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Abstract

This article analyses career trajectories into university management in Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom (UK), skills required to operate effectively and the power of vice-chancellors (VCs) and their impact on the gendered shaping of university leadership. It is based on qualitative research with 56 male and female senior managers. The research found that the typical career path was modelled on male academic careers. Not surprisingly, in South Africa and the UK the perception of the top university leader was of a man but in Australia, where more women have been VCs, there was no such assumption. Characteristics valued in university leaders in Australia and South Africa were 'soft' leadership traits, but in the UK 'hard' aggressive and competitive leadership prevailed. VCs are enormously powerful and can shape the gender balance in management teams and thereby potentially broadening leadership styles beyond the predominant transactional model to include transformational leadership. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)