 10 articles, it is surprising to see no explicit studies on COVID-19 in the top 10 despite its popularity in citations in recent years. Instead, employability research led by Denise Jackson at Edith Cowan University (see Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021; Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020) and assessment and feedback research led by David Boud and Phillip Dawson at the Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE), Deakin University (Boud & Dawson, 2023; Malecka et al., 2022; Winstone & Boud, 2022) were key themes across the top 10. Notably the top three studies (Crawford et al., 2023; Ferrer et al., 2022; Heffernan, 2022) are largely unrelated to other key papers and standalone.

Table 3

Top Australian articles

Article		Authors	Mean	Total
1.	Leadership is needed for ethical ChatGPT: Character, assessment, and learning using artificial intelligence (AI)	Crawford et al. (2023)	76.00	152
2.	Students' motivation and engagement in higher education: the importance of attitude to online learning	Ferrer et al. (2022)	46.33	139
3.	Sexism, racism, prejudice, and bias: a literature review and synthesis of research surrounding student evaluations of courses and teaching	Heffernan (2022)	38.67	116
4.	Eliciting, processing and enacting feedback: mechanisms for embedding student feedback literacy within the curriculum	Malecka et al. (2022)	36.00	108
5.	What actually works to enhance graduate employability? The relative value of curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular learning and paid work	Jackson and Bridgstock (2021)	26.75	107
6.	A sense of belonging at university: student retention, motivation and enjoyment	Pedler et al. (2022)	33.33	100
7.	The need to disentangle assessment and feedback in higher education	Winstone and Boud (2022)	32.67	98
8.	Investigating the relationship between career planning, proactivity and employability perceptions among higher education students in uncertain labour market conditions	Jackson and Tomlinson (2020)	17.40	87
9.	What feedback literate teachers do: an empirically-derived competency framework	Boud and Dawson (2023)	43.00	86
10.	The role of authentic assessment to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and employability	Sotiriadou et al. (2020)	16.80	84

Australian authorship

Following are authors identified as having published at least 10 times in the top 20 journals between 2020-2024, ordered by number of publications in the period. Deakin University (7) – largely CRADLE academics – can be seen to dominate the list followed by Monash University (4).

Table 4

Authors across Scopus and Web of Science (with at least 10 Scopus publications)

Avg. Rank	Author	Institution	Scopus				Web of Science			
			n	Citations	IF	h-index	*n*	Citations	IF	h-index
1	**Boud**, David	Deakin University	50	1,653	33.06	22	36	925	25.69	17
2	**Jackson**, Denise	Edith Cowan University	26	729	28.04	13	23	427	18.56	11
3	**Ajjawi**, Rola	Deakin University	31	769	24.81	15	22	357	16.22	11
4	**Dawson**, Phillip	Deakin University	31	678	21.87	13	22	387	17.59	9
5	**Tai**, Joanna	Deakin University	26	511	19.65	15	23	353	15.34	12
6	**Bearman**, Margaret	Deakin University	36	586	16.28	13	27	319	11.81	11
7	**Crawford**, Joseph	University of Tasmania	21	618	29.42	13	16	269	16.81	7
8	**Allen**, Kelly-Ann	Monash University	12	440	36.67	7	9	217	24.11	6
9	**Dollinger**, Mollie	Curtin University	21	309	14.71	11	17	162	9.53	8
10	**Gašević**, Dragan	Monash University	12	416	34.67	10	5	155	31	4
11	**Tran**, Ly	Deakin University	18	255	14.17	10	8	105	13.12	9
12	**Matthews**, Kelly	University of Queensland	18	241	13.39	9	15	170	11.33	9
13	**Baik**, Chi	University of Melbourne	14	210	15	8	7	98	14	6
14	**Henderson**, Michael	Monash University	10	426	42.6	7	5	50	10	4
15	**Ryan**, Tracii	University of Melbourne	10	167	16.7	7	7	81	11.57	5
16	**Bennett**, Dawn	Bond University	18	138	7.67	6	12	67	5.58	5
17	**Broadbent**, Jaclyn	Deakin University	10	206	20.6	7	5	47	9.4	3
18	**Curtis**, Guy	University of Western Australia	10	162	16.2	6	1	6	16.25	3
19	**Baker**, Sally	Australian National University	11	89	8.09	5	8	57	7.13	4
20	**Goode**, Elizabeth	Southern Cross University	10	64	6.4	6	9	56	6.22	5
21	**Pham**, Thanh	Monash University	11	128	11.64	4	6	51	8.5	3
22	**O'Shea**, Sarah	Curtin University	12	82	6.83	5	8	46	5.75	3
23	**Knight**, Elizabeth	Victoria University	13	73	5.62	5	8	31	3.88	4
24	**Lemon**, Narelle	Edith Cowan University	23	21	0.91	2	1	-	-	-
25	**Kember**, David	University of Tasmania	10	27	2.7	2	1	1	1	1
		Average	18	359.92	17.91	8.84	12	184.88	12.93	6.67

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While Table 4 could be shuffled in many ways, I have opted to present a raw series of statistics for any author who has published at least 10 studies in any of the top 20 journals using Scopus, and reporting on key metrics for these 25 Australian-based researchers, where *n* = number of papers, and Impact Factor (IF) is a calculation of citations/number of papers. The ranking is calculated by the average position between 1 and 20 across each of the eight indicators listed in the table for Scopus and Web of Science (*n,* citations, impact factor, h-index); there is some conceptual overlap between these indicators but it provides a general level of net impact balancing volume with impact. It is useful to note that there is not an equality of ranking between individuals. For example, Boud's average rank was 1.50, and the next six were similar in levels: Jackson (4.00), Ajjawi was (4.37), Dawson (5.25), Tai (5.63), Bearman (6.50), and Crawford (6.63), before the next beginning at 9.

Australian university contributions

Using only Web of Science data, and organised by number of publications, it is observed that Deakin University has a substantial representation in the Top 20 higher education journals. Deakin University, University of Melbourne, and Monash University have more than 100 publications. Deakin University, University of Tasmania, and La Trobe University have the top three impact factors.

Table 5

Top 10 Australian institutional higher education publications

Affiliations	*n*	Citations	Impact	h-index
1. Deakin University	167	2,205	13.20	26
2. University of Melbourne	117	913	7.80	18
3. Monash University	103	1,044	10.13	16
4. University of Technology Sydney	98	1,047	10.68	17
5. University of Sydney	74	439	5.93	12
6. University of Queensland	72	553	7.68	13
7. La Trobe University	70	813	11.61	14
8. RMIT University	62	469	7.56	12
9. University of Tasmania	58	685	11.81	14
10. Curtin University	58	339	5.84	11

A more interesting observation is evident between these 10 universities and all other universities in Australia with regards to self-citation levels. For the top 10 universities, self-citation levels are at 4.43 percent (range: 2.05% for University of Sydney to 6.69% for University of Queensland), in contrast to the Australian average self-citation for higher education papers of 13.01 percent.

Australian editorships

Across the 20 journals there are 1,041 editorial roles (excluding an extremely large review board on Journal of International Students (*n* = 257) and 8 editorial emeritus roles in *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*). With little surprise, the U.S holds a substantial volume of these roles (40.3%), followed by the United Kingdom (*n* = 202). Australia holds 112 roles primarily in the *Higher Education Research and Development* (*n* = 26), *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* (*n* = 19), *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* (*n* = 14), and

Teaching in Higher Education (*n* = 17). There are 10 universities with five or more appointments on editorial teams: University of Melbourne (*n* = 10), Curtin University (*n* = 8), Deakin University (*n* = 8), University of Queensland (*n* = 6), Edith Cowan University (*n* = 6), Monash University (*n* = 5), University of South Australia (*n* = 5), University of Sydney (*n* = 5), Australian National University (*n* = 5), and La Trobe University (*n* = 5). There are 26 senior editorial appointments across the 20 journals, with three of the roles held by Australian scholars (see Table 6). This may indicate an area of necessary growth in Australian higher education, noting that the United States of America have 11 of these roles, the United Kingdom has 9, Hong Kong holds 2, and Canada has 1. The three journals with Australian lead editors are also the journals that have 40+ percent of their publications in recent years with at least one Australian author.

Table 6

Chief editor appointments

Editor Roles	Uni	Journal	Term
Bentley, Peter	Innovative Research Universities	JHEPM	Since January 2017
Crawford, Joseph	University of Tasmania	JUTLP	Since August 2020
Guerin, Cally	La Trobe University	HERD*	Since January 2023

*Joint Executive Editor rather than sole Chief editorship.

Australia has a larger range of involvement with higher education journal editorships in the second-in-command roles (see Table 7). The Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice has a disproportionate representation due to its Senior Editorial structure. Other noteworthy higher education adjacent appointments may include Helen Partridge (Deakin University), Editor in Chief of *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*; Linda Corrin (Deakin University), Chris Deneen (University of South Australia), Feifei Han (Australian Catholic University), and Henk Huijser (Queensland University of Technology) who form the Lead Editorial Team of *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*; and Vitomir Kovanovic (University of Sydney) and Hassan Khosravi (University of Queensland) who are two of four Editors in Chief for the *Journal of Learning Analytics*. These three journals are consistently well-ranked Australian-published education journals that fall outside of the top twenty higher education journals but publish on higher education regularly.

Table 7

Deputy and senior editorial roles

Editor Roles	University	Journal	Editorial Role
Ashton-Hay, Sally	Southern Cross University	JUTLP	Senior Editor
Colvin, Cassandra	Edith Cowan University	JUTLP	Senior Editor
Curtis, Guy	University of Western Australia	HERD	Co-Editor
Dollinger, Mollie	Curtin University	JHEPM	Deputy Editor
Fitzgerald, Rachel	University of Queensland	JUTLP	Senior Editor
Grieve, Averil	Monash University	JUTLP	Senior Editor
Kligyte, Giee	University of Technology Sydney	HERD	Co-Editor
O'Shea, Sarah	Charles Sturt University	SIHE	Special Issues Editor
Veliz, Leonardo	University of New England	JIS	Regional Senior Editor

Open access and publishing

The top 20 journals have open access fees for Australian researchers at between $4,118 and $6,580, except for the *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* which observes a diamond open-access policy without any fees. Around half of the journals maintain a society- or university-ownership structure, although for the other half of the journals it was not transparent who owned the journal; suggesting it was owner-publisher.

Table 8

Top 20 journals, their publisher, and open access fees

Journal (Google Scholar rank)	Publisher	OA Fee
Studies in Higher Education	Taylor and Francis	$ 5,085
Higher Education	Springer Nature	$ 5,151
Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education	Taylor and Francis	$ 6,580
Higher Education Research & Development	Taylor and Francis	$ 4,595
Teaching in Higher Education	Taylor and Francis	$ 4,595
Journal of Further and Higher Education	Taylor and Francis	$ 5,085
Journal of Diversity in Higher Education	American Psychological Association	$ 4,844
Innovations in Education and Teaching International	Taylor and Francis	$ 5,570
Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education	Emerald Publishing	$ 5,988
Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice	Sage Journals	$ 5,895
Journal of College Student Development	John Hopkins University Press	*Unclear*
The Review of Higher Education	John Hopkins University Press	*Unclear*
Research in Higher Education	Springer Nature	$ 4,118
Journal of International Students	Open Journals in Education	$ 4,039
The Journal of Higher Education	Taylor and Francis	$ 5,570
Journal of Studies in International Education	Sage Journals	$ 5,895
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management	Taylor and Francis	$ 5,570
Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice	Open Access Publishing Association	$ -
Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning	Emerald Publishing	$ 5,991
Journal of Marketing for Higher Education	Taylor and Francis	$ 5,085

While it is not entirely clear of the value of the publishing agreements, those organisations whose societies are listed charities in their respective countries typically release income figures. For example, the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM, 2020) received $74,301 in journal revenue for the *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* with $42,915 in costs, and a $31,386 net journal profit in 2020, but reported a loss ($53,613 income, $40,000 editor honorarium, and $20,398 expenses) of $6,785 in 2022 (ATEM, 2022). The *Higher Education Research & Development Society of Australasia* (HERDSA, 2024) received $116,878 in Informa royalty income, and $25,000 in editorial income, with $20,482 in editorial expenses for the year ending 31 May 2024, although it is less clear of other expenses incurred. The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE, 2023) reported that 7 percent of their revenue came from publication royalties, likely associated with *The Review of Higher Education.* Matching this to their Propublica (2024) record, their royalties were $103,200 (although there are some % inconsistencies between these sources). The American College Personnel Association (ACPA, 2024) lists its total publication income as US$246,494, $261,048, and $374,224 between 2020-

2022, although it is difficult to apportion this to *Journal of College Student Development* as one of three journals (although JCSD is a clear flagship) and a small suite of book publications.

A Future Provocation

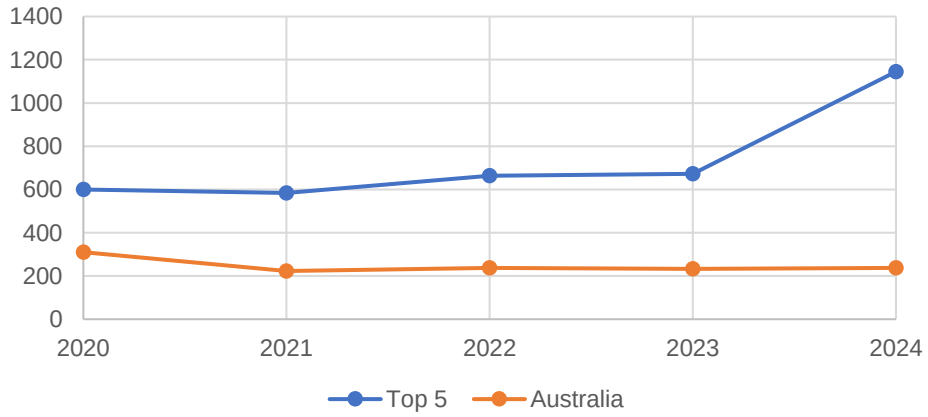
This bibliometric analysis points to some emerging and established leaders in higher education research, as well as the places they are published. The ecosystem is changing and the volume of studies being submitted, produced, and published is growing across the board. In this discussion section I offer some early thoughts on some of the limitations of current Australian higher education, and some possible questions the sector needs to ask of its pathway forward.

Is consistent volume good for higher education?

For the top 20 journals, this volume does not seem to be increasing despite that it is evident that education journals publications rates are increasing significantly. The ominous 'publish or perish' model seems to be having little effect on the volume of top quality publications in Australian higher education, yet in further review of the top five higher education journals (see Table 1), in 2024, *Studies in Higher Education* increased its publication volume from 133-195 in recent years to 318; and *Higher Education* saw a similar jump from 122-149 to 363 in 2024. To highlight this 2024 change, Figure 1 highlights total publications per year in the top five journals benchmarked against Australia researcher's total higher education publications in the same year. While 2020 may not provide meaningful data, 2024 shows a step increase for global higher education research without a response from Australia in kind.

Figure 1

Australian research compared to the top five higher education journals



Policy settings associated with medium- and long-term research strategies ought to consider more deeply the possible globalised change in output and what Australia may need to do to retain its competitive research positioning. It may also be a reasonable position to retain a consistent volume with an emphasis on elevating quality and impact.

Australian editorial representation is concentrated and poor

A brief analysis of the editorial roles highlighted just how few editorial roles are held by Australian-based academics. These roles were heavily concentrated in a small number of journals. Of more alarm, and I would not be the first to comment as such (see Bond, 2024), but there remains a

series of journals who hold a US-centric editorial team with low levels of connection into Australian research. The *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice, Journal of College Student Development, The Review of Higher Education, Research in Higher Education,* and *The Journal of Higher Education* have almost exclusively United States of America teams. And, not surprisingly, these then have the lowest levels of Australian participation (between 0 and 3% Australian publications). It also remains of interest that the top three universities by publication (Deakin University, University of Melbourne, and Monash University) have only one senior editorial appointment – Averil Grieve (Senior Editor, JUTLP). For Australian higher education to retain its place as a leader in higher education research, it ought to be considering how to better engage with the existing top 20 journals or likewise how the publishing ecosystem can better support Australian-based academics to lead editorial teams, build new or lower ranked journals, and emphasise diversity and quality in research.

Higher education publishing is *also* too concentrated and costly

Of the top 20 higher education journals, only one has no fees associated with being open access. In Australia this costs an estimated $1 billion AUD per annum (Scicluna, 2024). Using the Open Access fee and number of articles published (assuming no deals in place e.g., Council of Australian University Librarians), it would have cost Australian researchers $5,464,592[2] in open access fees to make all articles available open access with $1,240,650 paying for *Higher Education Research & Development* articles. For reference, if the *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* applied a standard open access fee, it would have added $965,142 to the Australian research bill. Universities and governments need to take a lead role in reshaping the funding model, and considering investing in acceleration of diamond open access supported with government or university seed funds to push the value of this down. An investment of less than $1.24 million per annum would be needed to deliver as high a quality HERD journal and offer a community-led journal framework.

Conclusion

This brief analysis sought to shed light on the current state of higher education research, researchers, publishing, and editing across Australia. It points to some key policy limitations in the extant higher education landscape, and likewise strengths from individuals and institutions in leading effective and sustainable higher education research. This analysis is limited by the availability of data – with some key information about publishing deals and ownership structures not publicly available. Yet, with the analysis conducted it provides a first benchmark of publications in recent years. This methodology could be applied to other disciplines or likewise applied backwards to better understand historical progression in higher education research.

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[2] All calculations were at a journal level (n of Australian publications x OA fee), except for JCSD and JUTLP. An average of $5,274 was used for JCSD publications given no clear OA fee was available; JUTLP has no OA fee, so was calculated at zero.

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