



S A G E

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

SAGE Cygnet Awards

for the SAGE Athena Swan
Accreditation Pathway



Edith Cowan University (ECU)
Application Form

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	4
PROVISO	5
KEY BARRIER	6
EVIDENCE OF BARRIER	6
Academic staff headcount.....	6
BARRIERS TO RETENTION AND PROGRESSION	7
Promotion application rates and stalled promotion.....	7
Promotion success rates.....	7
Staff perceptions - consultation and qualitative data collection.....	8
Qualitative data on career advancement - 2017.....	8
Qualitative data on career advancement - 2019.....	9
ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS	10
Building an inclusive workplace.....	15
Constraints.....	15
OUTCOMES	16
Academic staff headcount - wiS ALEVC-E in 2022.....	16
Promotion application and success rates.....	17
Data collection and limitations.....	21
IMPACT	22
Focus groups and survey demographics.....	22
Continuing barriers.....	27
FURTHER ACTION	29

SAGE CYGNET AWARD APPLICATION FORM



SAGE

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

SAGE Cygnet Award Application

Name of Institution	Edith Cowan University (ECU)
Date of Application	6 February 2023
Contact for Application	Professor Cobie Rudd, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) & Vice-President
Email	cobie.rudd@ecu.edu.au
Telephone No.	(+61) 08 6304 2162

GLOSSARY

ALEV	Academic level
ALEVA	Associate Lecturer
ALEVB	Lecturer
ALEVC	Senior Lecturer
ALEVD	Associate Professor
ALEVE	Professor
AS	Athena Swan
ASPEO	Academic Staff Performance Expectations and Outcomes Framework
ASBA	ECU's Athena Swan Bronze Application document
ASBAP	ECU's Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan
CaLD	culturally and linguistically diverse
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
DVC RF	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)
ECU	Edith Cowan University
ECUASCC	ECU Athena Swan Charter Committee
FTE	hours worked by one employee on a full-time basis
HRSC	Human Resources Service Centre
LGBTIQA+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer community, asexual
+M (after STEM)	Medicine [includes Schools of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM) and School of Medical and Health Sciences (SMHS)]
ODVC RF	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)
SENG	School of Engineering
SES	ECU's biennial Staff Engagement Survey
SMHS	School of Medical and Health Sciences
SNM	School of Nursing and Midwifery
SSCI	School of Science
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [includes Schools of Engineering (SENG) and Science (SSCI)]
STEMM	science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine
Tracking Dashboard	ECU 's Tracking Dashboard that monitors the <i>ECU Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan 2018 - 2023</i>
UE	University Executive – ECU's University Executive team meeting
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WA	Western Australia
wiS	women in STEMM disciplines (academic)
MWSC	Manager, Workforce Strategy and Capability

Edith Cowan University: SAGE CYGNET 2

Word limit – 2500 words (excluding the institutional context and excluding the action plan)

	✓ Current Cygnets	Barrier · List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnets · List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier		Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA)
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier	✓	Inadequate support systems inhibiting the promotion of women in STEM(M), specifically into academic levels C - E
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

PROVISO

Please read this in the context that we have not submitted this application for an area where we've excelled, but in fact for one that was our weak spot where we'd hoped that if we gave it the most attention, we could achieve our desired outcomes. However, our progress in this area was impacted by a range of sub-issues that emerged for women in STEMM (wiS) seeking and achieving promotion, in many instances related to the impact of the pandemic. For instance, we had a lack of wiS applying for promotion (specifically at the professorial level), low success rates, and cases of stalled promotion.

This Cygnets submission is more about us showing the courage required to be transparent; disclosing that not all activities succeeded as planned and revealing those deficiencies and devising alternative ways forward. Thus, demonstrating perhaps the very essence of the Athena Swan Charter.

It shows the importance of monitoring and evaluating as without our Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard (a highly-developed tracking and monitoring system), we would never have known the specifics about what wasn't working. Our Dashboard process determines where we need to focus our efforts, so our cygnets applications are going to be the areas where we may not be achieving our target outcomes and impact.

Improvements are not always linear. This application will reveal some positive outcomes, some areas that were maintained, and some areas where we fell short but can see other alternative avenues to try. This has been a revealing exercise in gathering data and stories that show us what we really look like and while the lack of success in some areas is uncomfortable, it's not what we will accept going forward and we will act to address the situation.

Courage is ECU's new value in our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. It's taken courage to reveal our weaknesses, but Athena Swan is not always about success in achieving specified strategies and transparency in that regard is important for the sector as a whole. Our purpose has been to devise clear ways forward in this challenging domain, revisiting our previous thinking if need be, to continue to transform the lives of wiS, for the better.

KEY BARRIER

An identified barrier to the retention and progression of women in STEMM (wiS) disciplines at ECU, specifically into academic levels (ALEV) C through E, is inadequate support systems. This includes the low numbers of women applying for, and being successful in achieving, academic promotion, thus affecting pipeline to STEMM.

EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

ECU chose this Cygnet to increase wiS being promoted into ALEVC-E because in 2017 the numbers of ALEVC-E wiS across the four STEMM schools; School of Engineering (SENG), School of Science (SSCI), School of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM) and School of Medical and Health Sciences (SMHS) were low. An Athena Swan (AS) data collection activity also showed low application and promotion rates for women in those schools (*Figure. 1*) (*Tables. 1&9*).

The lack of wiS progressing into ALEVC–E was identified as a barrier to achieving gender equality, diversity, and inclusion; primarily through analysis of data (numbers of academic women in schools, academic promotions rates etc.), staff feedback when preparing ECU’s successful AS Institutional Bronze Award application (ASBA), and subsequent data monitoring.

Academic staff headcount

2017 Academic staff headcount by school

School	Total staff headcount (Total)	Number of female (F) staff (No.)	Percentage of female (F) staff (%)
Year	2017	2017	2017
SENG	28	2	13%
SMHS	121	74	61%
SNM	47	43	91.5%
SSCI	75	23	31%
Total	271	142	49.1% (Average)

2017 Academic staff headcount by school

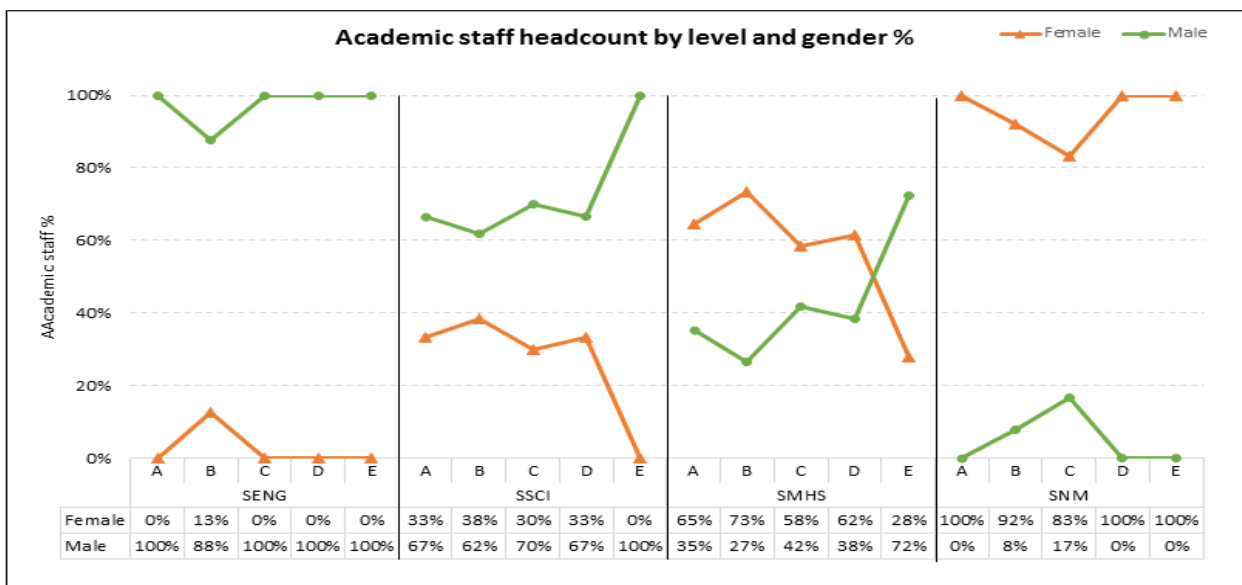


Table 1. Academic Staff headcount 2017 (disaggregated by school and academic level)

ECU STEMM School Academic staff headcount 2016 – 2018

- Low numbers of women ALEVC-E working in STEMM disciplines;
- SSCI and SENG lower proportion of wiS;
- SSCI and SENG lower proportion of wiS;
- SNM high numbers of women (as expected); and
- SMHS high numbers of women in some disciplines (allied health) and not others.

Figure 1. Overview of wiS in ECU STEMM schools 2016 - 2018

We know the impact of greater numbers of wiS and in senior leadership positions means an increase in innovation, better decision making and improved problem solving. Additionally, a strong economy and regional prosperity are interdependent on economic independence for women¹

BARRIERS TO RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

Promotion application rates and stalled promotion

During the ASBAP development, ECU identified a range of academic promotion sub-issues; lack of wiS applying for promotion (specifically ALEVC-E), low success rates, and cases of stalled promotion (i.e., senior staff from clinical backgrounds with no PhD). At ECU, promotions take place annually, where committee members assess applications against the Academic Staff Performance Expectations and Outcomes (ASPEO) criteria and the assessment of performance must be contextualised, based on achievement relative to opportunity (R2O), considering factors including caring responsibilities, industry engagement and cultural practices.

Through qualitative feedback, several wiS (and academic women generally), reported they didn't feel ready to be promoted, or would be unsuccessful. Often, this is in the context of wiS being well-progressed to meeting ASPEO requirements and at a stage that their male counterparts would apply for promotion. Anecdotally, data indicates ECU still needs to build the confidence of women and counter the imposter syndrome.

Promotion success rates

In 2017, ECU has a lack of wiS applying for promotion (*Figure.2*), even though evidence shows women are highly successful when they do apply and when compared to their male counterparts, with the biggest distinction in SSCI (*Table.2*). There were zero applications in SENG from women, and SNM had low success rates. Data suggests that leaders and potential applicants could be better informed of promotions' standards and processes to address some gaps between perception and practice and ensure a greater sense of fairness.

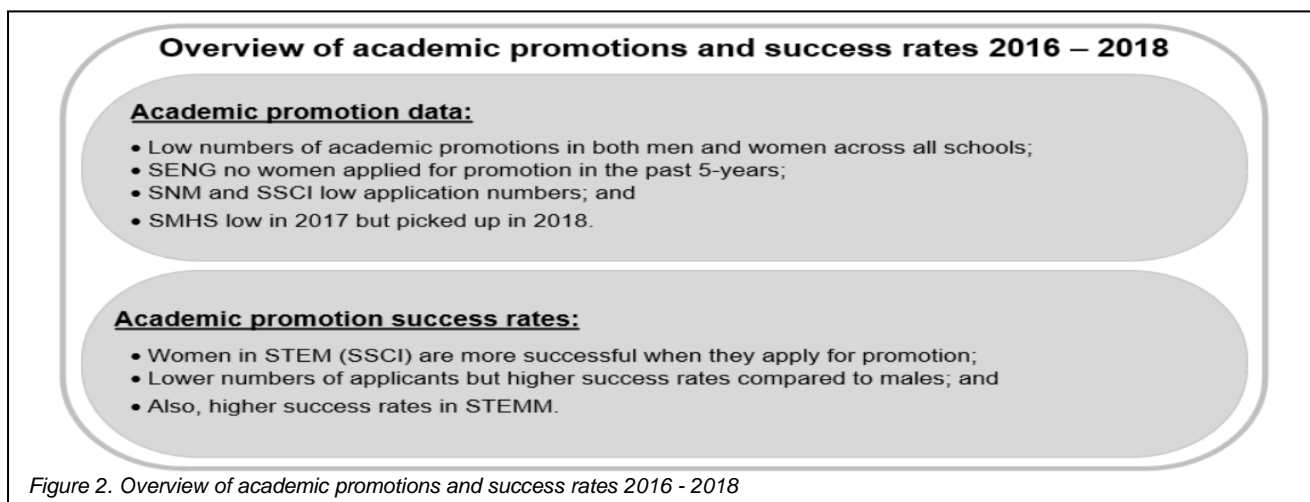


Figure 2. Overview of academic promotions and success rates 2016 - 2018

STEMM disciplines promotion application and success rates ALEVC - E				
2017 - No. applicants and % successful				
School	F		M	
	No. Apps.	% Succ.	No. Apps.	% Succ.
SENG	0	0%	5	80%
SMHS	0	0%	1	100%
SNM	1	100%	0	0%
SSCI	1	100%	2	100%

Table 2 Academic staff promotion application rates and success rates 2017

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>

Staff perceptions - consultation and qualitative data collection

Interviews and targeted focus groups were the two main forms of reviewing staff perceptions towards academic promotion and career advancement into senior levels for wiS.

Qualitative data on career advancement - 2017

Qualitative staff feedback showed dissatisfaction in the academic promotions' process. In 2017, issues were voiced in AS consultations, prompting interviews with staff recently applying for academic promotion (Table.3). Feedback revealed little differences in issues raised by either gender, except for women experiencing difficulty reintegrating, post-career-breaks.

AS Bronze Action Plan Staff consultation 2017 - In-depth Interviews feedback revealed:	
<i>A perception that women are less likely to be promotable/promoted;</i>	<i>A perception that some females are being promoted as a result of some sort of affirmative action policy;</i>
<i>The process is difficult (easier to be promoted by moving to another employer);</i>	<i>Issues for promotion of research staff employed as professional staff but with academic-like profiles - no real mechanism for promotion;</i>
<i>Externally-funded contract employees feel unable to apply due to impact on the budget of the grants under which they are employed.</i>	<i>Instances of male line managers/colleagues dissuading females from applying/lack of coaching from academic supervisors/leaders within the discipline;</i>
<i>Difficulties and misconceptions regarding the criteria and likelihood of success</i>	<i>Lack of a PhD was seen as a barrier to promotion.</i>
Examples of quotes include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"It's not about how good you are, but how good you sell yourself."</i> • <i>"People who have a more public profile or a champion on the panel get promoted."</i> • <i>"Lack of clarity for promotion process."</i> 	
<i>Table 3. Table of quotes from 2017 In-depth Interviews</i>	

In June 2017, ECU conducted in-depth interviews with staff about their academic promotion experiences (Table.4).

AS Bronze Action Plan Staff consultation 2017
<p>A total of 17 interviews were conducted with representatives from all schools (14 females and 3 males). Overall, there was little difference in the issues raised by either females or males, except for experiences with career breaks (namely parental leave) experienced by women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative interviews showed a lower level of satisfaction for career support for WiS. • This could address some of the gaps between perception and practice and ensure a greater sense of fairness.
Key themes:
<p>Promotion Policy/Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a widely held perception that the actual application process for promotion is too arduous and this poses as a disincentive and barrier to applicants. The attitude that applicants did not have time or were 'put off' by the process was a common response. Despite, in reality, there being a limit on the number of pages which applicants submit, many felt it was too convoluted and a barrier and too challenging to overcome.</i>
<p>Career Breaks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Women's careers consisted of breaks for the principal purpose of raising families. This impacted on their ability to accumulate the desired experience for career progression. This is a major issue when applying for promotion and a number of women commented on a system that is biased towards those whose careers which are uninterrupted and therefore provide more opportunities for recognition and promotion.</i>
<p>Leadership Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There was a mixed representation in participants who expressed that they had support and encouragement to promote. Many expressed they did not have career progression/promotion included or discussed in their performance review cycle. Those who did have a mentor or support had successfully progressed and promoted in the system.</i>
<i>Table 4. Breakdown of the 2017 Athena Swan Academic Promotion Interviews during staff consultation</i>

Qualitative data on career advancement - 2019

Subsequently, in June 2019, focus groups were held to discuss barriers (perceived and real) and enablers for academic wiS career advancement (*Table.5*).

STEMM Women's Advancement Program Report
<p>A total of eight (8) focus groups were held during 4th – 6th June 2019 to discuss barriers (perceived and real) and enablers for academic women to advance their STEMM careers at ECU through an external consultant.</p> <p>The focus groups were designed to gain a better understanding of the barriers and enablers for women participating, and succeeding, in academic careers in STEMM at ECU.</p> <p>A total of 55 academics participated; seven of the eight groups consisted of academic women representing Academic Levels A to E, and one group specifically comprised line managers with both male and female representation.</p> <p>As a result, 6 key themes were identified representing the overall discussion and feedback from the 8 focus groups: self; opportunity; logistics; line management; support networks; communication and knowledge.</p> <p>In addition, participant responses were categorised to show key enablers and barriers (perceived and real) to career advancement for female academics in STEMM.</p>
Key themes:
<p>Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Role / career development.</i>
<p>Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Missed career-related opportunities due to carer responsibilities.</i>
<p>Logistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Time restrictions due to carer responsibilities, parking on campus, individual childcare arrangements, work-related travel and working in a regional area.</i>
<p>Line management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Management and leadership skills of line managers, and their influence on applying for academic promotion.</i>
<p>Support networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Availability of support networks for women in STEMM.</i>
<p>Communication and knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Depth of line manager and staff knowledge of academic career planning and promotion.</i>
<p><i>In addition, participant responses were categorised to show key enablers and barriers (perceived and real) to career advancement for female academics in STEMM.</i></p>

Table 5. Breakdown of the 2019 Supporting Women in STEMM for Academic Promotion Focus Groups.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

From the ASBAP, ECU's actions specifically for the promotion of wiS are referenced under:

- *Bronze Action Item 3.1* - Improve retention and promotion of women in STEMM careers.
- *Bronze Action Item 3.2* - Improve career progression for female academic staff by increasing applications for promotion to ALEVC and ALEVE in STEMM disciplines.

To facilitate implementation, ECU took the extra step of developing strategies to address each action, and these were tracked and monitored through ECU's ASBAP 'Tracking Dashboard'. Updates to the Tracking Dashboard are reported to ECU's University Executive (UE) fortnightly by the AS lead under a standing item (See Cygnet 1 for more details).

Since these strategies were implemented in 2018, ECU has undertaken many activities relating to wiS simultaneously, based on ASBAP actions and related plans. Summary of activities below (Tables.6&7):

Actions directly related to improving wiS disciplines:

Activity/Output	From ASBAP	Implemented	Appraisal	Further Action (if required)
High-level Bronze Action Plan Item				
Bronze Action Item 3.1 - Improve retention and promotion of women in STEMM careers.	Yes	2018 – 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the past five years, ECU held ongoing consultation sessions with wiS disciplines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While significant progress has been made on Action 3.1 and 3.2, more targeted actions addressing issues for wiS disciplines will be implemented because of this Cygnet Award and resulting Action Plan. • Executive Deans of STEMM schools undertaking ongoing monitoring of issues.
Bronze Action Item 3.2 - Improve the career progression for female academic staff but increasing applications for promotion to ALEVC to ALEV E in STEMM disciplines.	Yes	2018 - 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior staff members in STEMM disciplines are assigned KPIs to improve wiS promotions. • The AS Data Dashboard will continue to provide leaders with up-to-date data on wiS. 	
Promotion policy/procedures				
Updates made to the ASPEO Framework.	No	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on feedback updates were made to the ASPEO Framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (See below) A project has commenced to begin to replace the ASPEO Framework.
Academic Promotion information sessions.	No	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held May & July annually • Information Session for applicants (pre round commencement) • Information Sessions for applicants (mid round) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (See below) A project has commenced to begin to replace the ASPEO Framework. • Also, refer to tapping potential applications for promotion and advise them to attend workshops.
Updates to documentation – Academic Promotions Form and a new Academic Promotion SharePoint site.	No	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building an Academic CV sessions are held virtually each year with two online sessions held in 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WiS have a more developed understanding of how to apply for academic promotion. • (See below) A project has commenced to begin to replace the ASPEO Framework.
Commenced the Contemporary Academic Career Framework Project.	No	Commenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key outcome of the Project is to create foundational principles that reflect the emerging capabilities and skill sets required to be a contemporary academic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will better support our academic staff in establishing and developing lifelong productive and fulfilling careers and achieve their career aspirations.
Analyse workforce segments for cases of stalled progression and assist line managers to address.	Yes	Ongoing CACP 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual schools in their own informal ways (spreadsheets and informal meetings). Some schools had regular, informal meetings and kept bespoke records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, through projects like the <i>Contemporary Academic Careers Framework Project</i> aiming to create foundational principles to support academic staff with their career development and aspirations. • ECU is looking to formalise some of the processes around progression. This will help with the staff perceptions.

Actions directly related to improving wiS disciplines (continued):

Activity/Output	From ASBAP	Implemented	Appraisal	Further Action (if required)
Career breaks (parental/caring logistics)				
Developed & published 'Parental leave' and 'Return to Work from Parental leave' booklets supporting women to continue their careers and know how to come back to work.	No	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DVC RF presented at staff induction training sessions that are attended by all new staff at ECU, 'Reach your Potential', displaying the Parental leave' booklets and hard copies are provided to attendees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available on the intranet under 'Working Parents at ECU' webpages. Regular web page monitoring shows resources are being accessed. No further action required.
Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity - Discussion paper released.	No	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had a whole-of-university discussion panel conducted featuring over 100 staff members. Featured the DVC RF, SDVC, HRSC and a Women in STEMM as a guest panel member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, feedback from academic and professional staff will continue to be used to assist ECU in developing an inclusive and consistent approach to achievement relative to opportunity.
Annual Athena Swan Advancement Scheme to support wiS.	Yes	Started 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has provided over \$200,000 in funding for working parents and gender equity leaders. To-date 27 winners, 26 women; 21 STEMM staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide scheme annually with one of the categories devoted to supporting wiS - AS STEMM Subsidy category.
Creation of the Athena Swan Parent and careers Car Parking Bays.	Yes	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 91 dedicated parking bays for staff and students with parenting drop-off responsibilities and/or carer responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bays are clearly marked in purple with signage that shows the ECU and Athena Swan member logo.
Leadership support				
Engage an independent expert to work with identified female staff to assist in preparing for promotions round.	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not actioned - During ongoing monitoring, Executive Deans had given feedback that independent experts were not what was needed. This formed more evidence to undertake this Cygnet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, qualitative evidence showed this wasn't the target approach wanted/needed by wiS. A new approach to support wiS to prepare for academic promotion will be implemented.
'Self – Role and career development'				
Leadership shadowing programs.	No	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities within the School to shadow senior executives School executives providing leadership training for women i.e., SNM provided 'Dare to Lead' training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools to provide opportunities as necessary.
Opportunity				
Recruit from underrepresented groups.	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples: the SENG has an ongoing EOI for women to join the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent EOI to allow wiS to apply at any time. Ensure recruitment advertising stating flexible working arrangements highlighted.
Line management and support networks				
Conscious effort to nominate women for awards.	Ongoing	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DVC RF and the DVC (Research) have committed to ensuring women and continually nominated for external awards and supported with nominations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DVC(SE&I) addressing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in VC and National Awards through targets actions in the ECU Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Blueprint 2020-2021 and subsequent Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
Women at junior levels to be partnered with a mentor/buddy.	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ASBAP action was for Schools to assign women at junior levels with a mentor/buddy (either their school or another STEMM school), with experience in academia. This wasn't undertaken consistently across all schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative feedback referenced a lack of understanding of mentorship/sponsorship, especially for wiS at junior levels. Review the intersecting challenges for wiS and age, ALEV of mentors and support networks.

Actions directly related to improving wiS disciplines (continued):

Activity/Output	From ASBAP	Implemented	Appraisal	Further Action (if required)
Communication and knowledge				
Report of enabler and inhibitors to career advancement for wiS from external consultant.	Yes	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action in the ASBAP 3.1a) was to have an External consultant engage with wiS and seek unbiased feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was completed through two separate external consultants in 2019 and 2022.
Expand the interviews/analysis of female and male experiences of promotion from 2016-2018 and both successful/unsuccessful candidates to determine barriers experienced.	Yes	2017/ 2019 & 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action was completed through the 2017 interviews along with the follow-up Women in STEMM focus groups held in June 2019 and again in the wiS Focus Groups in October 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standard review of processes for academic promotion will take place by Human Resources Services Centre after each round of academic promotion.
External presentations and submissions				
Presentations at conferences etc. giving women opportunities for development.	No	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give opportunities for early career staff members to present at conferences. Opportunities for academic and professional staff to contribute to conferences that contribute to increasing wiS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support women to submit to relevant conferences. Athena Swan team within ODVC RF to continue to scout for presentation opportunities.
Actively seek feedback from women in STEMM, via focus groups, to identify ways to mitigate the disadvantage to their research productivity.	Yes	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held the 'Supporting Women for Academic Promotion' Focus Groups in 2019 and AS wiS Focus Groups in 2022. AS Team ran ad-hoc consultation with AS Champions within individual schools as requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from wiS will take place over the following years as part of the Cygnet Award and applications for Athena Swan Silver in 2024. All Athena Swan qualitative data analysis to be shared with relevant stakeholders. Feedback from the 2022 wiS Focus Groups to be shared with Contemporary Academic Careers Framework Project Team. No additional action to be taken.
Developed and completed 2022 Women in STEMM Focus Groups (AS wiSFG).	Yes	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis also extended to a desk audit of appropriate focus groups and comparative analysis with the 2017 (2016 – 2018) Athena Swan staff consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional action to be taken.

Table 6. Actions directly related to improving wiS disciplines.

Activities/outputs that indirectly support the career advancement of wiS (Table.7):

<u>Other actions related to improving wiS career advancement</u>				
Activity/Output	From ASBAP	Implemented	Appraisal	Further Action (if required)
Building an inclusive workplace				
Develop strategies within the ECU Strategic Plan to address gaps of underrepresentation of marginalised groups.	Yes	2017 and 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per the action item 1.3 Gender equity, diversity and inclusion is well built into the <i>2017 – 2021 Strategic Plan: World Ready</i>, and the current <i>Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026: Towards the University of the Future</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECU will continue to action equity goals as part of the Strategic Plan.
Reporting on gender equity strategies on a regular basis.	Yes	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 1.2 under the “Entrench Athena Swan” theme in the ASBAP ensures we have equity standing items on fortnightly UE meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athena Swan to continue to report on a fortnightly basis to the VC and University Executive as well as presentations to ECU Council, Equity and Diversity Committee, Academic Board and Research and Higher Degrees Committee.
Promote role models of women in STEMM to the wider University.	Yes	2018 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per ASBAP 2.4c) there is SAGE Page articles in every fortnightly ECU Newsletters. ‘Our Stories’ Page on the ECU intranet showcasing visible role models from various members of our community pursue their studies and careers at ECU in both academic and professional capacities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECU will continue to showcase wiS as part of the series. Continue to ask, “as a woman in STEM, what or who inspired them to pursue their career in their chosen field”.
Creation of an LGBTIQ+ Staff Network and LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee.	Yes	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under item 4.5 in the ASBAP, ECU aims to develop a coordinated approach to activities designed to building a wholly inclusive culture. The ECU LGBTIQ+ Staff Network is for all LGBTIQ staff members to connect and support each other through social events and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECU’s first LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee, named Pride @ ECU, was established in 2019. ECU will continue to highlight our trans- and gender-diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those who love with a disability.
ECU is a member of Pride in Diversity, the national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion.	No	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pride in Diversity, the national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion. ECU participates in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) which is the national bench marking study that allows us to assess our progress in LGBTIQ+ inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This assessment includes a yearly survey to measure the visibility and success of our LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiatives and for staff to have their say.
Commit to having diverse representation on panels and presentations for ECU internal events and on external event staff participate in.	No	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECU subscribes to the ‘panel pledge’, that we are committed if requested to participate in a panel or forum, to ask the organiser about the gender and diversity balance of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECU continues to uphold those values and regularly turns down invitation to be part of panels where there is no diversity in existing speakers.
Provide a Diversity Development Framework for all staff.	Yes	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Framework is a multi-modal, multi-layered framework that facilitates an equitable approach to staff development in all areas of diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Framework is always available on the ECU intranet for self-directed learning for staff. No further action is required.

Other actions related to improving wiS career advancement (continued)

Activity/Output	From ASBAP	Implemented	Appraisal	Further Action (if required)
Provide Trans, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary Support and developed a set of Guidelines.	Yes	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Guidelines are designed to provide information and support to anyone who has previously, is currently, or may in the future affirm their gender within ECU, regardless of the language they use to describe their identity or where they are in their personal journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Guidelines are available on the ECU intranet and no further action is required.
Development of an 'Inclusive Language Guide' and an LGBTIQ Inclusive Data Collection Guide.	No	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECU's Inclusive Language Guides will help staff and students increase their knowledge and awareness of how to use inclusive language at the University. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Guides are available on the ECU intranet and no further action is required.
Participate in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI).	No	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This national bench marking study allows ECU to assess progress in LGBTIQA+ inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an ongoing action as part of the ECU Equity Office.
Data Dashboards				
Development of the Athena Swan Data Dashboard - a bespoke data dashboard created within 'Tableau', the data analytics software and visualisation platform, was developed by ECU's Human Resources Service Centre (HRSC) in conjunction with Enterprise Analytics & Performance Improvement (EAPI).	Yes	2018/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 1.2 specified a new AS data requirement. The dashboard provides staff-based information relating to gender break downs for part-time work, separations, and parental leave arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further views to be created to better support schools to address issues of gender inequality. Continued updates to views will be investigated and actions as required.
Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard.	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tracking Dashboard shows ASBAP items that are not-yet complete, therefore, still relevant as items are tracking as 'at risk', having 'minor' or 'major' issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-reference to Cygnet 1 if required for more details. This is an ongoing item.
Project Manager position, SAGE conference, Decadal plan champions etc)				
Creation of a new ongoing full-time position the Program Manager – Athena Swan, reporting to the DVC(RF).	No	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Manager aims to support and maintain ECU ASBAP and liaises with other departments to ensure actions were completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program Manager is an ongoing position and will continue to advance wiS through the ASBAP.
Presentations at conferences etc. giving women opportunities for development.	No	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give opportunities for early career staff members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support women to submit to relevant conferences.
Sponsorship of conferences of importance to wiS.	No	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I.e., the SAGE conference where the Athena Swan lead presented on advancing wiS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to sponsor relevant conferences.
Submissions to the Australia Government strategies.	No	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submissions to Advancing Women in STEMM, STEM Women Australia and ECU have become Women in STEM Decadal Plan Champions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to submit items to relevant Australian Government departments.
Actively seek feedback from women in STEMM, via focus groups, to identify ways to mitigate the disadvantage to their research productivity.	Yes	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held the 'Supporting Women for Academic Promotion' Focus Groups in 2019 and AS wiS Focus Groups in 2022. AS Team ran ad-hoc consultation with AS Champions within individual schools as requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from wiS will take place over the following years as part of the Cygnet Award and applications for Athena Swan Silver in 2024. No additional action to be taken.
Developed and completed 2022 Women in STEMM Focus Groups (AS wiSFG).	Yes	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis also extended to a desk audit of appropriate focus groups and comparative analysis with the 2016 AS staff consultation. 	

Table 7. Activities/outputs that indirectly support the career advancement of wiS

Building an inclusive workplace

Barriers to promotion into senior levels for wiS can be from multiple and diverse areas. ECU aims to create a supportive and inclusive workplace where individuals feel safe to be themselves and address any intersectional sub-barriers through the activities in *Table.7*.

Constraints

Partial progress has been made, however, as with ECU's Cygnet Award 1, further progress was not possible due to the result of competing priorities against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, (*Figure.3*) which resulted in limitations to staff resourcing (including budget/funding changes and recruitment freezes).

Impact on resourcing during the COVID-19 pandemic:

With several staff being taken off business-as-usual tasks to work on projects/initiatives that supported the University's journey through the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacted resource allocation of support services resulted in leaner teams operating on core business. This was further exacerbated by challenges such as recruitment activity freezes and reduction to funding.

Disruptions to staffing as a result of the pandemic response impacted the progression of wiS-related Athena Swan actions due to the redirecting of support services and resources. By way of example, key members of the HRSC were assigned other work relating to staffing measures aligned to mitigating the financial impact of COVID-19. This directly impacted progress on Athena Swan-related activities.

In 2021, a number of staff transitioned into retirement, and this meant many staff, including senior women in STEMM disciplines, left the University. Although there was every effort to replace these wiS, the replacements were mostly in lower academic levels. This has further affected the gap in the headcount and pipeline for wiS. This was particularly impactful for SSCI where 3 ALEVD, or 60% of women at ALEVD left.

ECU managed the financial impacts and revenue shortfalls of COVID-19 through multiple cost-saving measures:

- Expenditure review;
- Temporary freeze on staff recruitment (and introduction of a decision-making recruitment panel);
- Active management of staff leave; and
- Targeted staffing measures for academic and professional staff members.

Figure 3. Explanation of partial progress due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

OUTCOMES

Academic staff headcount - wiS ALEVC-E in 2022

Through monitoring and tracking actions, ECU observed that between 2017 and 2022 the numbers of wiS have only marginally improved. The academic wiS headcount was improving (SSCI and SENG) or being maintained where relevant since 2017. In 2019, the wiS headcount was stronger, however, due to COVID-19 the proportion of wiS dropped back in 2020/2021 (*Figure.4*).

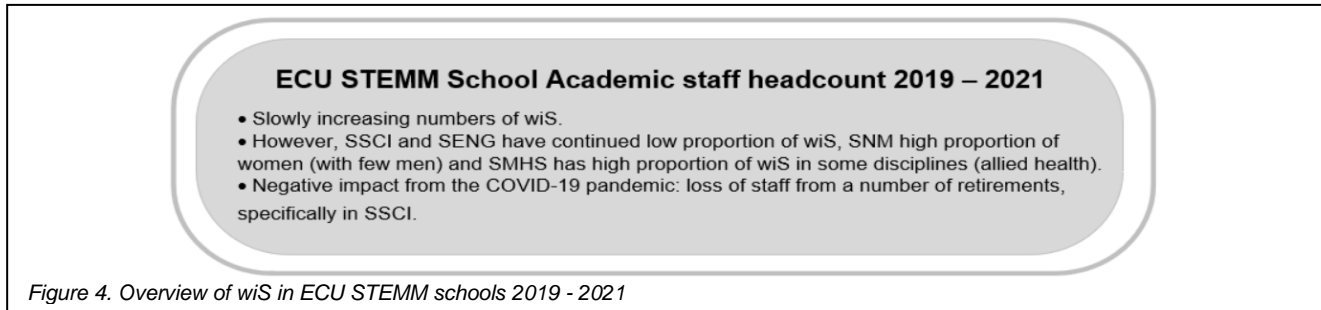


Figure 4. Overview of wiS in ECU STEMM schools 2019 - 2021

SSCI had several senior women retire and were later replaced by women in lower-level positions. For SMHS, some disciplines had similar numbers of women, however, the scissor graph is moving towards a more favourable position where women and men are closer across the academic levels (*Figure.5*). SNM didn't have issues with headcount but does have issues in gender disparity and gender diversity, to be addressed in a subsequent Cygnet.

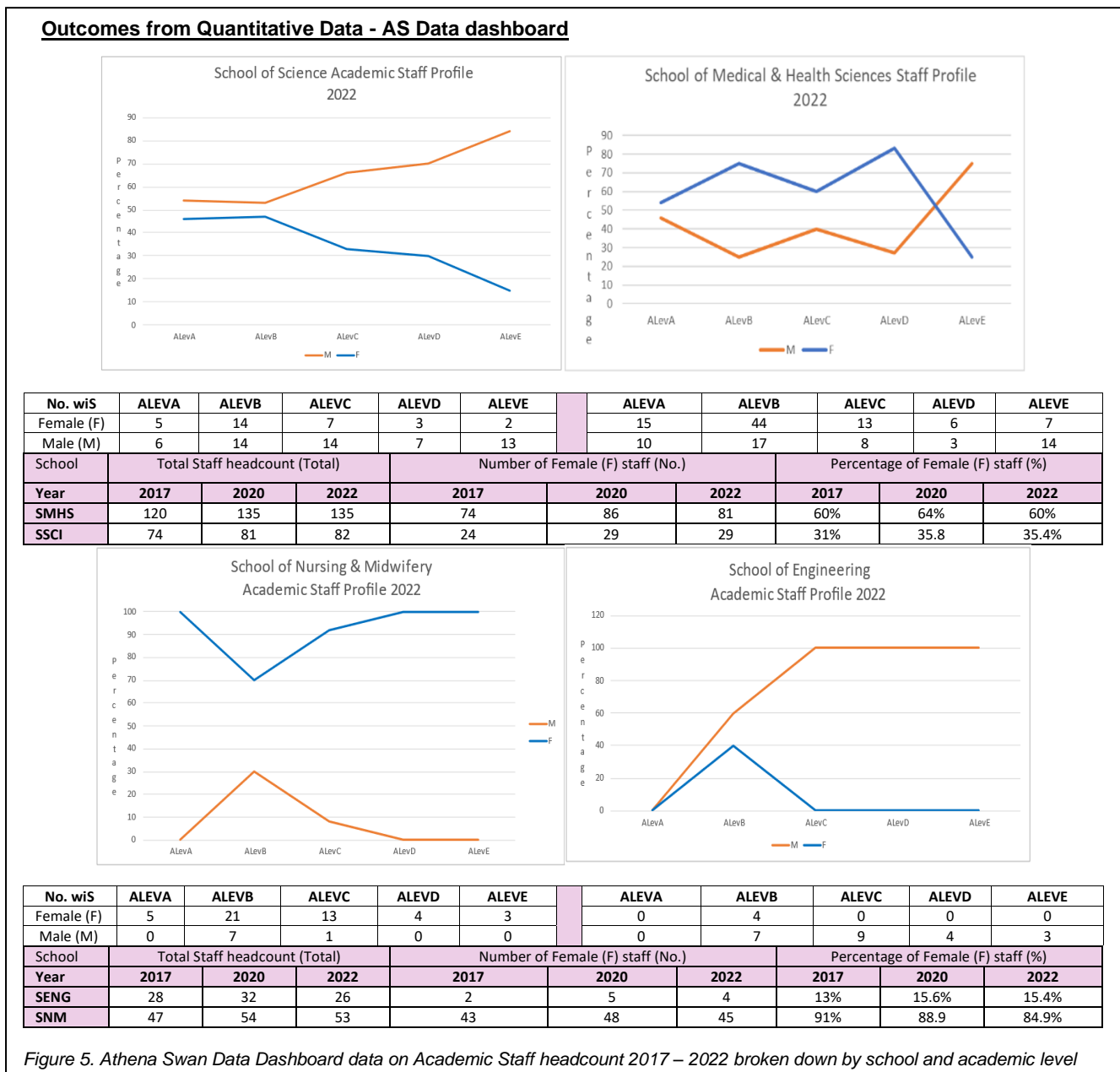
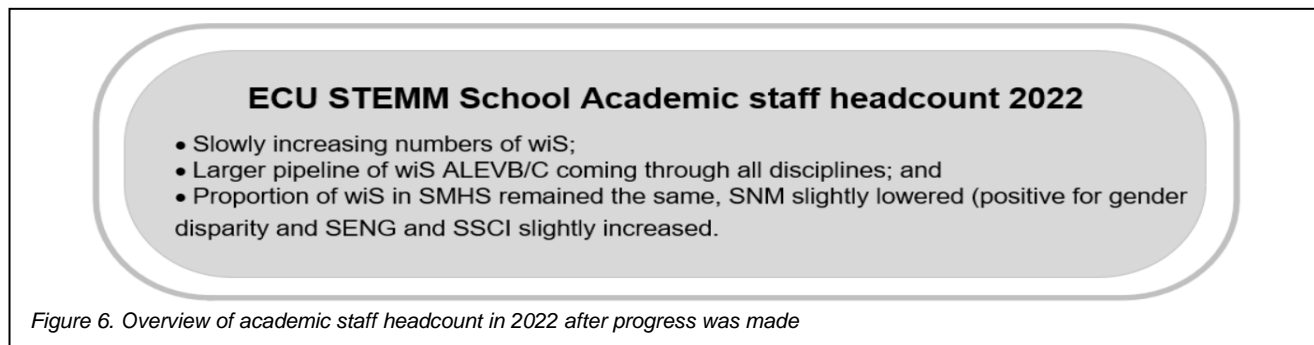


Figure 5. Athena Swan Data Dashboard data on Academic Staff headcount 2017 – 2022 broken down by school and academic level

ECU continues to improve academic wiS headcount, building an ongoing pipeline of wiS coming through ECU (Figure.6). However, in 2020/2021 the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant many staff retired from higher levels, severely depleting the proportion of wiS.



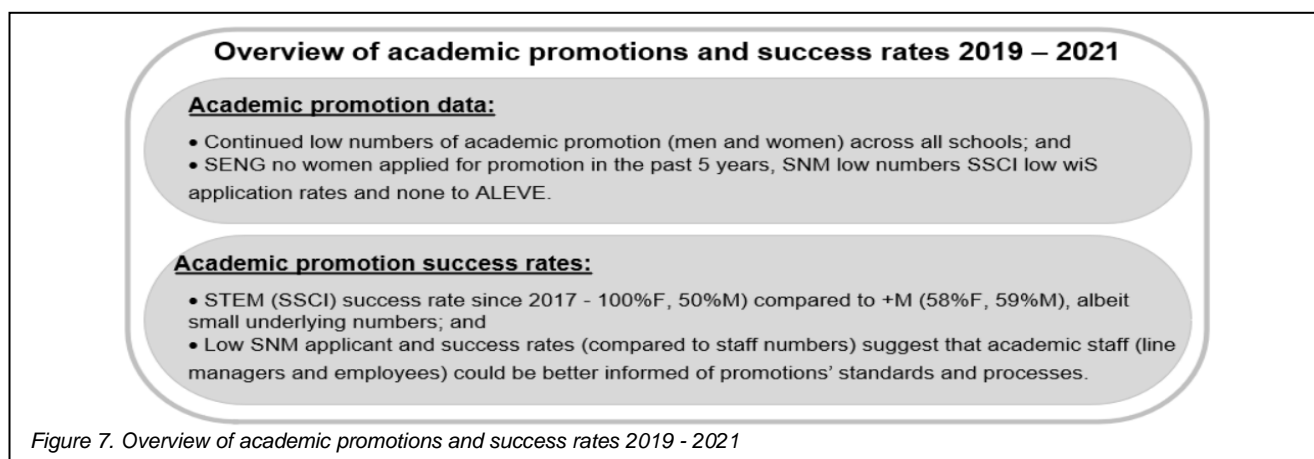
Data from 2022 (Figure.5) revealed that, as was the case in 2017, women are still under-represented in STEM (SENG +SSCI) and over-represented in +M (SNM). Despite high numbers at ALEVB in STEMM, the numbers of women drop from ALEVB to ALEVC and ALEVD to ALEVE, leading to a greater proportion of women pooled in lower levels and lack of a pipeline of women progressing to senior levels from ALEVC. SMHS continues to be the one school with a typical ‘scissors’ pattern, where despite a large pool of women, there is a crossover at ALEVD to ALEVE. The remaining schools are highly skewed to males (SENG/SSCI) or female-dominated (SNM).

Promotion application and success rates

The number of promotion applications from women ALEVC-E only slightly increased in SMHS/SNM, didn’t improve in SSCI, and SENG had zero promotion applications from women over five years². Hence, the barrier is still not adequately removed and is a Key Priority Area³.

A broader approach was required when analysing data because the number of promotions in any year-to-year timeframe per school are very small and patterns can be difficult to determine. All observations are based on small numbers, however, the averages for staff applying for promotion displays a positive outlook as numbers are slightly improving. The ‘pipeline’ of women is being addressed and with future action taken, expect to see more promotions in the coming years. The applications for promotion have slightly improved, and although more applications are needed especially at lower levels and earlier in women’s careers, the established success rate for women is at a good rate and we aim to maintain this.

In 2019, the academic promotions and success rates looked to be increasing across all schools but fell away again in 2020/2021 (Figure.7).



To report on this result, ECU re-evaluated evidence from focus groups, in-depth interviews, and desktop analysis, with findings indicating there remain significant opportunities to improve practices for promotion and career advancement more broadly.

² Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) only make up 27% of the workforce across all STEM industries, just 23% of senior management and 8% of CEOs in STEM-qualified industries are women - <https://www.industry.gov.au/news/state-stem-gender-equity-2022>

³ ECU acknowledges that the underrepresentation of wiS is the result of multiple intersecting social, cultural, and economic influences that impact the entry, progression, and retention of wiS careers, and recognises that many ongoing and concurrent activities are needed to address this wider issue.

As low staff headcount for wiS is an issue for ECU and a further sub-barrier for wiS relates to patterns of compression for women into junior levels (*Figure.8*). As a result, Professor Cobie Rudd, as AS Lead, serves on every Academic Promotions Assessment Committee to assess all applications each year. The challenge for many schools appears to be in re-building numbers of women in the mid-senior career ALEVC-D part of the pipeline to provide career progression opportunities for the women at ALEVC and build a pool of candidates for ALEVE.

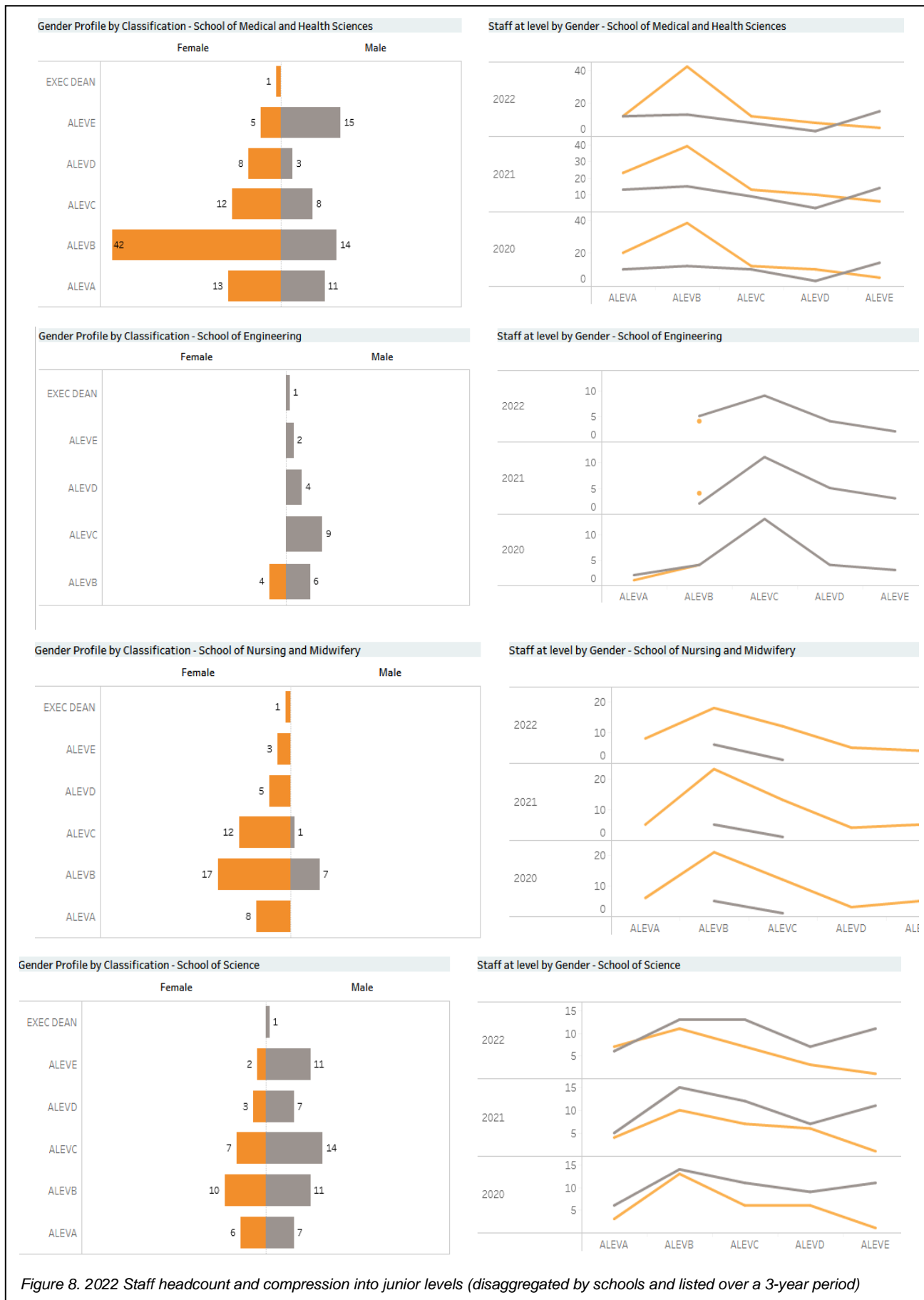


Figure 8. 2022 Staff headcount and compression into junior levels (disaggregated by schools and listed over a 3-year period)

Over the past five years ECU has tracked academic promotions and analysis has shown:

SMHS – Female dominated across all levels until ALEVE where the classic ‘scissor’ cross-over is evident with only 25% being female (5/20 staff). Applicant ratios for promotion are consistent with the representation of women for each level of the profile (60-75%) until ALEVD. Applicant ratios to ALEVD were higher but have fallen in 2021/2022. ALEVE applicant ratios for women were stronger in the period to 2018-2020 but since has fallen to a level that is well below the representation of women in the profile at the senior levels (i.e., 80% women at ALEVD). Success rates for women who apply for promotion in this school are generally higher than the rates for men.

SSCI – Low application rates but when women do apply their success rates were generally high. SSCI shows a building pipeline of women coming through promotion at ALEVC/D from 2018-2020 but regressing again by 2021.

SNM – Even as a female-dominated school, women in SNM don’t show a higher success rate in promotion than other schools and no women have applied for promotion after ALEVD. Increased numbers of applications in this school to ALEVC/D in 2019/20 but success rates weren’t high, and this may have contributed to lower applicant numbers in subsequent years. Career progression in SNM seems to hit a ceiling at ALEVD and this may not be seen (by women at lower levels) as an available advancement context. Academic promotion success rates for men have been zero.

SENG - No data is available for SENG as zero women have applied for promotion in SENG.

In 2022, ECU has not improved applications for academic promotion from ALEVC-E wiS compared to 2017 (*Table.8*), although there is evidence to suggest this may be due to the COVID-19 impact and the retirement of ECU staff. The only exception is SMHS who did have an increase in applications to 2020 but then dropped again in 2022 (*Table.9*).

<u>STEMM disciplines promotion application and success rates ALEVC – E</u>	
Redacted	
<i>Table 8. Academic staff promotion application rates and success rates 2017 compared to 2022</i>	

Action 1.1	Develop a school specific promotion panel session (for each STEMM school)
Action 2.1	Develop a checklist supporting line managers on career advancement to inform all gender/Academic Levels C through to Academic Level E (all ECU staff).

New Cygnet	Complete a Cygnet to investigate the lack of diversity across the SNM (gender, CALD etc.)
New Cygnet	Complete a Cygnet to investigate the lack of gender diversity in SENG

STEMM schools Academic Promotion trend data from the ECU AS Data Dashboard – ALEV B – ALEVE:

Redacted

Table 9. Athena Swan Data Dashboard findings 2017 – 2022

ECU identified, based on action outcomes from the 2018 ASBAP, the actions themselves were perhaps not specific enough to address the individual complexities within each school for academic promotion/career advancement. Also, SNM had no actions assigned to address their gender disparity or academic promotion issues.

Data collection and limitations

A data limitation was identified that as well as number of applicants, it would be useful to analyse the proportion of the eligible pool who had applied. This will be addressed in future reporting.

The wiS Focus Groups (wiSFG) in 2022, were a primary source of lived experience data, providing an abundance of positive feedback and opportunities for improvement. In parallel, ECU has been undertaking an initiative to modernise and streamline our academic workload model. Therefore, it was decided not to undertake additional data collection for this cygnet over concerns around survey fatigue.

Due to small numbers of SENG women, ECU lacked the ability to receive more SENG data. Also, no specific actions were assigned to SNM, however, they were still included in some ASBAP actions.

The extensive wiS data collected over the past six years allowed ECU to further develop targeted actions for wiS. Through specific demographic questions, ECU has begun to understand intersectional needs, including those for culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) staff, Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples, international academic staff and staff living with a disability.

ECU relies on self-reporting for members of the LGBTIQA+ community, therefore, having an anonymous portion of the focus groups/interviews provided the opportunity for more honest feedback. The wiS focus was a key aspect of the previous data collection, however, the need for a more intensive intersectional approach was provided through qualitative feedback and will be helpful when removing and/or reducing barriers, as consideration will be given to diverse perspectives driving targeted actions. ECU's approach to capture intersectionality was limited as we didn't ask demographic questions regarding whether wiS had other factors influencing their lives. This was asked in the in-depth questions to allow for more discussion, providing a more practical opportunity for wiS to disclose any complexities later. ECU will address these intersecting areas within the Actions 1.1 and 2.1

Action 3.2	Enhance the ECU Athena Swan Data Dashboard
Action 3.3	Increase internal Athena Swan consultation and reporting on key gender equity issues

New Cygnet	Complete a Cygnet to investigate target structures to support women in research.
New Cygnet	Complete a Cygnet to investigate the lack of diversity across the SNM (gender, CALD etc.)
New Cygnet	Complete a Cygnet to investigate the lack of gender diversity in SENG

IMPACT

Focus groups and survey demographics

In 2022, WiSFGs were held (*Table.10*) to capture the lived experiences of wiS disciplines and included a survey to capture demographic and intersectional data (*Figure.9*) and to confirm if actions were changing from 2019 compared to 2022. Staff perception of ECU and the attempts to negate barriers for wiS is improving, as the feedback from the wiSFG shows that the perceptions of being able to get promoted are changing more positively.

Outcomes from the wiSFG are outlined below:

2022 Athena Swan Women in STEMM Focus Group

In October/November 2022, a total of eight AS wiSFG, were again held to discuss barriers (perceived and real) and enablers for wiS career advancement. The wiSFG were attended by 44 academic wiS from the relevant STEMM schools participating in the focus groups.

To support the wiSFG, a short survey was conducted during the sessions to gain quantitative data (demographics). wiSFG were conducted by an external consultant to have an independent assessment of the results.

The aims were:

- To re-visit the issues raised in focus groups in 2019 to support an assessment of whether still issues remain the same or progress made.
- To explore issues raised by current data on career advancement and promotion with staff at the school-level.
- To review the current actions/strategies in the Athena Swan Action Plan for feasibility and potential efficacy and to collect any alternative suggestions.

Key themes:

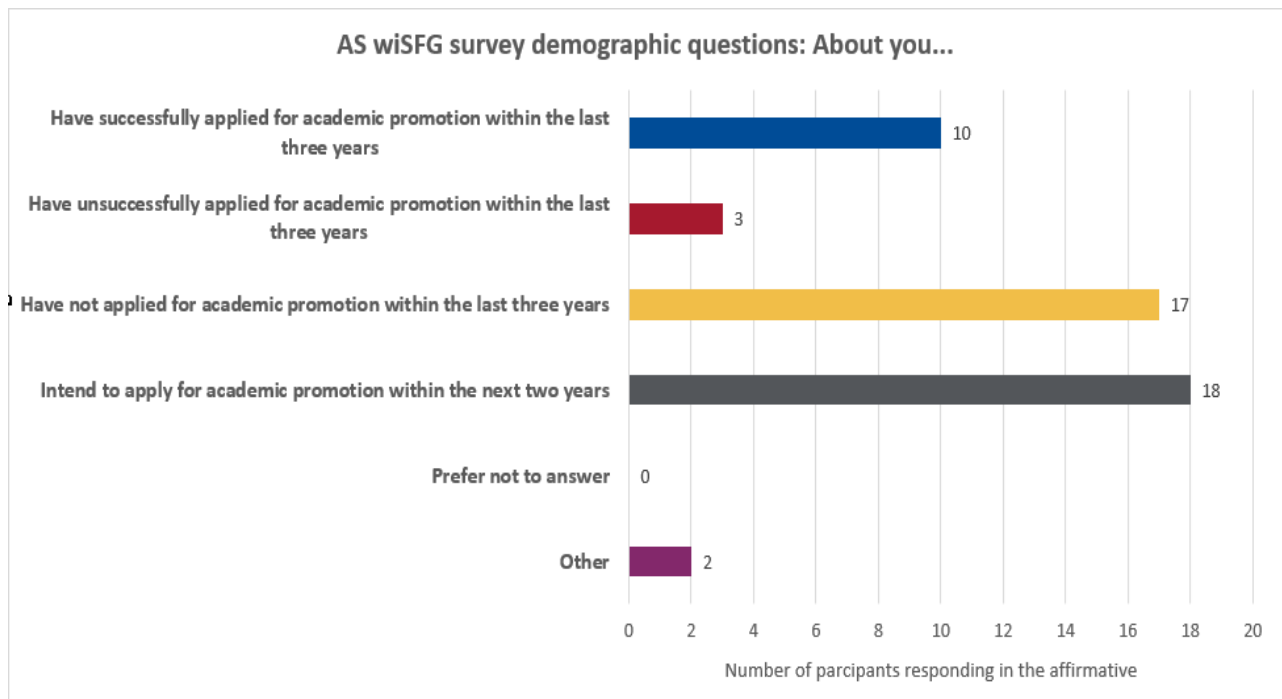
- **Skills abilities and confidence**
- **Knowledge and understanding of the academic promotions**
- **Career Framework (ASPEO)**
- **ASPEO framework having adequate flexibility**
- **Workload allocations within the team/school, structural issues, contract security, work role, research funding.**
- **Roles and responsibilities outside of work**
- **Access to practical local advice and encouragement**

Academic Level					
School	ALEVA	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
Science	2	7	3		1
Medical Health Sciences		8	3	4	1
Nursing and Midwifery	1	7	2	1	1
Engineering		3			

Table 10. Breakdown of the 2022 Athena Swan Women in STEMM Focus Groups

ECU survey and demographic information

A survey/poll was conducted with all participants during the session. A total of 40 (out of 44) staff completed the poll, all identified as female, and they reported:



NB: (These categories are not mutually exclusive and therefore numbers do not add up to 40). The 'Other' category applied to those women who had applied for promotion in the last round and were awaiting results.

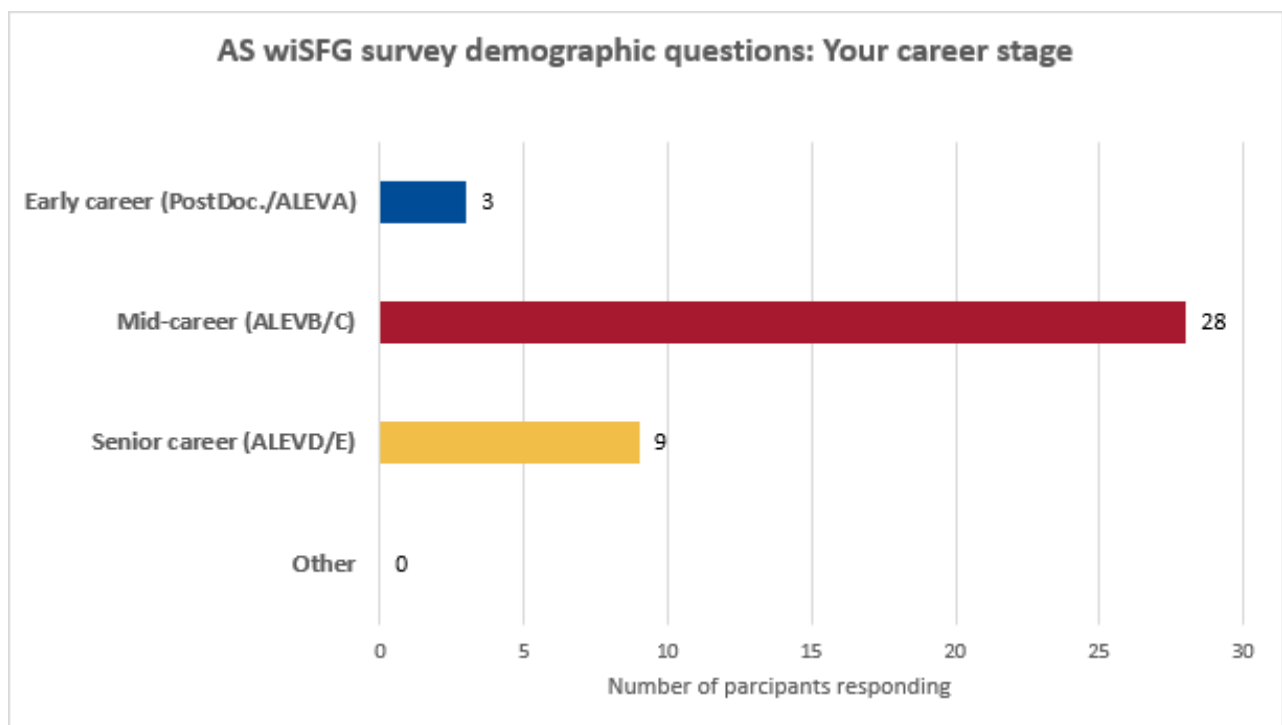


Figure 9. WiS survey information and results

Qualitative data on academic promotion and career advancement (2022)

As part of the wiSFG, ECU asked participants targeted questions to determine the changes in staff perceptions. The groups were then asked to provide feedback on the efficacy of actions from the original ASBAP -what would be most likely to make a difference (Figure. 10).

In 2022, the qualitative data from wiSFGs gave ECU evidence that wiS could see that Schools were trying to address the issues wiS face regarding academic promotion/career advancement and expressed appreciation for ongoing consultation from both AS and HRSC (*Figures. 11&12*).

Reported from those who participated in the focus groups:

- Participants generally found the proposed actions as relevant or obvious but most said they had not directly seen evidence of these actions other than the ‘consulting with women’, one which is obviously what we were all engaged in in the focus group.
- The groups were sceptical about external expertise being particularly useful in the promotions mentoring context.
- It was reinforced again that more important than formal mentoring programs which some individuals were a bit cynical about was local school-level career coaching and assistance to plan one’s approach to promotion enough in advance.
- The provision of coaching and discipline-specific mentoring on building promotion capital in an individual’s particular career stream was universally seen as a critical strategy at the school level There were different views about whether that was best located with line managers or elsewhere in the school.

Figure 10: ECU emerging themes from the 2022 Focus Groups

Survey responses:

- 18 WiS intended to apply for promotion within two years. (There is likely overlap with the group who also indicated they have not applied for promotion within the last 3 years [17]).
- In relation to career stage, the majority (28) identified as mid-career (ALEVB/C) and the second largest group (9) were senior-career (ALEVD/E). The remaining 3 were early-career academics.
- A targeted strategy could identify and focus on support for mid-career academic women in these schools This group of staff, if appropriately supported, could represent a real opportunity to improve outcomes in terms of gender disparity at the senior end of the classification structure in STEMM.
- Responding to staff views on the specific issues identified as career advancement support factors or ‘enablers’ from the Time 1 focus groups:
 - The respondents generally agreed that they had line supervisors/managers who offered practical advice and support.
 - They also agreed that they had access to approachable mentors and sponsors. Individuals who did not feel they had this support, talked openly about their experience.
 - There was no doubt about the criticality of this to their perceived future chances of success in promotion or career advancement generally. This was because the supervisor/manager or influential mentors were the main sources of the other enabling critical factors.

Figure 11: ECU emerging themes from the 2022 Focus Groups

Action 1.1	Develop a school specific promotion panel session (for each STEMM school)
Action 2.1	Develop a checklist supporting line managers on career advancement within STEMM schools

Data Review:

- On a review of the data from the survey, the majority of respondents were mid-career researchers with a total of 28 responses. 71% of responders had never applied or had not been successful in promotion in the last 3 years
- On a scale from 'Agree' to 'Don't know' the range of participant responses was varied.
- The majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the support for academic promotion had increased.
 - Participants who had successfully applied for promotion did not disagree.
 - 50% of the senior wiS agreed support for academic promotion had increased.
 - More mid-career academics didn't know if the support had increased or disagreed that it has increased
- The majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that barriers had increased but there were more who agreed that barriers had increased compared to those who disagreed. Senior-career academic clearly agreed barriers were not increasing. Due to the complex nature of individual career advancement journeys, it was difficult to ascertain if barriers were being reduced to a satisfactory level.
- The range of responses, especially across academic levels indicates that there is no consistent approach across STEM schools for supporting wiS to be promoted into senior levels.

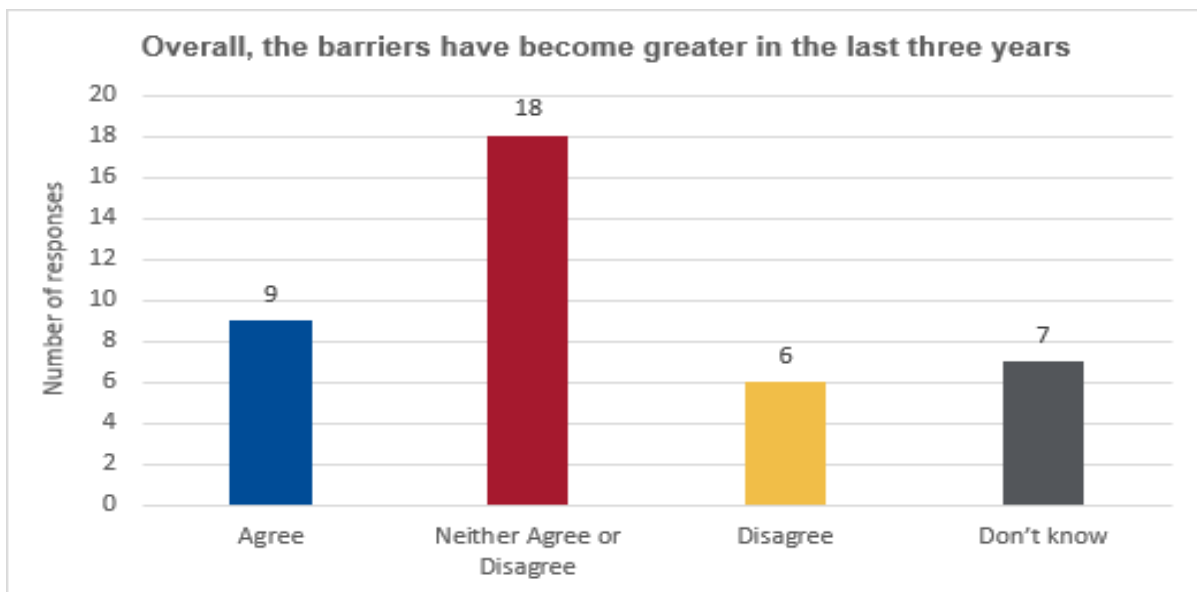
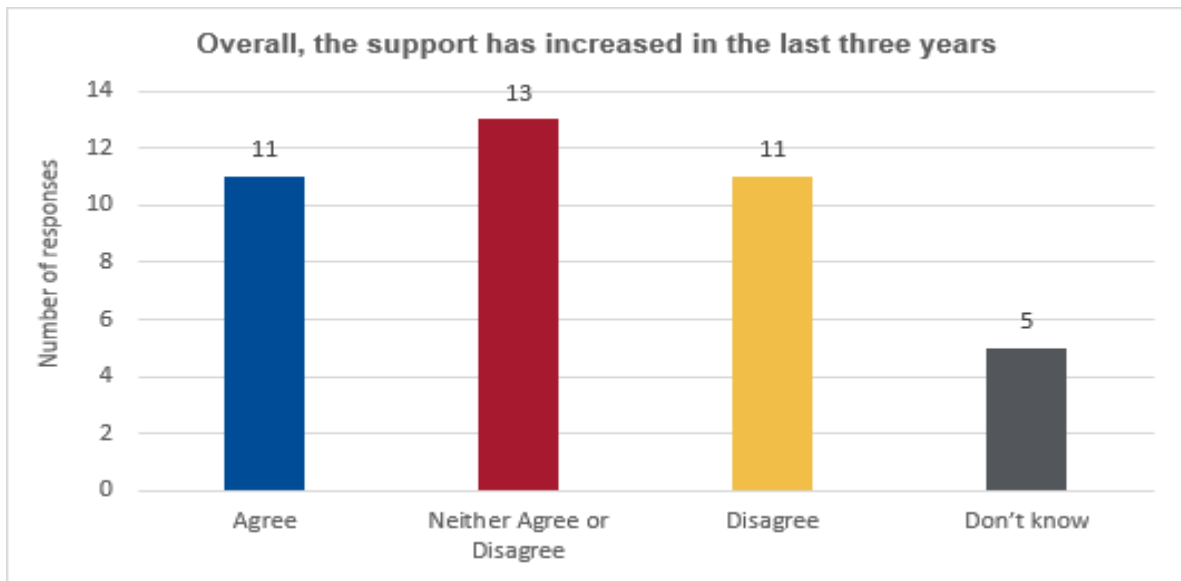
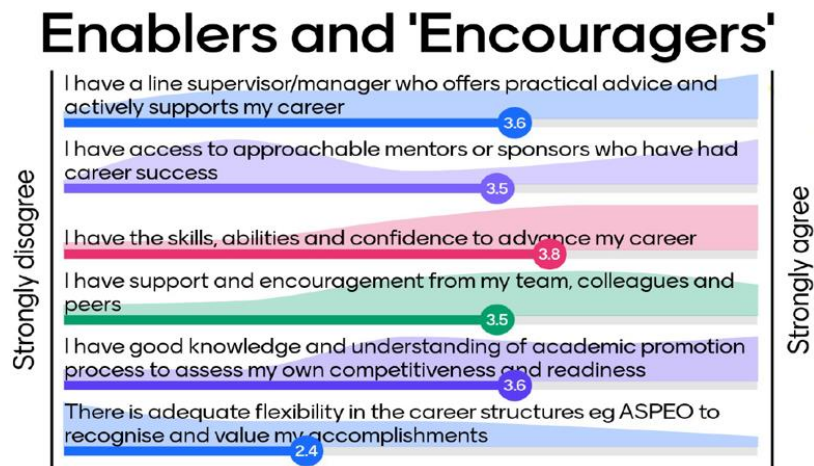


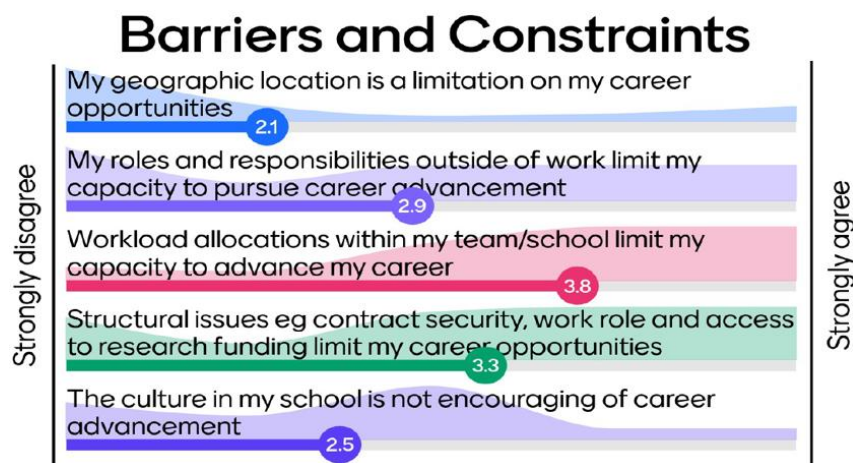
Figure 12: Comparative numbers of responses to the wiSFG survey questions

ECU completed a comparison of 2017, 2019, 2022 focus groups (*Figure.13*). WiSFG participants were asked to consider that past 3 years and give feedback on whether they felt enablers had improved and barriers had decreased.

- The ranges of responses for enablers indicated most generally agreed with the enablers shown below. The mid-career academics had an average of 3.1 satisfaction whereas the senior career academics had a 3.8.



- Comparatively for the barriers and constraints, the mid-career academics had an average of 2.9 whereas the senior career academics had a 2.5. These numbers were also supported by qualitative feedback which portrayed how senior academics saw themselves more 'in-control' or able to reduce their barriers as they got higher in their careers.
- Where the two levels agreed more was that roles and responsibilities outside of work limited both their capacity to pursue career advancement, and structural issues e.g. contract security, work role, and access to research funding, limit their career opportunities.



NB: The questions were asked with 'Strongly agree' as a number 5 and 'Strongly disagree' as a 1.

Figure 13: Comparative numbers showing how participants felt enabler and barriers had changed since the ASBAP

The wiS qualitative interviews in 2022 showed wiS were starting to see positive changes and were developing confidence in University projects being delivered (*Figure.14*).

WiSFGs 2022 feedback examples:

"In our school, we either get no support or get heaps of support."

"I think that [the Executive Dean] is trying to provide leadership opportunities."

"I genuinely felt like the University heard what we are saying for the first time in years"

Figure 14: Examples of feedback form the 2022 As wiSFG

There is an opportunity to provide targeted support to this group as a cohort, linking them to the gender equality priorities in research strategy for access to funding and workload support. This needs to be done with enough lead time to plan and develop their competitiveness.

Continuing barriers

In 2022 wiS still say there are barriers for career advancement and academic promotion (*Table. 11*). Some wiS spoke of unique challenges, but many shared common trials related to roles outside of work. Planning and managing those issues could be on a shared or peer-support basis.

Perceived ‘Enablers’:

- Skills, abilities, and confidence
- Knowledge and understanding of the academic promotions process and requirements.
- Career Framework (ASPEO) (enabler and a barrier)

Perceived ‘Barriers’:

- Workload allocations within the team/school were still a significant constraint as were structural issues such as job security, work role and access to research funding
- The ability for junior wiS to negotiate workload with their line manager
- Roles and responsibilities outside of work that were not easily reconciled with career advancement and a culture within the school supportive of career advancement.
- Access to practical local advice and encouragement.

Emerging themes:	
Enablers	Barriers
<p>Skills, abilities and confidence</p> <p>Successful staff were provided opportunities to get valuable academic experience that was rated in promotions specifically research grants publications and leadership opportunities were cited.</p>	<p>Workload (Negotiating workload)</p> <p>Notable also was that some staff proactively initiated these discussions with their line supervisor and negotiated their workload boundaries to enable them to build aspects of their academic profile important for promotion. Others felt that the relationship they had with their supervisor was not strong enough to support this. The more junior Level A/B staff were less confident about this and would prefer a separate adviser or career coach to their line manager.</p>
<p>Academic promotions process and requirements</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the academic promotions process and requirements was seen as being key to those who had been actively encouraged and coached by their supervisors or mentors on what is expected and how to address the criteria and collate and present their evidence.</p>	<p>Structural issues</p> <p>Workload allocation, contract security, work role and access to research funding was still seen as a significant restraint. Research workload allocations and funding were seen as key to progression particularly beyond Senior Lecturer (Level C).</p>
	<p>Roles and responsibilities outside of work</p> <p>Having a culture within the school supportive of career advancement. Outside of work responsibility still consistently raised in discussion although not as emphatically rated in the poll.</p>
<p>Practical local advice and encouragement</p> <p>Local knowledge and advice was seen by respondents as being directly related to their supervisors/mentors own direct knowledge of the ECU promotions policy and standards. It was also why external expertise or mentoring was seen as unhelpful. Annual promotions information briefings were seen as providing minimal and general information not customised enough to their individual circumstances.</p>	<p>Practical local advice and encouragement</p> <p>The most significant difference between the staff with positive (successful) experiences of the promotion process and career advancement and those with more negative experiences was proactive and practical advice and support provided by line supervisors or others in influential positions usually within the local school context. This support took the form of prompting, reviewing and providing encouraging feedback, as well as being open to negotiating workload changes to assist with building promotion ‘capital’.</p>
<p>Career Framework (ASPEO)</p> <p>The lowest scoring item in the set of <i>enablers</i> polled was the ASPEO framework having adequate flexibility to recognise and value their accomplishments. Whilst many staff in these groups had already been successfully promoted to mid-career there was less confidence that the framework would support success for them at the next level, particularly to Professor (Level E).</p>	<p>Career Framework (ASPEO)</p> <p>There were also a number of staff particularly at Level A/B who seemed to have very little detailed understanding of the ASPEO framework and its requirements. They were repeating information they had been told which was often inaccurate. This was sometimes corrected by more knowledgeable group members.</p>

Table 11. Emerging themes from 2022 Women in STEMM Disciplines Focus Groups

The wiSFGs provided an opportunity to engage with the ECU community on their lived experiences in the workplace. A range of facilitating and inhibiting indicators was collated from responses to identify five emerging themes (Table. 12).

Qualitative feedback from wiS identified at the wiSFG	
Enablers and encouragers	Barriers/inhibiting behaviours
<p>Skills, abilities and confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a formal mentoring system. I've been buddied up with someone in my school that is experienced. The [Executive Dean] is trying to provide leadership opportunities. Looking forward to the change. We can see things are starting to change – signs are looking positive. 	<p>Workload</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'd like to apply for promotion. Is it reasonable to say to my line manager that I want to reduce what I'm currently doing [with teaching workload] to include more university service. i.e. being on more university committees. For career advancement, negotiating the workload is the biggest thing for me.
<p>Academic promotions process and requirements.</p> <p>If wiS had a better knowledge and understanding of the promotions process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are looking to advance our careers and be promoted, but we are sometimes talking with people who went through what you are going through for academic promotion but they did it 15 years ago... We are not upskilling the line managers enough on how to know what the promotion application looks like. For example the recent line manager hasn't gone through internal promotion at ECU before as they are new to the University. 	<p>Structural issues</p> <p>(Workload allocation, contract security, work role and access to research funding)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A barrier to career advancement is workload as there is no real clarity. Workload is just a balancing act. Whenever the diversity or gender thing needs to happen, they don't have a big pool to work from so they ask the same people. I just had a meeting with 15 people – I was the only woman
	<p>Roles and responsibilities outside of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In our school we either get no support... or get heaps of support. The complexities are often to do with different career pathways. The main barrier that I see at this stage for progression, because I'm not considered an Early Career Academic, I couldn't apply for research. There isn't another academic in the school with the same research interests as my research. I didn't study in Australia so I don't have the links for my research that others may have.
Both enablers and barriers	
<p>Practical local advice and encouragement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are looking to advance our careers and be promoted, but we are sometimes talking with people who went through what you are going through for academic promotion but they did it 15 years ago... "People didn't know I was still at this level. You should have applied years ago they said!" 	
<p>Career Framework (ASPEO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I've heard that a lot and the need for a PhD. Something I'd never considered that. Industry never really wanted a PhD, but I can see that is changing. I've been encouraged from the school to look at promotion. I know there is a woman in our school who applied for a ALEVD and she was basically told "you're not there yet because, [Head of promotion panel] only likes to give a promotion after you have been at that level for 5 years". So, she was told do not go for promotion because you won't get it. Because you have only been in that position for 3 years even though she could tick every single box... but they said for her it was 'not time'. 	

Table 12. Emerging themes and quotes from the 2022 Women in STEMM Focus Groups

Action 1.1	Develop a school specific promotion panel session (for each STEMM school)
Action 2.1	Develop a checklist supporting line managers on career advancement to inform all gender/Academic Levels C through to Academic Level E (all ECU staff).
Action 3.1	Complete the ECU Contemporary Academic Career Framework Project
Action 3.2	Enhance the ECU Athena Swan Data Dashboard
Action 3.3	Increase internal Athena Swan consultation and reporting on key gender equity issues

FURTHER ACTION

CYGNET ACTION PLAN

Ref.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions and Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued compression of women in to ALEVB means there is a number of women looking to be promoted in the next 18 months. The focus group participant profiles shows that there are a significant group of women (18-20 in our sample alone) across these STEM schools at mid-career level who are intending to apply for promotion in the next two years and have not applied in the last three years. Schools can utilise People and Culture Plans to capture information. 	<p>Actions</p> <p>1.1 Develop a school specific promotion session (for each STEM school)</p> <p>1.1.1 Be inclusive of promotion challenges for women in STEM disciplines</p> <p>1.1.2 Be aware of intersecting challenges for wiS i.e., CaLD backgrounds, living with a disability.</p> <p>Outputs</p> <p>a) Annual school-based promotion panel session</p> <p>b) WiS to feel more confident through increased information.</p> <p>c) Increased support for the intersections where women fall down.</p>	Q4 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Deans STEM Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) (DVC RF) – Athena Swan lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Deans STEM 	<p>i. Improved applications for academic promotion for ALEVC-E wiS for all schools as per individual targets⁴.</p> <p>ii. Maintain or improve (where relevant) success rates for wiS disciplines in academic promotion ALEVC-E as per individual school targets⁵.</p>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help with ALEVBs and set a tone for ALEVD and ALEVE to encourage applying for promotion and provide information to make the process easier to navigate. 	<p>Actions</p> <p>2.1 Develop a ‘<i>career advancement checklist</i>’ supporting line managers to inform all Academic Levels C through to-E (supporting all ECU staff).</p> <p>2.1.1 Acknowledge ECU’s focus on supporting wiS disciplines and other under-represented groups.</p> <p>2.1.2 Ensure the checklist aligns to University policy, procedures, and</p>	Q1, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) (DVC RF) – Program Manager Athena Swan Athena Swan School Champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) (DVC RF) – Athena Swan lead Executive Deans STEM 	<p>i. Improved applications for academic promotion women in STEM for all schools as per individual targets.</p> <p>ii. Improved success rates for women in STEM disciplines in academic</p>

⁴ Promotion application targets to be confirmed with individual school Executive Deans and School Executive on an annual basis.

⁵ Academic Promotion success rate targets to be confirmed with individual school Executive Deans and School Executive on an annual basis.

Ref.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions and Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing for conversation and staff feedback. Address the availability and correctness of information provided for wiS seeking promotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) (DVC RF) – Athena Swan lead Manager, Workforce Strategy and Capability (MWSC) –HRSC lead Executive Deans STEM <p>decision-making to achieve consistency.</p> <p>2.1.3 Address challenges face by women from those coming from overseas, CALD women and other intersections.</p> <p>2.1.4 Highlight assessing achievement relative to opportunity (R2O)</p> <p>Outputs</p> <p>a) University-wide ‘<i>career advancement checklist</i>’ available on the ECU intranet, developed in collaboration with HRSC.</p>				<p>promotion as per individual school targets.</p> <p>iii. Improved perceptions from women in STEMM of promotion via discipline feedback mechanisms.</p>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility is required from a central source to provide updated information and resources. Evidence showed numerous feedback still about the ASPEO Framework and the career pathway especially for the female-dominated areas of nursing and Allied Health. The Contemporary Academic Careers Project is supported by the <i>ECU Strategic Plan 2022-2026: Towards the University of the Future</i> and looks to create foundational principles that support academic staff to achieve their desired career development and aspirations. 	<p>Actions</p> <p>3.1. Complete the <i>Contemporary Academic Careers Framework Project</i>, addressing issues with existing approaches and academic career structure.</p> <p>3.2. University monitoring of the wiS workforce through school specific <i>People and Culture Plans</i>.</p> <p>3.3. Continue to maintain the ECU Athena Swan Data Dashboard.</p> <p>3.4. Increased Athena Swan reporting on key gender equity issues.</p> <p>3.4.1. Increased reporting to whole-of-school meetings for STEMM schools.</p> <p>Outputs</p> <p>A) Contemporary Academic Careers Framework to be rolled out.</p> <p>B) Updated AS Data Dashboard to maintain currency of information.</p> <p>C) Annual Report provided to school meetings</p> <p>i. AS team to report on data to the STEMM school meetings annually.</p>	<p>Q4, 2024</p> <p>Q4, 2023</p> <p>Q4, 2024</p> <p>Q4, 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager, Workforce Strategy and Capability (MWSC) – HRSC lead Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) (DVC RF) – Program Manager Athena Swan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Director, Human Resources Services Centre (HRSC) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) (DVC RF) – Athena Swan lead Executive Deans STEMM 	<p>i. Improved applications for academic promotion women in STEMM for all schools as per individual school targets.</p> <p>ii. Improved success rates for women in STEMM disciplines in academic promotion as per individual school targets.</p> <p>iii. Improved perceptions from women in STEMM, of promotion via discipline feedback mechanisms.</p>

ECU Response to Cygnet 2 More Information Request

Progress (Actions and Activities)

Outline the actions taken that were designed specifically to improve the promotion rates of women in STEMM

Since 2017, ECU has coordinated a targeted approach with multiple actions designed to improve the promotion rates of women in STEMM disciplines (wiS), but also designed so non-STEMM women could benefit from these actions too. No single specific action could be completed to improve promotion rates as a range of factors influence whether women are eligible for promotion, ready for promotion and confident in applying for promotion.

ECU identified particularly low promotion application rates for wiS. These result from a lack of support systems and structures, which stops wiS from progressing in their careers and in turn being promoted. Therefore, actions focused on improving a range of support systems and structures, not just the promotion process itself.

Actions were designed based on the 2017 feedback collected during the Athena Swan (AS) Bronze Award self-assessment process (p.11) and further data collected through feedback sessions in 2019 from wiS on what support for promotion they needed.

Key theme from 2017 and/or 2019 feedback	Activity/Output	From ASBAP?	Implemented
Promotion policy/procedure is arduous. People don't have time or are put off by the process.	Updates to the Academic Staff Performance Expectations and Outcomes	No	Yes
	Updates to documentation – Academic Promotions Form and a new Academic Promotion SharePoint site	No	Yes
	Academic Promotion information sessions	No	Yes
	Academic Career Framework Project to support academic staff in establishing and developing lifelong productive and fulfilling careers and achieve their career aspirations	No	Commenced
	Analyse workforce segments for cases of stalled progression and assist line managers to address.	Yes	Ongoing
Career breaks impact ability to accumulate experience required for career progression. Process is biased toward uninterrupted careers.	Developed & published ' <i>Parental leave</i> ' and ' <i>Return to Work from Parental leave</i> ' booklets supporting women to continue their careers and know how to come back to work.	No	Yes
	Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity (R2O) - feedback from academic and professional staff will continue to be used to assist ECU in developing an inclusive and consistent approach to achievement R2O	Yes	Ongoing
	Annual Athena Swan Advancement Scheme (ASAS) to support wiS	Yes	Yes
Leaders' knowledge, skills and support for career planning and promotion are variable. Career progression/promotion is not always included in performance review. Having support or a mentor is linked with success.	Independent expert to work with identified female staff to assist in preparing for promotions round.	Yes	No – decided this is the wrong approach
	Conscious effort to nominate women for awards.	Yes	Yes
	Provide opportunities for presentations at conferences etc.	No	Yes
Carer responsibilities (including logistics) affect ability to take up career-related opportunities	Creation of the Athena Swan Parent and Carers Car Parking Bays to ease logistical challenges	Yes	Yes
Staff member knowledge of career planning and promotion are variable	Leadership shadowing programs	No	Ongoing
Support networks for wiS are needed	Women at junior levels to be partnered with a mentor/buddy.	Yes	Partially – inconsistent uptake across schools; lack of understanding of mentorship/ sponsorship for junior wiS

We have included here (and in the original application) actions that did not work, or that were planned but not implemented, along with the rationale as to why the items were not completed, We believe a critical point in AS (and gender equity, diversity and inclusion work more broadly) is to be honest and transparent about what things have not worked, as much as what has, and in turn, being prepared to try other approaches.

The Review panel noted that it is unclear how the creation of parents and carer parking bays directly relates to the promotion of wiS. At ECU, the intention of the AS parking initiative is to provide dedicated parking bays for staff and students with parenting drop-off responsibilities and/or carer responsibilities. These staff and students will often be later to campus than the standard 8:30 am start time, therefore, struggling to find a parking bay. This has knock-on effects on their productivity and ability to engage in opportunities that contribute to career progression.

“When I need to be on campus for a lecture or laboratory by 8.30 it is virtually impossible to find a parking bay and often I am left to pay \$26/day or to walk a distance... This gives me an opportunity to have access to a bay on the mornings that I need it the most, to get to my classes.” Example of feedback from a woman in SMHS

Outline KPIs and targets that are specifically related to the promotion of women in STEMM

1) Promotion

Target 1: an improvement in the overall promotion rates of wiS from the 2017 numbers

In 2017, promotion application rates, and hence promotion rates, were extremely low, making it difficult to set meaningful targets for improvement. Similarly, no relevant overarching target could be set because of the range of academic wiS staff numbers across the four schools (from 2 women in SENG to 74 women in SMHS). From this low base, our target was simply an improvement in the overall promotion rates of wiS.

2017 STEMM disciplines promotion application and success rates (ALEVB-ALEVE combined)

Redacted

*Total # women in schools included in ALEVA – ALEVE

Outcome 1: Partly achieved

The comparative promotion data for 2017, 2020 and 2022 is provided below (and Table 9 (p20 of the original Cygnet application). Overall, the actions taken have had some effect on promotion application rates and overall promotion rates for women in SMHS and SNM, but not yet in SENG or SSCI.

2017, 2020 and 2022 STEMM disciplines promotion application and success rates (ALEVB-ALEVE combined)

Redacted

*Total # women in schools included ALEVA - ALEVE

Target 2: By 2022, applicant rates for women to Level C and to Level E are on par with national averages

In 2017, women’s promotion application rates (all disciplines) for promotion to ALEVC (4.5%) and ALEVE (3.5%) were low against national averages of 5% at both of those levels. ECU aimed that by 2022, applicant rates for women and men to Level C and to Level E are on par with national averages.

Outcome 2: Not achieved

In 2022 the women's applicant rates for promotion to ALEVC remained low (4.1%) with the national averages increasing to 8.9%. Although ECU promotion applications for women to ALEVE increased to 5.9%, the national average increased to 9.1% (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (AHEIA) data).

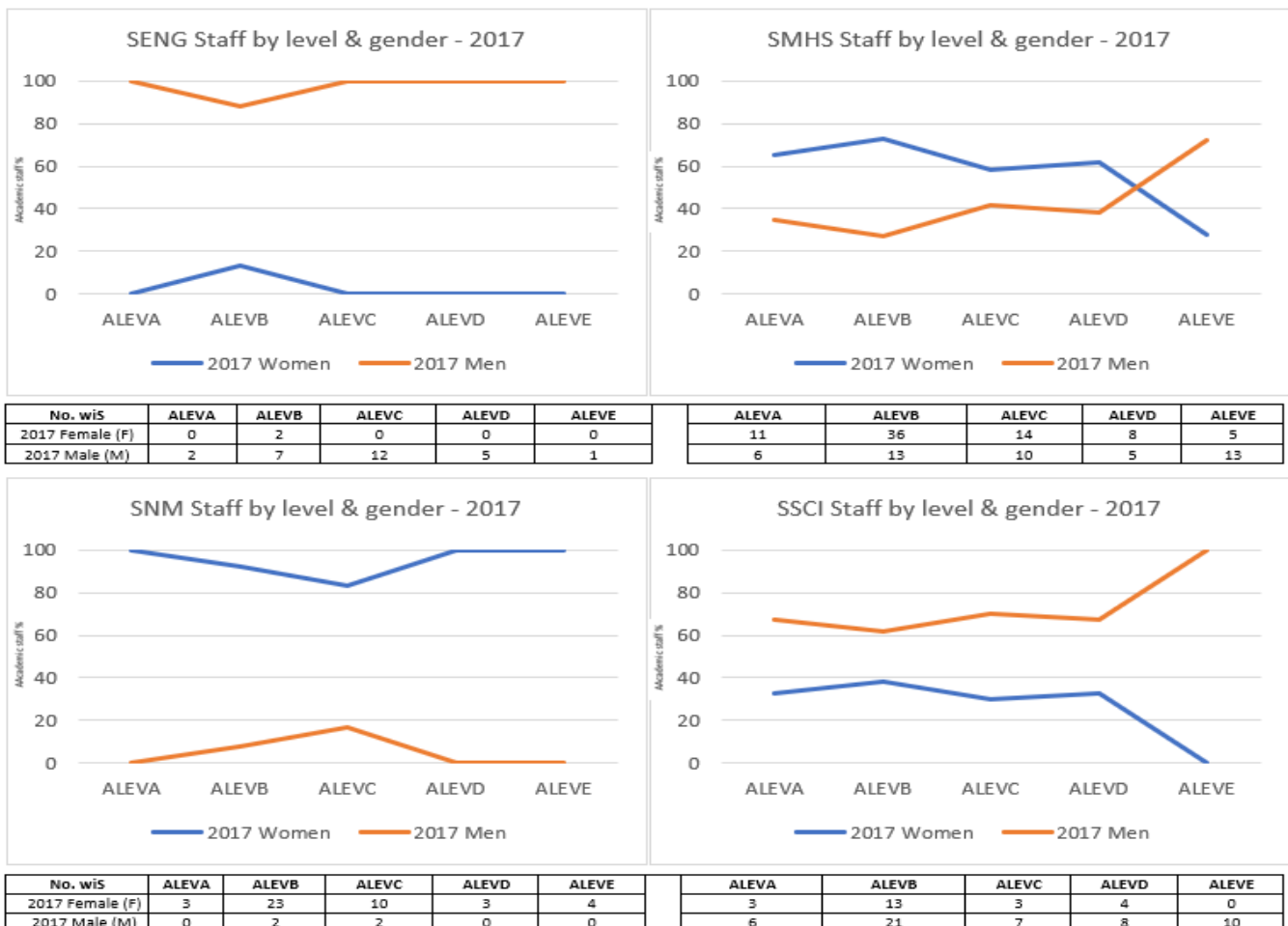
	ECU Academic Staff Application Rate & Success Rate 2022				2022 Sector Average (AHEIA) – Academic Staff Application Rate & Success Rate				
	Application Rate		Success Rate		Application Rate		Success Rate		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
ALEVB	12.5%	9.30%	100%	100%	ALEVB	6.00%	5.7%	91.9%	82.3%
ALEVC	4.1%	10.1%	85.7%	50%	ALEVC	8.90%	10.1%	85.3%	74.9%
ALEVD	10.1%	8.8%	62.5%	50%	ALEVD	8.70%	10.9%	78.8%	68.7%
ALEVE	5.9%	10.3%	100%	33.3%	ALEVE	9.10%	9.6%	77.2%	68.2%

2) Representation

Target 3: Increased representation of women at ALEVC-E in STEMM disciplines.

In 2017, our data showed:

- Low numbers (2) of women in SENG. Both women are ALEVB.
- SMHS is women-dominated at ALEVA-D, but there is a sharp drop off at ALEVE.
- SNM is women-dominated at all levels.
- The proportion of women in SSCI is between 30-40% at ALEVA-D but there no ALEVE women.



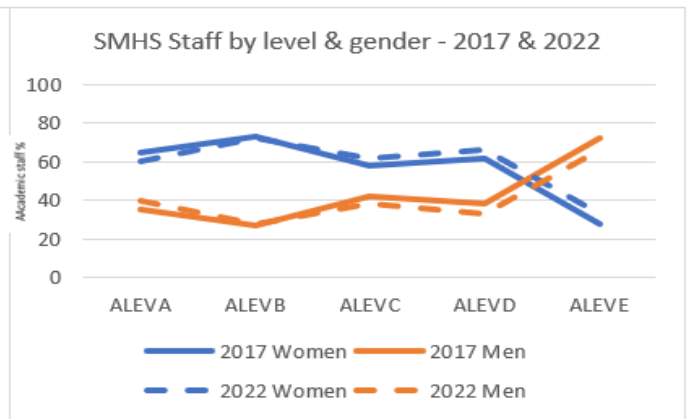
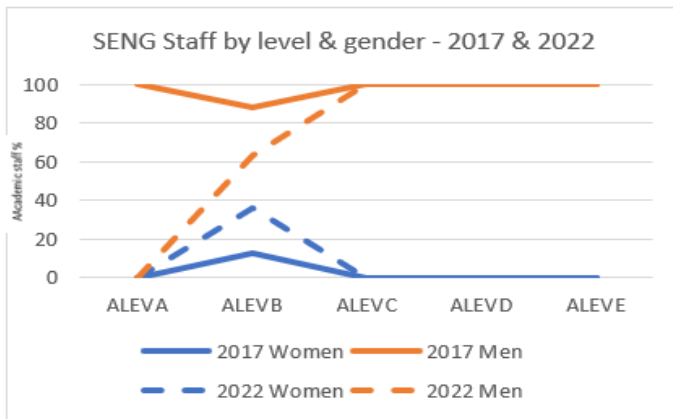
As a result of improving promotion for wiS, we hoped to see increased representation of women at ALEVC-E. This focus on promotion of current staff proved important during the COVID-19 pandemic where there were temporary recruitment freezes.

Outcome 3: Partly achieved

In 2022, our data showed:

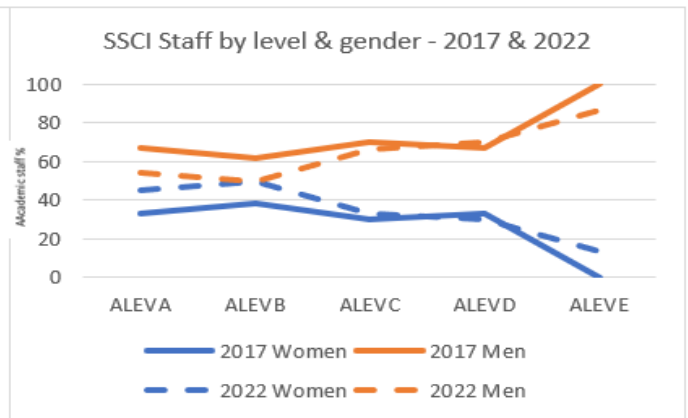
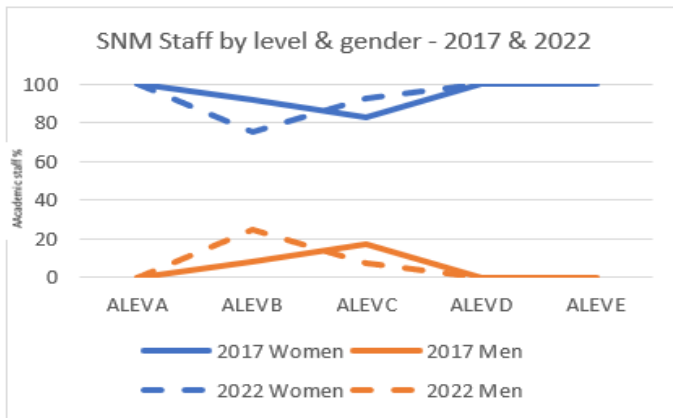
- SENG still has low numbers of women. All women are still at level B.

- SMHS is still women dominated at ALEV A-D with a drop off at ALEV E, but the proportion of Level E women has increased.
- SNM is still women dominated. The gap has narrowed at ALEV B, but widened at ALEV C.
- In SSCI the gap has narrowed at all Levels, except ALEV D where it has very slightly widened.



No. wiS	ALEV A	ALEV B	ALEV C	ALEV D	ALEV E
2017 Female (F)	0	2	0	0	0
2022 Female (F)	0	4	0	0	0
2017 Male (M)	2	7	12	5	1
2022 Male (M)	0	7	9	4	3

ALEV A	ALEV B	ALEV C	ALEV D	ALEV E
11	36	14	8	5
15	44	13	6	7
6	13	10	5	13
10	17	8	3	14



No. wiS	ALEV A	ALEV B	ALEV C	ALEV D	ALEV E
2017 Female (F)	3	23	10	3	4
2022 Female (F)	5	21	13	4	3
2017 Male (M)	0	2	2	0	0
2022 Male (M)	0	7	1	0	0

ALEV A	ALEV B	ALEV C	ALEV D	ALEV E
3	13	3	4	0
5	14	7	3	2
6	21	7	8	10
6	14	14	7	13

Outcomes:

How many of the women successful in promotion engaged with actions taken by ECU?

All successful wiS promotion candidates would have engaged in at least one (often more) of the activities ECU undertook.

Key theme from 2017 and/or 2019 feedback	Activity/Output	Engagement by wiS seeking promotion
Promotion policy/procedure is arduous. People don't have time or are put off by the process.	Updates to the Academic Staff Performance Expectations and Outcomes	Every academic seeking promotion, including the wiS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engages with the ASPEO Framework. • accesses the Academic Promotions Form and Academic Promotion SharePoint site. • indicates they attend the Promotion sessions. Attendance is not collected as attendance is not mandatory but highly recommended for promotion. All the academic staff were invited to participate in the engagement sessions. Attendance is not recorded as the engagement was often confidential. Feedback given during the wiS Focus Groups confirmed wiS participated in these workshops.
	Updates to documentation – Academic Promotions Form and a new Academic Promotion SharePoint site	
	Academic Promotion information sessions	
	Contemporary Academic Career Framework Project to support academic staff in establishing and developing lifelong productive and fulfilling careers and achieve their career aspirations	

Career breaks impact ability to accumulate experience required for career progression. Process is biased toward uninterrupted careers.	Analyse workforce segments for cases of stalled progression and assist line managers to address.	N/A – This is the management team who engage with this action.
	Developed & published ' <i>Parental leave</i> ' and ' <i>Return to Work from Parental leave</i> ' booklets supporting women to continue their careers and know how to come back to work.	Not all women who were promoted used this. However, women who are considering having children or coming back from parental leave use it.
	Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity – feedback from academic and professional staff will continue to be used to assist ECU in developing an inclusive and consistent approach to achievement relative to opportunity.	Over 100 academic staff members attended a whole-of-university presentation and hundreds of people gave feedback on the discussion paper. This is relevant for many wiS, but we are not privy to what women write on their promotion applications.
	Annual Athena Swan Advancement Scheme (ASAS) to support wiS	Out of the 21 academic women who won an ASAS award and are still at the University, 67% have now been promoted.
Leaders' knowledge, skills and support for career planning and promotion are variable. Career progression/promotion is not always included in performance review. Having support or a mentor is linked with success.	Independent expert to work with identified female staff to assist in preparing for promotions round.	No – decided this is the wrong approach
	Conscious effort to nominate women for awards.	See detail below
	Provide opportunities for presentations at conferences etc.	See detail below
Carer responsibilities (including logistics) affect ability to take up career-related opportunities	Creation of the Athena Swan Parent and Carers Car Parking Bays to ease logistical challenges	Not all the women who were promoted use the AS Parking Bays
Support networks for wiS are needed	Women at junior levels to be partnered with a mentor/buddy.	See detail below

It is not possible to attribute promotion application or success to engagement in specific activities because:

- We do not know exactly which staff engaged with which activities and how often.
- It is also unlikely that any single action can be linked to a person applying for or being successful in receiving a promotion. Rather, we hoped the suite of actions would improve promotion rates.
- Some of the actions were undertaken in 2019/2020, so we are only just beginning to see the full outcomes and impact of those.
- The literature also suggests that some wiS's promotion timelines may have been impacted by COVID-19. Therefore, the wiS who have participated or are currently participating in these actions supporting promotion may not yet have applied for promotion or their plans to apply for promotion have been delayed.

What was the uptake of the mentor/buddy system? How many mentors/buddies were there and were those that had a mentor/buddy more successful in promotion?

In the table on page 11 of the original Cygnet application, we note that the mentor/buddy system (the 'buddy system') was not implemented as successfully as it could have been.

Line management and support networks				
Activity/Output	From ASBAP	Implemented	Appraisal	Further Action (if required)
(Page 11) Women at junior levels to be partnered with a mentor/buddy.	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ASBAP action was for Schools to assign women at junior levels with a mentor/buddy (either their school or another STEMM school), with experience in academia. • This wasn't undertaken consistently across all schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative feedback referenced a lack of understanding of mentorship/sponsorship, especially for wiS at junior levels. • Review the intersecting challenges for wiS and age, ALEV of mentors and support networks.

We do not have uptake rates or data to connect the system to promotion success because:

- WiS were informally buddied-up and records were not kept of who the lead Buddy was or who they would mentor. WiS were often buddied up across schools. Meetings were not recorded to ensure a 'safe space'. The lead Buddy was able to determine what activities were undertaken and discussions were had with their mentee. Together the buddies determined how long they met for as this was an informal process determined by the participants.

- New starters who received a Buddy in the last few years would not be eligible for, or would be unlikely to apply for promotion.

At ECU, the standard norms for academic promotion are:

- Promotion is considered to be “accelerated” if achieved between 3-5 years since the last promotion/ commencement
- Promotion would “normally” be expected at top-of-level increments - around 5 years since the last promotion or appointment
- Promotion before 3 years would be considered “exceptional”

At ECU you are ineligible to apply for promotion if:

- You’ve been at ECU for less than 1 year – Eligibility criteria is that you need to be employed at ECU for at least 1 year
- When applying for ALEVB, applicants who have been appointed or applied unsuccessfully in the last 12 months (applications to ALEVB are open all year around but applicants if unsuccessful must wait at least 12 months since their last application to reapply)
- For all other Levels, applicants who have applied in the previous promotion round who were not successful will be deemed ineligible to apply the following year
- Also, a Buddy can’t attribute this task of mentoring to their promotion Service category as this role does not match Service requirements. Service is defined as a contribution to school and/or University-wide policies, projects and/or activities that are innovative, collaborative and brings significant benefits and value to the organisation.

How many women were nominated for external awards and how many were successful/ unsuccessful? How did this correlate with promotion outcomes?

The University does not record the number of wiS nominated for external awards because some of the processes are confidential, submitted over a period of time, and/or nominations come from across ECU. Even with the receipt of an award, if other criteria under the ASPEO framework aren’t met, there’s no guaranteed link between an award to promotion. For example, a wiS might get an award for mentoring yet not have the required research publications and grant income required for the level to which she is applying.

The ECU promotion application form asks candidates to “*present a summary of any research esteem measures since they joined ECU (e.g., national/international awards or prizes, invited keynote presentations at conferences, professional body recognition, etc.)*”. For academic wiS, there are many opportunities for award nominations that recognise and celebrate individual and team achievements in research, innovation, and impact. Prestigious Awards and Prizes improve the profile of a researcher and are a valuable addition to an academic track record. They may therefore contribute to a successful promotion application form, though they would not be the sole reason for a promotion and so cannot be relied on as a direct predictor of success. ECU’s ASPEO Framework has specific metrics that may or may not be met as a result of winning an award.

Beyond the promotion process itself, being nominated for an award, and presenting at or attending conferences, can aid future collaborations and/or opportunities and thus further career development. This kind of external recognition is important enough that research staff have an “Awards and Prizes” dedicated webpage and a research fortnightly newsletter, as well as an ‘all staff’ newsletter, keeping wiS aware of award opportunities.

Were conference opportunities funded? How many were there? How did conference attendance correlate with promotion outcomes?

Conference opportunities through the ASAS are funded through the central AS funding. So far, the ASAS has had 27 recipients, 26 were women and 21 of these recipients were STEMM staff. Approx. \$200K has been provided in funds for whatever the candidate believes will best support their career advancement (e.g., PD, travel, research programs, University-wide presentations, attending conferences etc).

Directly supporting wiS, the ASAS has always provided some form of *STEMM Advancement Subsidy*. This subsidy aims to improve the gender balance of the STEMM staff profile at ECU by boosting the career progression of academics with parenting and/or caring roles who face career disadvantages because of these responsibilities. The subsidy facilitates staff attendance at conferences, training and professional development events that support career and work-related STEMM projects, initiatives, or programs.

Conference opportunities may also be funded by the school, from a central pool of funds, from the Human Resources Services Centre (now People and Culture), from the Professional Development Scheme, or

from external organisations that academic women are part of. The number of conferences attended varies as funding recipients determine which conference(s) or other opportunities to attend.

As with the awards mentioned above, presenting at a conference helps build a case for promotion. Engaging with other academics at a conference enables women to improve research networks and enhance opportunities for collaboration and mentorship. Improving their knowledge supports their research and teaching, both of which are important for promotion.

“The conference attendance provides an excellent opportunity to connect with other researchers in the field and will be invaluable to [my] career growth as an academic, researcher and [more]” - wiS feedback

As with Awards, we cannot directly link receipt of an award to promotion outcomes, but it is a positive success indicator. Enabling conference attendance and the nomination for awards is one of a number of strategies to improve career opportunities and thus promotion for wiS.

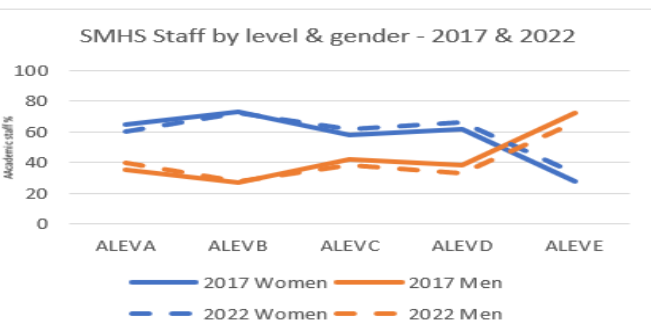
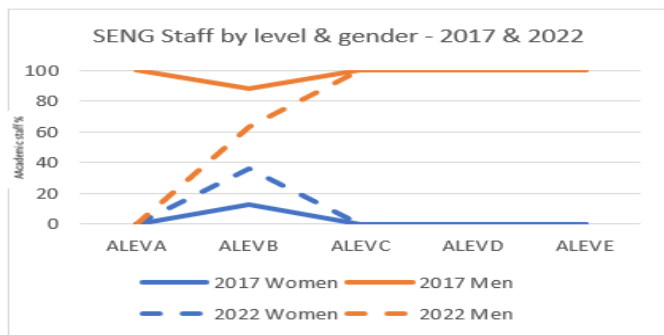
Provide data on new appointments to ECU - did new appointments impact internal promotion rates?

Staff headcount over the past 5 years remained very consistent in each school.

Proportion of Academic Staff – 2017, 2020, 2022

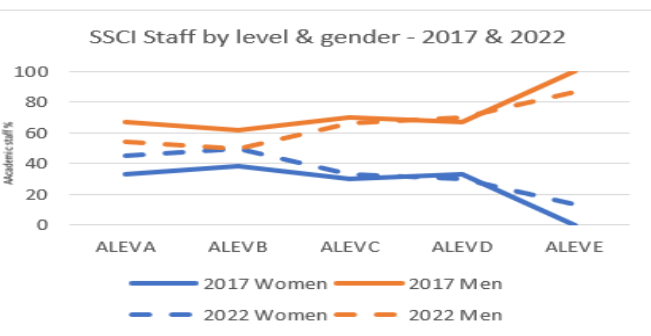
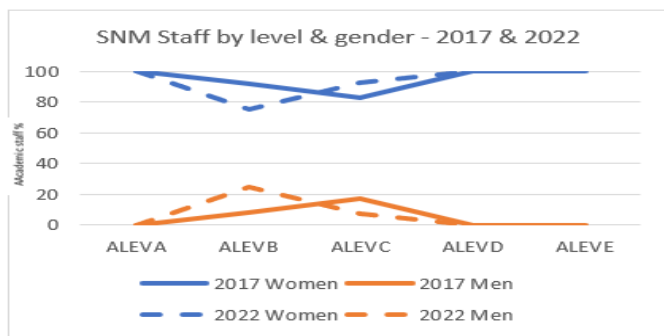


As can be seen from the data below, women’s representation at each ALEV also remains relatively consistent. The exception to this is in SSCI where several senior women retired and were later replaced by women in lower-level positions.



No. wiS	ALEV A	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
2017 Female (F)	0	2	0	0	0
2022 Female (F)	0	4	0	0	0
2017 Male (M)	2	7	12	5	1
2022 Male (M)	0	7	9	4	3

ALEV A	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
11	36	14	8	5
15	44	13	6	7
6	13	10	5	13
10	17	8	3	14



No. wiS	ALEV A	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
2017 Female (F)	3	23	10	3	4
2022 Female (F)	5	21	13	4	3
2017 Male (M)	0	2	2	0	0
2022 Male (M)	0	7	1	0	0

ALEV A	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
3	13	3	4	0
5	14	7	3	2
6	21	7	8	10
6	14	14	7	13

Small numbers of wiS are hired into ALEVC-E, with the majority of new appointments at ALEVB. Again, this is particularly evident in SSCI where women leave the academic pipeline at the senior levels and are replaced at lower levels driving hiring into ALEVB positions.

Recruitment numbers are also relatively consistently low with the exception of SSCI/SMHS in 2021 when there was a recruitment freeze due to the COVID pandemic and the reduction in number of international students.

In a comparison of Headcount, recruitment and academic promotion across the past 5 years (2018 – 2022), there is no evidence that new appointments influence promotion rates for wiS into senior levels, at least in the short-term. As noted previously, new staff cannot apply for promotion until working at ECU for approximately 3-5 years. However, if the headcount for wiS increases, we would expect more wiS to eventually be promoted, noting this could be limited by the availability of ongoing positions at the University.

Headcount, recruitment and academic promotion of women in STEMM across the past 5 years (2018 – 2022)

Redacted

Impact:

Clarification on whether the baseline data for comparison is 2017 or 2019 as both are referred to in documentation

The baseline data is from 2017, as reported in the ASBAP submitted in March 2018.

The 2019 qualitative data collection was an action in the ASBAP to allow us to better understand the barriers to promotion for wiS and to inform further initiatives to reduce the barrier. We included that data to show the continuous development of our actions in this area.















From the survey data, outline responses specifically related to the actions taken to improve promotion rates for women




For context, the survey was conducted as part of a larger focus group - the wiS Focus Group 2022 (wiSFG), which sought to hear lived experiences of women applying for promotion and advancing/improving their careers. The survey helped ECU gain demographic information of those attending the wiSFG as well as whether participants found the barriers to promotion were being or had been reduced.

Overall, ECU found that:

- WiS haven't directly seen evidence of the actions implemented or didn't realise what action was taken e.g., wiS didn't see line managers reviewing stalled cases of promotion progression.
- Of 40 survey respondents, only 11 agreed that support has increased in the last 3 years.
- Almost 50% of those attending the focus groups (22 people) intended to apply for promotion in the next 2 years.

Linking back to the key themes from the 2017/2019 feedback which informed our actions, in the 2022 wiSFG and associated survey we found:

Key themes from 2017 and/or 2019 feedback		2022 Feedback
Promotion policy/procedure is arduous. People don't have time or are put off by the process.	  	<p>The ASPEO framework is seen as having insufficient flexibility to recognise and value accomplishments.</p> <p>A line manager will say – “go to ASPEO” rather than providing tailored support</p> <p>ASPEO is driving a mentality of “it will look good for promotion”, but wiS don't have the capacity to take on additional promotion-worthy tasks.</p>
Career breaks impact ability to accumulate experience required for career progression. Process is biased toward uninterrupted careers.	 	<p>Consideration of career interruptions/ non-linear career paths was still as issue.</p> <p>Following breaks, wiS were not feeling confident going for promotion and experienced imposter syndrome. This was in line with assessing achievement R2O. If wiS achieved success before a career break, they had track record achievement and experience and should not be impacted by their career break.</p>
Leaders' knowledge, skills and support for career planning and promotion are variable. Career progression/ promotion is not always included in performance review. Having support or a mentor is linked with success.	  	<p>Respondents generally agree that line managers offer practical advice and support.</p> <p>Local school-level, discipline-specific, career coaching, mentoring and assistance to plan one's approach to promotion is critical, and more important than formal mentoring programs.</p> <p>Around 50% of staff say the culture in their school is not encouraging of advancement.</p>
Carer responsibilities (including logistics) affect ability to take up career-related opportunities	 	<p>Roles and responsibilities out of work are seen as limiting capacity to pursue career advancement.</p> <p>WiS felt they had larger commitments outside of work than some of their male colleagues. The 'cognitive load' of responsibilities at home affects women's capacity to apply for promotion.</p>
Staff member knowledge of career planning and promotion are variable	 	<p>Staff are generally satisfied with their knowledge and understanding of the academic promotion process or where to go to find the information.</p> <p>However, ALEVA/B wiS have little detailed understanding of the ASPEO framework and its requirements.</p>
Support networks for wiS are needed	 	<p>Staff generally feel they have support and encouragement from their team, colleagues and peers.</p> <p>Staff generally feel they have access to approachable mentors and sponsors.</p>

Legend:	Positive Impact		No Impact		Middle Ground	
		Comment shows something has worked/ is working that ECU should keep doing.		Comment shows an area where improvement is still needed. Further action is needed to improve support for wiS.		This is a comment of interest not positive or one of no impact.

Therefore, from the 2022 qualitative feedback, the continuing or newly emerging themes ECU feel are important to focus on to continue to reduce/remove the promotion barrier for academic wiS are:

- Career framework (ASPEO Framework)
- Leader/manager knowledge, skills, support
- Carer responsibilities - Strategies continuing to support wiS to manage these responsibilities
- Workload - Many wiS feel their workload limits their capacity to advance their career and need more focus on how to plan for career advancement and promotion
- Security/funding - WiS feel contract security, role, and access to funding limits opportunities.