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**Abstract**

While not the only title used by UK university leaders, the term Vice Chancellor will be used throughout this paper to include the other titles used (including Rector, Provost, Principal and President). According to data obtained pre-1997, UK Vice Chancellors (VCs) were predominantly scientists, largely former professors, Pro-VCs or deputy directors in universities, with only a few recruited from industry or the civil service. There have been changes in the fundamental demands being placed on UK universities in the recent past and the aim of our study was to explore if there had been changes in the socio-demographic characteristics of UK VCs since 1996. Our analysis of data available in the public domain on VCs appointed between 1997 and 2006 established that several changes had occurred. Most interestingly, we report an increase in the numbers of women and social scientists, and an increase in the age at which appointments are made. We also report an increase in appointments to universities established post-1992 of academics previously working in institutions

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