

PRESS RELEASE

## **Australia and South Africa top ranking of academic staff salaries**

Results of a recent survey of Commonwealth universities reveal that the purchasing power of the average academic in South Africa is now higher than those in Canada, the UK and New Zealand. South African academics earn on average only 6% less than their counterparts in Australia, the top-ranked country, when cost of living is taken into account.

The differences in average salaries between the countries has reduced, pointing to increased international competition for academic staff, as well as efforts within individual countries to improve academic salary levels. The rate of growth in Canada, the UK and New Zealand has been higher than in Australia since the last survey – South Africa saw the highest rate of growth, at 51% since 2006-2007.

The survey, the seventh undertaken by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), looks at academic salary scales and associated benefits in 46 institutions across seven Commonwealth countries: Australia, Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

The provision of discretionary bonuses or market adjustments has increased significantly from the previous survey, and is now offered at 63% of institutions (compared to 41.5% in 2006-2007), with several institutions also highlighting specific recruitment and retention strategies, further pointing to the increased importance of attracting and retaining academic staff.

Australian universities continue to have some of the best pension and leave conditions, while Malaysia is notable for its extensive use of additional benefits on top of base salaries, including set entertainment and housing benefits, as well as generous medical entitlements for employees and their dependents.

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Notes to editors:

1. 41 institutions in seven Commonwealth countries – Australia, Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and the UK – responded to the survey, which compared salary scales for academic staff from the point of entry up to professorial level. Public sources provided information and data for an additional five universities in New Zealand.
2. Salary scales were analysed using a purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion rate – the Big Mac Index – expressing all salaries in US dollars. For comparison of salary levels across the participating countries and over time, average salary levels have been calculated. Participating countries have been ranked according to their overall midpoint average (the arithmetic mean of the top and bottom of each scale averaged across all responses).
3. The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) was established in 1913 and is the oldest inter-university network in the world, with over 500 members in six continents. Its mission is to strengthen the higher education institutions within its membership through international co-operation and understanding. The ACU operates a series of professional networks for staff in key roles, undertakes research and policy analysis on key issues in international higher education, and has active programmes in libraries and information, research management, gender and university governance. Her Majesty the Queen, the Head of the Commonwealth, is Patron of the ACU. For further information, visit [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)
4. The executive summary of the *2009-2010 Academic Staff Salary Survey* report can be downloaded from [www.acu.ac.uk/publication/download?id=294](http://www.acu.ac.uk/publication/download?id=294). The full report will be published in early 2011.

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