Overseas influence on the staffing of schools and departments of education in Australian universities and colleges

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Abstract. Research conducted during the past twenty-five years has consistently indicated that Australian universities are subject to considerable overseas influence in their staffing. It is not known to what extent this influence also extends to the staffing of the country's more recently established colleges of advanced education. This study looks at overseas staffing influence in schools and departments of Education in a sample of ten universities and ten colleges of advanced education in Australia. It compares the extent of such influence in these two different types of institutions and analyses its nature and scope in terms of particular types of qualifications and particular countries.

Background to the study

The extent to which Australian universities have been influenced by staffing appointments from overseas has been the subject of considerable research during the past twenty-five years. Examination of figures available for the period from 1957 to 1960, for instance, led Encel (1962) to conclude that 34 percent of all university staff appointed during these years were recruited from overseas. Rodda (1964) expressed the opinion that "something like 40 percent of academic staff in recent years" had been appointed from outside Australia and when Browne (1969) looked in detail at the Universities of Melbourne and Queensland, he found that 33 percent of all staff were from overseas countries. An Australia-wide figure of 30 percent was suggested by Cropley and Hemingway (1973) and in a later study, Saha and Klovdahl (1979) claimed an overall figure of 40 percent.

It is clear from these studies that from 1957 to 1977, somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of all staff in Australian universities came from overseas countries. The relative stability of this percentage over the twenty year period suggests that present day figures could well fall within a similar range.

Researchers have also turned their attention to the composition of the overseas staffing component in Australia's universities. Encel (1962) found that during the late 1950's, the majority of all overseas recruits, some 57 percent, were drawn from the United Kingdom. Since then, however, there appears to have been a growing trend towards recruitment from the United States. Fallon (1976) found that for the period 1970 to 1974, United Kingdom recruitment stood at 37 percent and United States recruitment at 34 percent. When Cana-
adians were taken into account, the total North American contribution rose to 44 percent. Figures supplied by Saha and Klovdahl (1979) supported this trend towards North American recruitment.

Other researchers have looked for different patterns of overseas influence between Australia's universities and between different disciplines and fields of study. Browne (1972) studied Queensland University during the period 1964 to 1967 and found different levels of influence across different departmental groups and this was supported by Saha (1973) who found variations in overseas influence of from 30 percent to 54 percent across different faculty groupings at Sydney University.

Research into the composition of staff in Australia's colleges of advanced education, on the other hand, has been minimal. One of the few readily available studies to look at the question of overseas influence reported that 29 percent of all staff in Education in a sample of regional colleges were from overseas (Anderson et al., 1975). The same study revealed variations in overseas influence of from 46 percent to none across different regional and metropolitan colleges. It also recorded a figure of 38 percent overseas recruitment for Australian universities and colleges combined.

**Purpose of the study**

It may be seen from the research reviewed above that no attempt has yet been made to compare the extent of overseas staffing influence on Australia's universities and colleges of advanced education. This study addresses this question. It is restricted to staffing in the field of Education because this field is one which is common to most Universities and to most Colleges. By restricting the study to this field, the effect of variations across different fields of study is minimised. Lecturers in Education in universities receive basically the same academic preparation as lecturers in Education in colleges or expressed in another way, universities and colleges draw from essentially the same pool of potential Education lecturers and for this reason at least one of the variables influencing overseas recruitment can be reasonably well controlled.

The study seeks to answer a number of specific questions about overseas influence on the staffing of Schools and Departments of Education in Australian universities and colleges of advanced education:

1. Are there any differences in the extent of overseas influence in the overall Education staffing of universities and colleges?
2. What proportions of Education staff in universities and colleges have overseas qualifications?