

# Commercial Biotech

## A good sector for women?

In her study of over 400 Melbourne biotech managers, Dr Janine Pickering sheds some light on working life in this dynamic sector, and how it compares to the more traditional career path in public science.

### Management opportunities

Biotech firms offer relatively more management opportunities for women according to Dr Pickering's research. Women scientists working in firms are 3.5 times more likely to be a manager than their academic counterparts. A major reason is that biotech firms are essentially 'management firms' offering a wide variety of research, development and corporate roles. This is in stark contrast to traditional science where the vast majority of management jobs are lab-based.

So whilst comparing across the two sectors is a bit like comparing apples and oranges, the stats get interesting when you compare women and men within each of these sectors. In biotech firms, twice as many male scientists (57%) are working as managers compared to females (25%). Whilst far from ideal, it's a more egalitarian outcome than in public sector biotech where four times as many male scientists (27%) are working as managers compared to females (7%). Once they become managers, women in biotech firms also have relatively similar pay and responsibilities to men, whilst in public sector science women managers on average hold lower level positions and earn less than men.

### Part-time management work

Commercial biotech is also distinguished by the number of high quality part-time management positions available. For example, 22% of managers in firms were working part-time, compared to only 5% of managers in the public sector. What is particularly unusual is that although overall more women than men were working part-time in biotech firms, Dr Pickering found no significant gender difference. In other words, part-time work was normalised for both women and men. This makes a difference for career advancement as women are not singled out as 'different' and overly penalised for this choice.

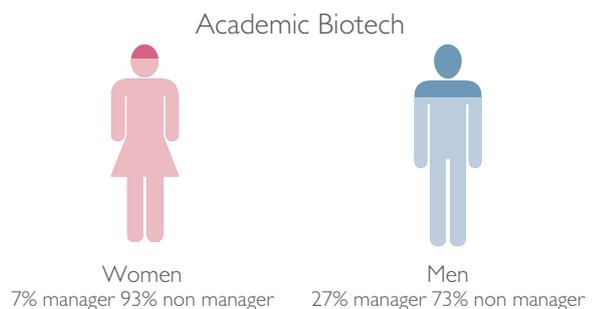
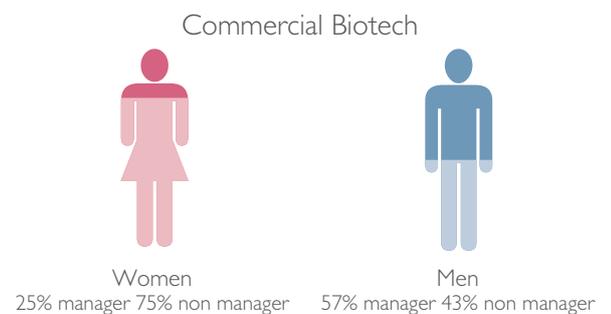
### Job insecurity

Job insecurity is often quoted as a reason why women drop out of science, especially if they want to start a family. There is job insecurity in both public sector science and biotech firms. In the former this is associated with jobs being linked to grant funding while in the latter, security is often dependent on clinical trial results. Surprisingly, biotech firms appear to offer more security with 21% of managers working on term appointments compared to 56% of managers in public sector biotech organisations.

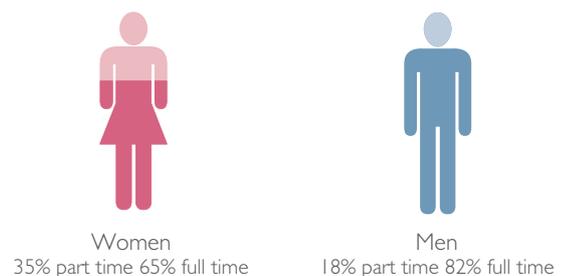
For more information see

<https://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/file/d86b4417-266b-40aa-b165-c573a2d516ba/1/Janine%20Fay%20Pickering%20Thesis.pdf>

### Is the scientist a manager?



### Employment status in Commercial Biotech



### Employment terms

