



S A G E

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

SAGE Cygnet Awards

for the SAGE Athena Swan
Accreditation Pathway

Monash University
Application Form



SAGE

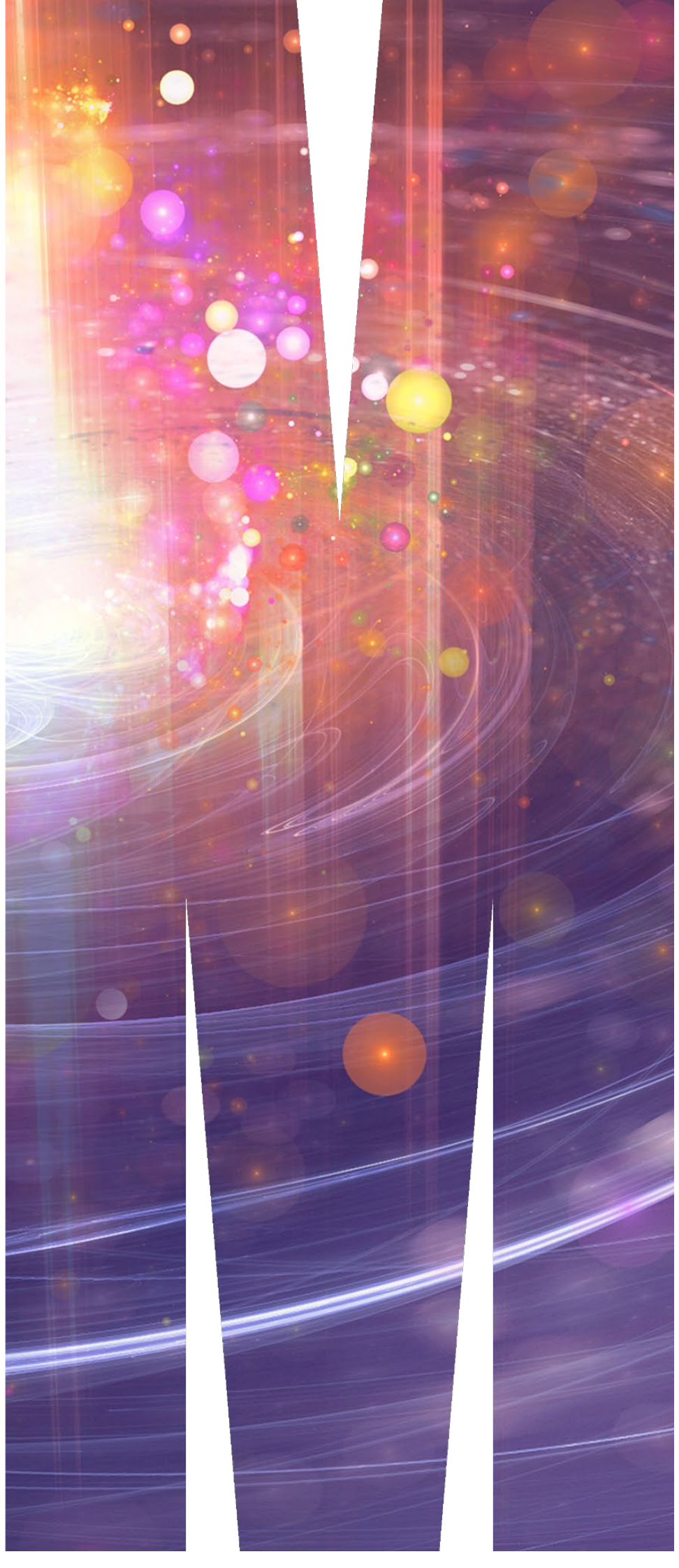
SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

Name of Institution	Monash University
Date of Application	31 March 2023
Contact for Application	Dr Lucie Joschko, Director Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion A/Prof Laura Jobson, Chair of Athena SWAN Steering Group
Email	lucie.joschko@monash.edu laura.jobson@monash.edu
Telephone No.	0436 025 986

SAGE ATHENA SWAN CYGNET AWARDS APPLICATION

Relative to Opportunity
in Academic Promotion

March 2023



Acknowledgement of Country

Monash University recognises that its Australian campuses are located on the unceded lands of the people of the Kulin nations, and pays its respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Monash is committed to fostering a society that recognises, respects and includes Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge. The University will contribute to the creation of this society by working with and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and knowledge, as well as Indigenous peoples of other places where Monash has a campus or major presence.

Monash University is committed to supporting and contributing to:

- The Uluru Statement from the Heart process for a First Nations Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia; and
- Treaty discussions in the state of Victoria and the Yoo-rook Justice Commission.

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Monash University: SAGE CYGNET #1

	✓ Current Cygnet	Barrier List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier	✓	Relative to Opportunity in Academic Promotion
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

Section	Word Limit	Actual Word Count
Cygnet Submission	2,500	2,207
Key Barriers		308
Evidence of Barriers		586
Activities and Outputs		133
Outcomes		677
Impact		503
Future Action Plan		Table

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KEY BARRIER

Barrier to equity in academic promotion: understanding and applying achievement relative to opportunity principles

In 2017 Monash University identified systemic barriers to academic progression, which are contributing to persistent gender disparities in senior academic roles in STEMM. In 2017, only 33.2% of Associate Professors and 21.6% of Professors in STEMM were women.

The key barriers addressed in this application represent considerations required to ensure more equitable assessments of academic promotion applications, centered around improved understanding of the University's Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework for both promotion applicants and decision-makers. The identified barriers show gendered impacts, particularly affecting career progression of women who are 3x more likely to work part-time than men and more likely to experience longer career interruptions associated with caregiving responsibilities.

The work of the Athena Swan Steering Group recognised that barriers to academic progression hinder our collective ability to utilise the considerable potential within our highly educated and talented workforce and sought to holistically address it through the implementation of evidence-based actions developed as part of the institutional application for Athena SWAN Bronze award.

Scope

- The report focuses on addressing key barriers and improvements across STEMM disciplines, which was the focus of Athena SWAN Bronze Action Plan. However, we acknowledge that the university-wide approach was taken and actions implemented had a demonstrably positive impact on all fields of Monash University.
- Monash University's academic promotion round takes place annually. It is split across two calendar years; applications are invited in the second half of each year (e.g., November 2021) and outcomes are announced the following year (e.g., May 2022). *Note: Years displayed in this submission refer to application years (rather than outcome years). Hence, 2022 application data is not included as 2022 applications are yet to be assessed in the first half of 2023.*
- The report does not include Monash University international campuses.



EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

The University has a robust academic promotion process in place, underpinned by principles of equal opportunity and fairness, and designed to foster a workforce focused on excellence, as well as continual learning and growth.

Through the analysis of academic promotion data, collection and analysis of the Staff Equity and Diversity survey data, as well as qualitative findings from targeted focus groups, we gathered evidence that the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework, how it is perceived, utilised and understood - impacts the promotion process.

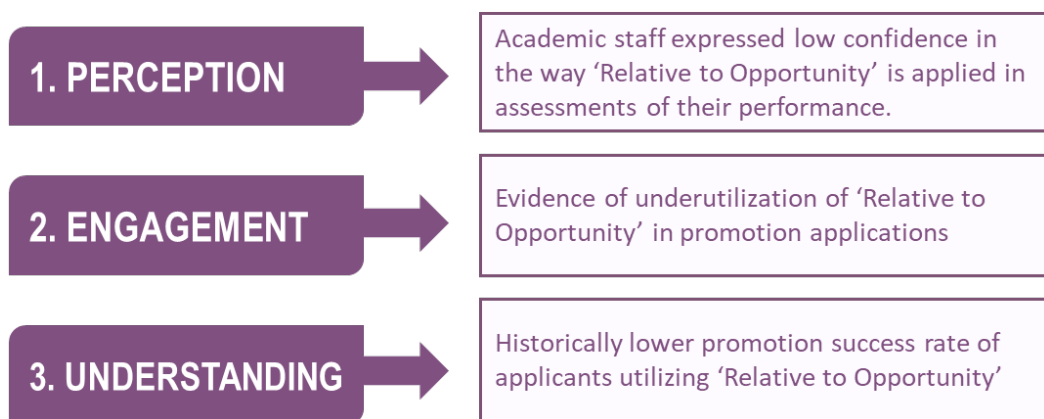


Figure 1: Barriers to equitable assessments of academic promotion - Achievement Relative to Opportunity framework

BARRIER 1: Perception

Low confidence in how 'Relative to Opportunity' is applied by Monash decision-makers

To help facilitate fair and equitable assessments of performance, Monash introduced the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework. Despite having this framework in place for several years, feedback from staff suggested it was not well understood. In 2017 focus groups with academic staff, participants of all genders questioned the value of this policy, suggesting it was only “paid lip service”. Feedback from participants highlighted lack of confidence in the way decision-makers and assessors were applying ‘relative to opportunity’ principles and spoke about the importance of knowledge building, as well as provision of case studies and training.

A university-wide survey administered in 2019 (total number of responses=1540) revealed that less than half of staff believed that decision-makers were applying relative to opportunity principles in promotion either ‘Always’ or ‘Often’ (Figure 2). For women in STEMM, and women with caregiving responsibilities, the results were 35.9% and 30.1% respectively. These findings highlighted the importance of targeted interventions to improve the University’s incorporation of Achievement Relative to Opportunity in performance assessments.

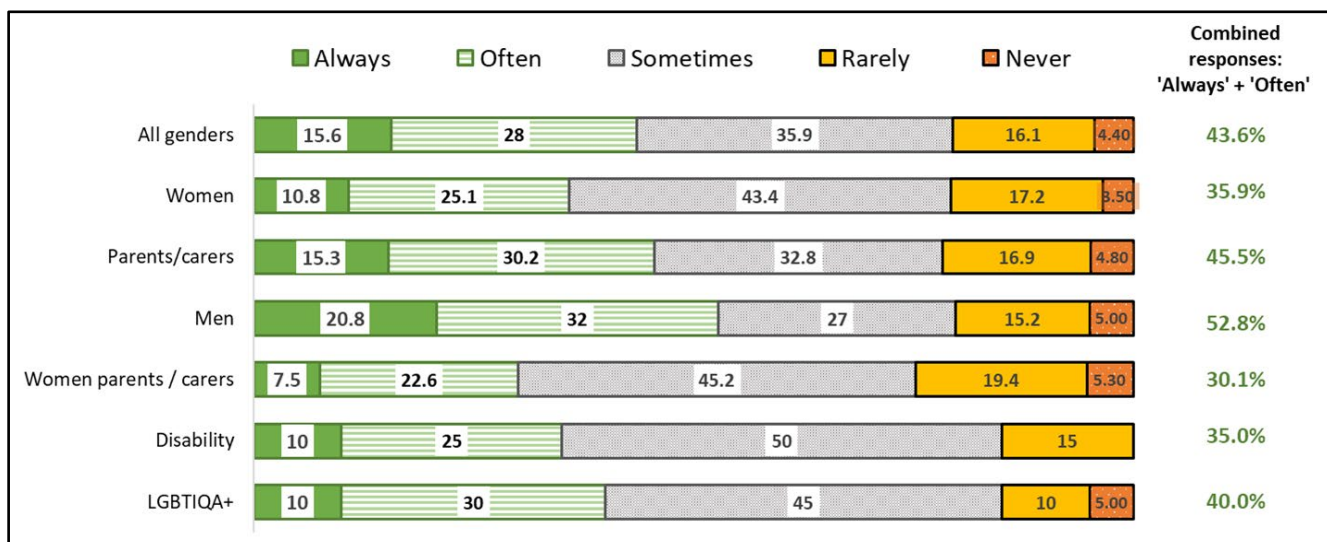


Figure 2 - Survey responses to 2019 Staff Equity and Diversity Survey: “Do you believe decision-makers at Monash are applying Achievement Relative to Opportunity principles in academic promotion?” (STEMM participants)

BARRIER 2: Engagement

Under-utilisation of ‘Relative to Opportunity’ in promotion applications

Engagement in the Achievement Relative to Opportunity framework was measured by utilisation of ‘relevant circumstances’ in promotion applications. While there was never an expectation that all staff would utilise the optional ‘relevant circumstances’ form section, we found the rate of use did not commensurate people’s lived experiences as caregivers, part-time employees, having non-linear career histories and a wide range of other personal and professional circumstances that qualify under this framework.

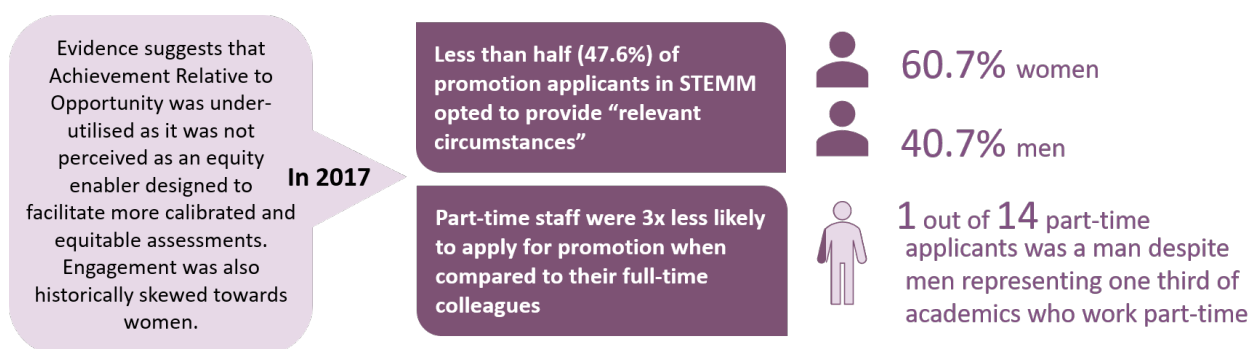


Figure 3 - Evidence of barriers related to under-utilisation of the Achievement Relative to Opportunity

Unsurprisingly, utilisation of ‘relative to opportunity’ was historically strongest by women in early career stages, in comparison to applications for senior roles (Associate Professor and Professor) or applications by men (Figures 4 and 5). This too, indicated opportunities for improvement.

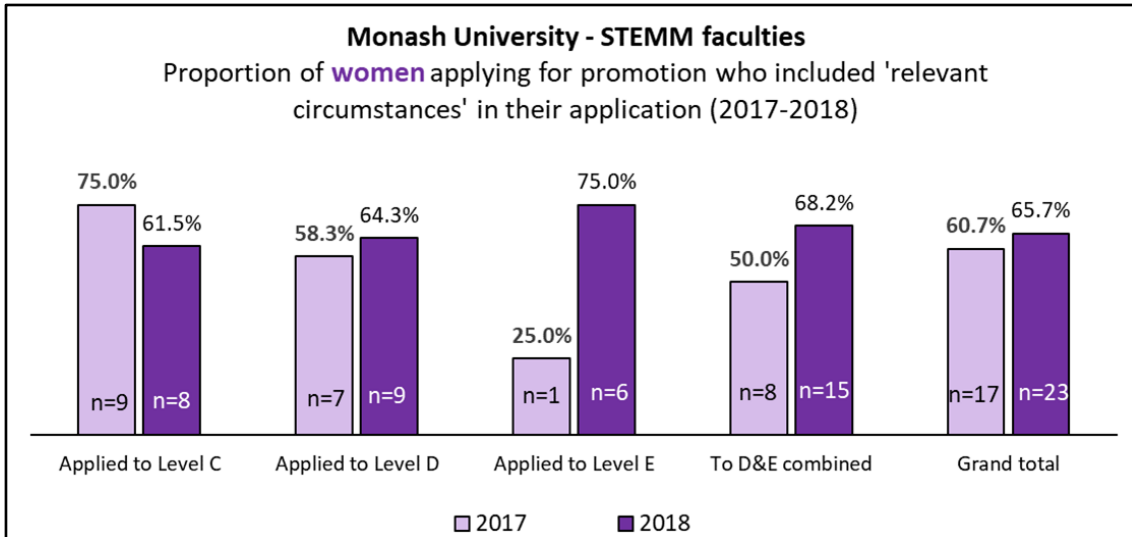


Figure 4 - Proportion of STEMM women utilising 'relevant circumstances' in promotion applications

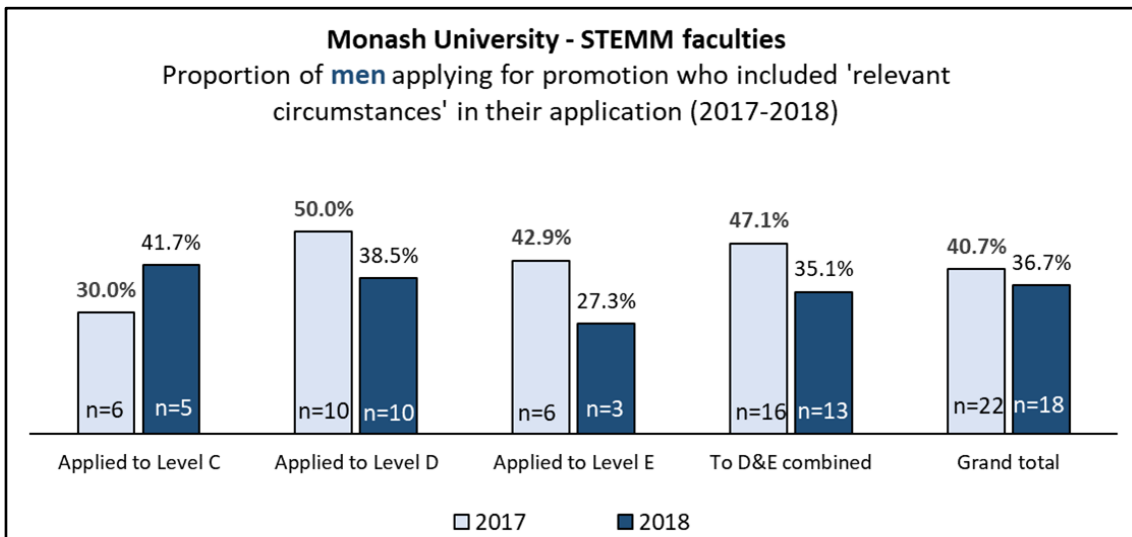


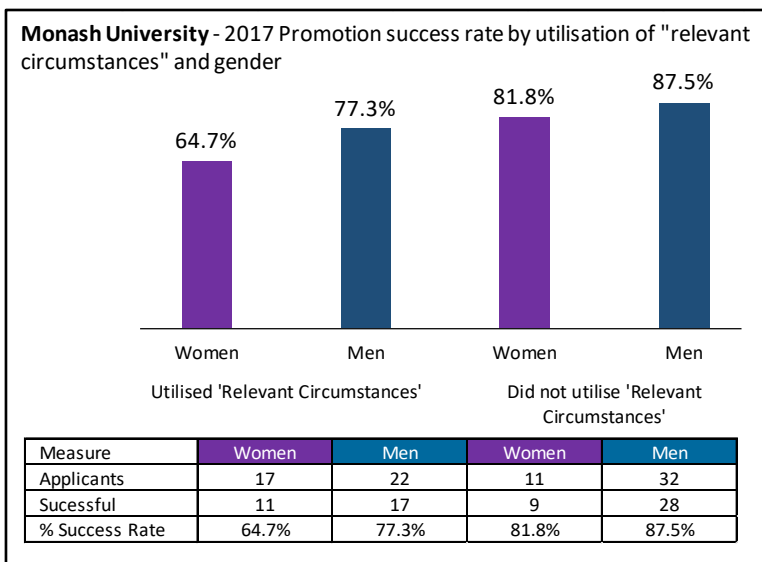
Figure 5 - Proportion of STEMM men utilising 'relevant circumstances' in promotion applications (N=applicants who included 'relevant circumstances')

BARRIER 3 - Understanding

Low promotion success rate for applicants utilising 'Relative to Opportunity'

Analysis of promotion outcomes split by utilisation of 'relevant circumstances' revealed success rates were historically lower for candidates who opted to include 'relevant circumstances', when compared to those who did not (Figure 6). This indicated limited understanding from decision-makers how to assess 'relative to opportunity'.

The Framework's primary purpose is to generate a more calibrated measure of a person's performance, achievements and outcomes, by considering the broad range of circumstances that may have impacted the applicant. As such, the Framework's adoption, and understanding how to implement it, should theoretically help level the playing field. However, evidence indicated otherwise.



Higher promotion rates of candidates who did not utilise 'relevant circumstances', particularly in STEMM, indicates low understanding of the Framework's purpose and how to assess applications 'relative to opportunity' (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6 - 2017 Promotion success rate by gender and utilisation of 'relevant circumstances'

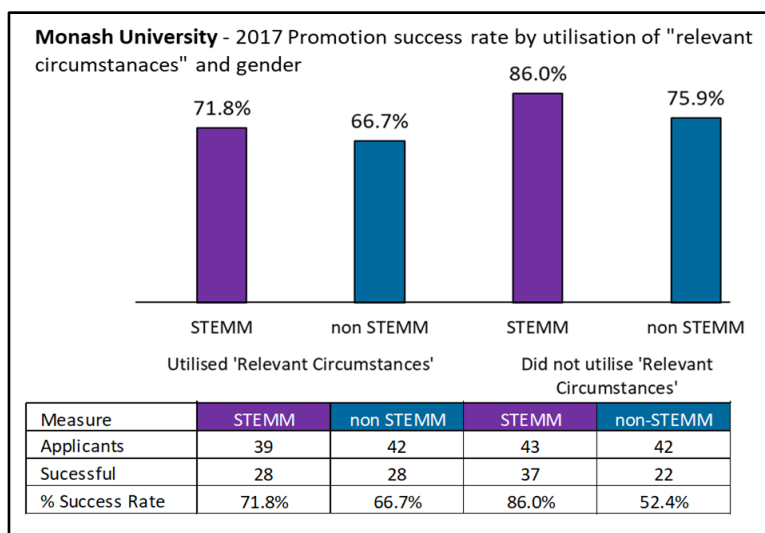


Figure 7 - 2017 Promotion success rate by discipline and utilisation of 'relevant circumstances'

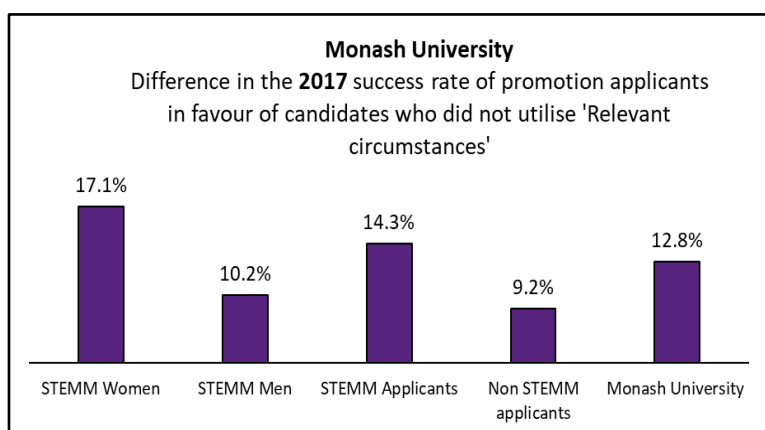


Figure 8 - Difference in the 2017 promotion success rate in favour of candidates who did not utilise 'relevant circumstances'

As shown in Figure 8, in 2017, the difference in success rate was 14.3% in favour of applicants who did not choose to engage in 'relevant circumstances.'

The gap was more notable for women than men (17.1% and 10.2% respectively) and slightly more so in STEMM than in non-STEMM disciplines (14.3% vs. 9.2%).



ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Actions and outputs were designed to address key barriers (Figure 1 and Table 1):

- Perception
- Engagement
- Understanding

Development of actions was evidence-driven and informed by findings from surveys, focus groups and results of consultation with academic staff. Their delivery and implementation was supported by Monash University Athena SWAN Steering Group, Human Resources teams, the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice-Chancellor as well as other senior key stakeholders.

In recognition of many intertwined factors affecting the adoption of 'Relative to Opportunity' principles, Monash University has pursued a multi-faceted approach as depicted in Figure 9. Instances where Covid-19 delayed implementation are noted in sections below.

Activities presented in this section were endorsed by University leadership as part of Athena SWAN Bronze Action Plan as well as Monash's Gender Equality Action Plan.

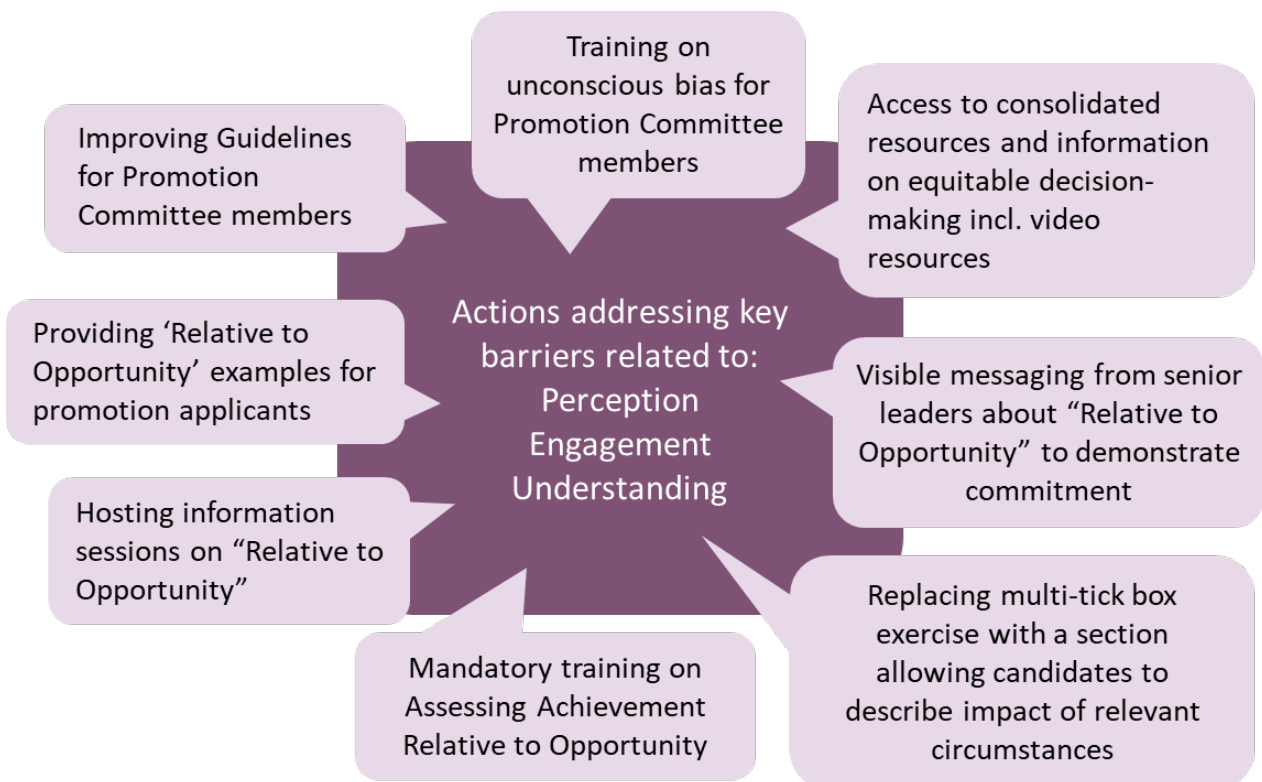


Figure 9 - Actions addressing key barriers

Table 1 - Activities and outputs designed to address key barriers

Actions / Activities	Key Barrier Addressed	Deliverables / Outputs / Milestones
<p>1. Ensure senior leaders present at “Addressing Achievement Relative to Opportunity” sessions to convey the University’s commitment to equitable practices. <i>(emphasis behind Athena SWAN Action 4.2)</i></p>	<p>Perception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each information session on Achievement Relative to Opportunity was presented by at least two senior leaders, including the Provost and Senior-Vice President, and the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs).
<p>2. Ensure senior leaders actively promote training on Achievement Relative to Opportunity and champion its importance. <i>(emphasis behind Athena SWAN Action 4.2)</i></p>	<p>Perception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded and distributed video message from Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) on the importance of Achievement Relative to Opportunity training for all decision-makers. Communication by Provost and Senior Vice-President advising of the training’s launch. Promotion campaign featuring Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) distributed through internal channels. The Vice-Chancellor's Group (most senior Committee at Monash University) approved the training to become mandatory for all academic leaders and supervisors.
<p>3. Host dedicated information sessions on ‘Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity’ presented by senior leaders, to discuss the Framework, its objectives, how to prepare ‘relevant circumstances’ section and how ‘relative to opportunity’ principles are applied in assessment. <i>(Athena SWAN Action 4.2)</i></p>	<p>Perception Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted two inaugural sessions in 2019 with four senior leaders presenting and participating in the Q&A with staff. In subsequent years, impacted by Covid-19, the format of these sessions moved online and took on the form of webinars. Staff interest and high participation numbers in the online format led to the decision to keep running it as an interactive webinar (579 staff attending in 2020). Recordings of these sessions were published on the University’s website, supported by communication to all staff. Relative to Opportunity was embedded in all promotion information sessions – university-wide and faculty-specific. This included how applicants could make their case and how committees utilised this information.
<p>4. Improve Guidelines for promotion candidates on preparing relevant circumstances <i>(extension of Athena SWAN Action 4.1)</i></p>	<p>Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines were expanded to include examples of professional and personal circumstances as well as case studies to highlight the breadth of relevant circumstances, including Covid-19 impacts.
<p>5. Develop an online training module on how Achievement Relative to Opportunity should be applied in decision-making, using scenario-based examples. <i>(Gender Equality Action 2.2.3)</i></p>	<p>Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity” online module was developed in collaboration with the academic community, launched and embedded in the University’s learning and management system. <i>(Development of this module was delayed due to Covid-19 impacts on resourcing and budget)</i>

Actions / Activities	Key Barrier Addressed	Deliverables / Outputs / Milestones
<p>6. Provide access to consolidated resources, including videos from information sessions.</p> <p><i>(Gender Equality Action 2.2.2)</i></p>	<p>Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web development work ensured that all relevant information, guidelines, resources as well as videos can be found on the Academic Promotion website. These are now routinely distributed to promotion committee members and candidates.
<p>7. Amend policy to ensure that promotions committee Chairs are trained on unconscious bias (Inclusive Leadership)</p> <p><i>(Athena SWAN Action 4.6)</i></p>	<p>Perception Engagement Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Academic Promotion Committees Levels C-E Procedure’ was updated to include the requirement for Committee Chairs, as well as the expectation for committee members to be trained on unconscious bias (Inclusive Leadership). • Uptake is monitored routinely and staff who need to complete the training are invited to undertake the training sessions before their participation on a promotion committee.
<p>8. Revise and improve Guidelines for decision-makers on applying principles of Achievement Relative to Opportunity.</p> <p><i>(Athena SWAN Action 4.1)</i></p>	<p>Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines were revised, published and distributed through relevant and targeted communication channels. • Case studies were included in this document to demonstrate the breadth of relevant circumstances, including an example of the Covid-19 impact.

Note: Actions 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 of the Athena SWAN Action Plan were also implemented but did not specifically address the perception and understanding of Achievement Relative to Opportunity. Instead, they included publishing promotion outcomes (4.3), a mentoring program for women in STEMM (4.4) and piloting ‘pre-promotion panels’ designed to provide feedback to potential candidates (4.5).

OUTCOMES

1. Engagement > Increased utilisation of 'relevant circumstances'

Between 2017-21 (application years), the proportion of promotion candidates who utilised 'relevant circumstances' increased by 34.6% by women (from 60.7% to 95.3%) and 33.5% by men (from 40.7% to 74.3%) (Figure 10).

In 2021, 41 out of 43 STEMM women seeking promotion utilised 'relevant circumstances'. This speaks highly to the efforts of destigmatising the policy and increasing staff confidence in how it works.

As the increase was not limited to women, it suggests improved understanding that the framework is applicable to staff of all genders.

Additionally, increases can be observed in applications to senior roles (Figure 11) which provides encouraging evidence of breaking historic barriers where engagement in the framework was previously perceived as a statement of disadvantage. When broken down by levels (Tables 2 and 3), the proportion of applicants to Professorial level (E) that engaged in the Framework increased too but not at the same rate as other levels.

This could be partly attributed to reduced instances of career interruptions associated with parental leave and lower proportion of Level D staff working part-time, in comparison to early career academics. Low application numbers can also skew this trend quickly.

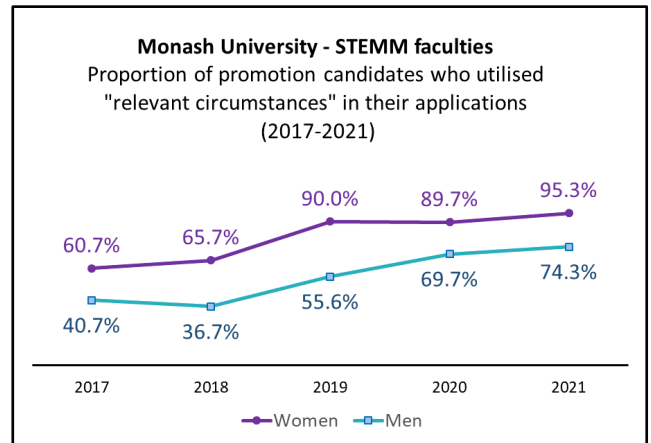


Figure 10 - Utilisation of 'relevant circumstances' by promotion candidates in STEMM

Table 2 - Promotion applications by STEMM women, 2017-21

Women in STEMM		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Promotion application count	Applied to Level C	12	13	22	13	20
	Applied to Level D	12	14	21	11	15
	Applied to Level E	4	8	7	5	8
	To D&E combined	16	22	28	16	23
	Grand total	28	35	50	29	43
Number of applicants including ARTO in applications	Applied to Level C	9	8	20	12	20
	Applied to Level D	7	9	19	10	15
	Applied to Level E	1	6	6	4	6
	To D&E combined	8	15	25	14	21
	Grand total	17	23	45	26	41
Engagement in ARTO (% applicants utilised)	Applied to Level C	75.0%	61.5%	90.9%	92.3%	100.0%
	Applied to Level D	58.3%	64.3%	90.5%	90.9%	100.0%
	Applied to Level E	25.0%	75.0%	85.7%	80.0%	75.0%
	To D&E combined	50.0%	68.2%	89.3%	87.5%	91.3%
	Grand total	60.7%	65.7%	90.0%	89.7%	95.3%

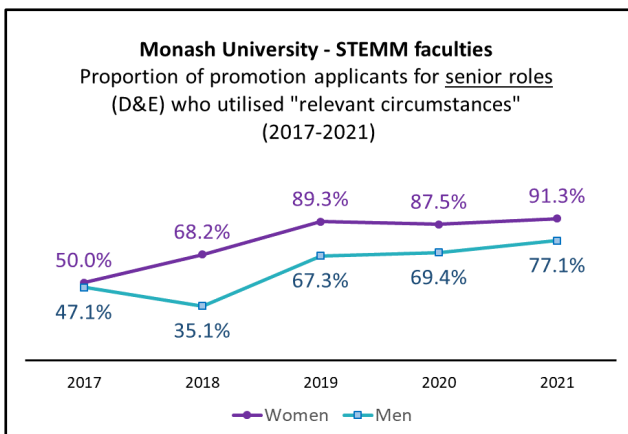


Figure 11 - Utilisation of 'relevant circumstances' by promotion candidates in STEMM applying to senior roles

Table 3 - Promotion applications by STEMM men, 2017-21

Men in STEMM		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Promotion application count	Applied to Level C	20	12	23	27	22
	Applied to Level D	20	26	35	36	35
	Applied to Level E	14	11	14	13	13
	To D&E combined	34	37	49	49	48
	Grand total	54	49	72	76	70
Number of applicants including ARTO in applications	Applied to Level C	6	5	7	19	15
	Applied to Level D	10	10	23	27	28
	Applied to Level E	6	3	10	7	9
	To D&E combined	16	13	33	34	37
	Grand total	22	18	40	53	52
Engagement in ARTO (% applicants utilised)	Applied to Level C	30.0%	41.7%	30.4%	70.4%	68.2%
	Applied to Level D	50.0%	38.5%	65.7%	75.0%	80.0%
	Applied to Level E	42.9%	27.3%	71.4%	53.8%	69.2%
	To D&E combined	47.1%	35.1%	67.3%	69.4%	77.1%
	Grand total	40.7%	36.7%	55.6%	69.7%	74.3%

2. Understanding

a) Increased success rate of promotion candidates who utilised ‘relevant circumstances’

In 2020 and 2021, promotion success rates notably increased for candidates who opted to include relevant circumstances in their applications, exceeding the success rate of applicants who did not seek assessment relative to opportunity (Figure 12).

This suggests both improved quality of detailing relevant circumstances by candidates as well as improved understanding by committee members how to duly take it into consideration.

Table 4 – promotion success rate – all genders; all levels

Utilised Relevant Circumstances	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Applicants	39	41	85	79	93
Successful	28	31	60	72	81
% Success Rate	71.8%	75.6%	70.6%	91.1%	87.1%
Did not utilise Relevant Circumstances	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Applicants	43	43	37	26	20
Successful	37	32	29	21	16
% Success Rate	86.0%	74.4%	78.4%	80.8%	80.0%

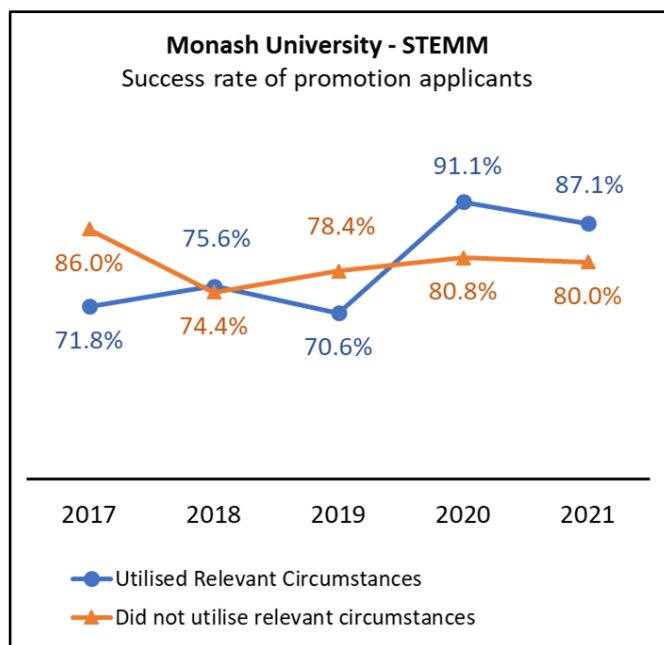


Figure 12 - Success rate of promotion applicants by utilisation of ‘relevant circumstances’

Pervasive nature of Covid-19 related impacts on academic careers was likely a contributing factor in further bringing ‘relative to opportunity’ principles into the forefront of performance assessments.

To this end, it is also important to note that by 2021, 84% of promotion applicants utilised ‘relevant circumstances’, making it difficult to meaningfully compare outcomes to their peers. This is particularly true for women whose engagement in ‘relative to opportunity’ in promotion applications reached 95.3% in 2021 (Figure 10).

b) Improved success rate for applicants working part-time

Despite the fact that part-time work always featured as a prominent example for candidates, it was not until 2019 when 100% of part-time women who applied for promotion, also included the impact of their reduced work fraction as a relevant circumstance.

As shown in Table 5, the percentage also increased for men who work part-time, although it has not reached the full saturation like women.

Additionally, the success rate of part-time staff increased from 71.4% in 2017 to 96.8% in 2021 (Table 6), which is higher than the average success rate of applicants working full-time.

Table 5 - Part-time applicants for academic promotion 2017-2021

Part-time applicants (HC)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% used "relative to opportunity"	
						2017-18	2019-21
Women	13	18	20	10	20	80.6%	100.0%
Men	0	2	3	10	10	50.0%	84.6%
Total	10	18	19	19	30	75.7%	94.7%

Table 6 - Promotion success rate of part-time applicants 2017-2021

Success Rate of Part-time Staff	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Women	76.9%	88.9%	80.0%	90.0%	100.0%
Men	NA	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	90.9%
Total	71.4%	78.3%	76.0%	95.0%	96.8%

While part-time staff continue to be under-represented among promotion applicants when compared to full-time staff, we observed improvements in their application rate from 2.7% of part-time staff applying for promotion in 2017 to 5.3% in 2021. This, too, is an encouraging sign of improved perception and understanding of 'relative to opportunity' by promotion candidates, supervisors and promotion committee members.

3. Perception > Improved proportion of women in senior academic roles in STEMM

Finally, the cumulative effect of targeted interventions designed to enhance equity in academic promotion at Monash has contributed significantly to the increased proportion of women in senior academic positions in STEMM.

Among Associate Professors (Level D), Monash achieved accelerated improvements in women's representation, increasing from 36.2% in 2017 to 45.6% in 2022. In contrast, between 2012 and 2016, the percentage shifted only by 0.8% (from 32% to 32.8%).

Among Professors, the challenge continues to persist as only 25.8% of Level E positions in STEMM are held by women, despite 4.6% improvement since 2018.

While this cannot be attributed to promotion outcomes alone, it is a very positive signal that academic women in STEMM are supported through equitable practices to thrive.

IMPACT

Impact of implemented actions was measured using three primary methods (Figure 13):

- 1) Monash University's biennial *Staff Equity and Diversity Survey* (2019 results compared to 2021)
- 2) *Targeted focus groups and interviews* conducted with Monash academic staff to examine lived experience of academic promotion process and feedback on the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance equity.
- 3) *Targeted survey* distributed to those who served on academic promotion committees to assess decision maker perceptions of Relative to Opportunity.

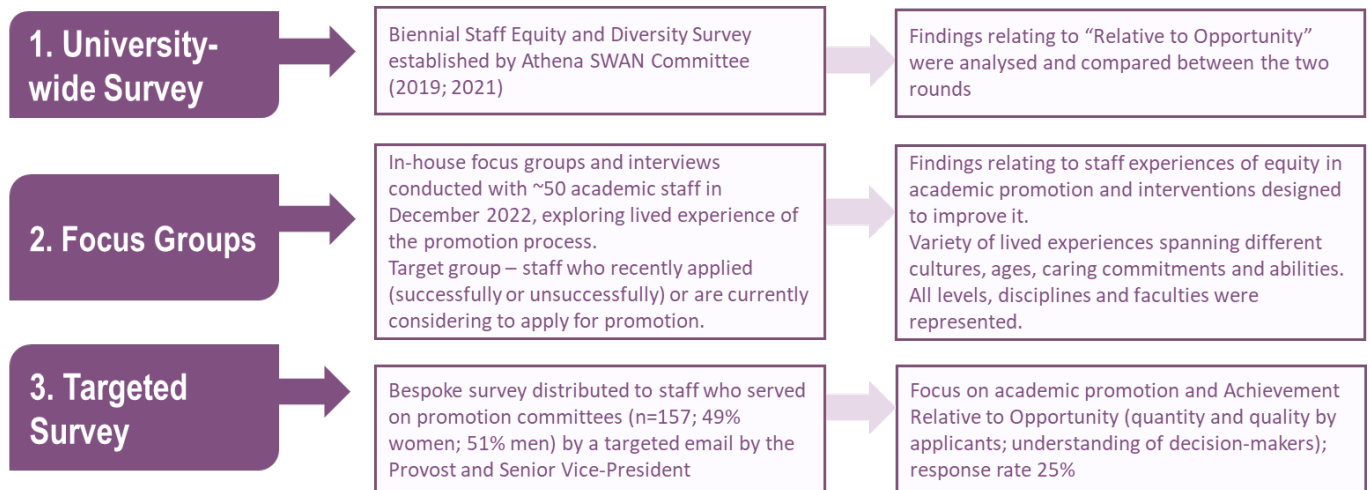


Figure 13 - Methods used to Assess Impact

Impact 1: Improved confidence in the 'Relative to Opportunity' framework (Findings from University-wide Survey)

Findings from the University-wide Staff Equity and Diversity Survey indicated that we achieved a crucial shift in confidence in relation to whether decision-makers at Monash are applying Achievement Relative to Opportunity principles in academic promotion.

As shown in Figure 14, this improvement in confidence occurred across all demographic groups, and most notably by academic women with caregiving commitments (increase by 24.5%), by staff with disability (increase by 22.1%) and LGBTIQ+ staff (increase by 23.7%).

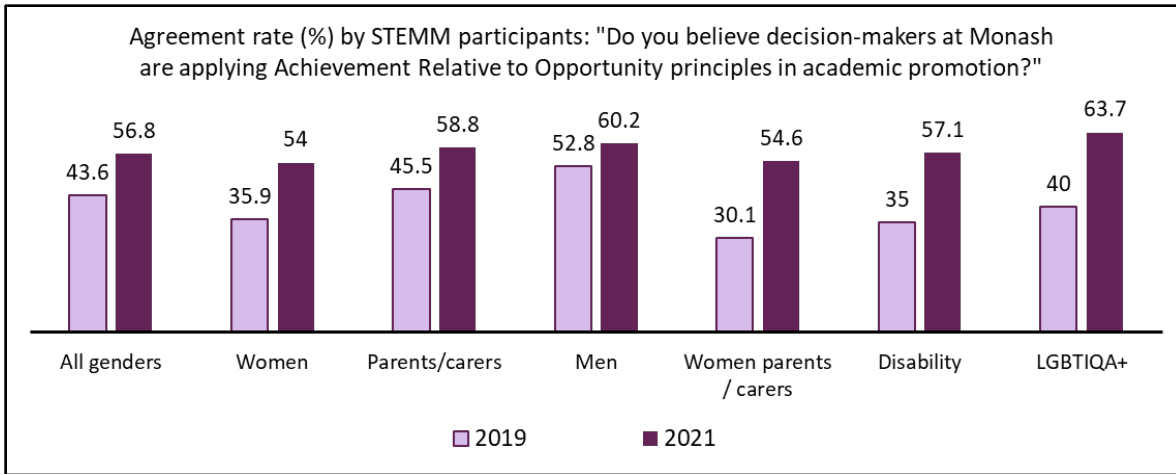


Figure 14 - Survey responses to 2019 and 2021 Staff Equity and Diversity Survey: "Do you believe decision-makers at Monash are applying Achievement Relative to Opportunity principles in academic promotion?" (STEMM participants)

Impact 2: Improved experience for promotion candidates (Focus Groups).

Improved Perception

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
<p>Participants talked about the way the targeted initiatives had improved perception and understanding about Relative to Opportunity at Monash, which in turn encouraged staff to apply for promotion:</p> <p><i>"I think the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Sessions really try and support more staff going for promotion."</i></p> <p>and another staff member stated:</p> <p><i>"I say credit to the University...I didn't feel ready.... but these sessions gave me self-belief... and it wasn't until I went to one of those sessions that I thought I could apply."</i></p>	<p>Improved perception</p> <p>Demonstrates impact in addressing the barriers relating to how Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework is perceived and utilised particularly in relation to the University's commitment and decision-makers' ability to apply it.</p> <p>Participants noted that the sessions provided support and increased self-belief and confidence.</p>

Improved Engagement

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
<p>Participants noted that Achievement Relative to Opportunity Sessions had assisted staff in deciding to apply for promotion and <i>"increased the confidence needed"</i> to submit applications.</p>	<p>Demonstrates impact in addressing the barriers relating to how Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework is utilised.</p>

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
Participants noted that the targeted initiatives had increased confidence in using the Relative to Opportunity Sections in the promotion application form and had assisted applicants in crafting their application considering career disruptions.	Staff report increased confidence in utilising Achievement Relative to Opportunity and crafting applications considering career disruptions.

Enhanced Understanding

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
Feedback on the newly introduced Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARTO) sessions was exceptionally positive, with focus group participants describing them as <i>“incredible”</i> , <i>“exceptionally helpful”</i> and commenting on having access to <i>“fantastic resources”</i> .	Demonstrates impact in addressing the barriers relating to how Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework was perceived and understood.
The ARTO sessions were perceived by academic staff as instrumental in helping them better understand that relative to opportunity applies to people of all genders, not just women, and what scenarios fall under Relative to Opportunity: <i>“Relative to Opportunity sessions really promote all staff not just women, but men as well.”</i>	This is important because Monash University has run Women’s Promotion Information Sessions for more than twenty years and may have inadvertently skewed Relative to Opportunity examples towards women and caregiving in the past, which has impacted understandings and perceptions.

Impact 3: Improved Use and Understanding of ‘Relative to Opportunity’

(Findings from survey for Promotion Committee Members)

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
Promotion Committee members (decision-makers) reported that over recent years they had observed in promotion applications: <i>“great improvements in the use by applicants of ‘relative to opportunity’ statements”</i> , <i>“increased awareness of relative to opportunity”</i> <i>“greater willingness to include relative to opportunity statements”</i>	Demonstrates impact in addressing the barriers relating to how Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework is utilised by staff at Monash University (Engagement and Understanding).

Improved Perception of ‘Relative to Opportunity’

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
<p>Feedback from decision-makers included that the targeted initiatives positively changed perceptions of utilizing relative to opportunity; there is:</p> <p><i>“reduced stigma that was previously attached to such statements”.</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates impact in addressing the barriers relating to how Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework is perceived and utilised. (Perception)</p>

Impact of training on Achievement Relative to Opportunity

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
<p>The development of our bespoke online module on Achievement Relative to Opportunity received overwhelmingly positive feedback from academic leaders and promotion committee members. The mandatory aspect of this training was seen as a positive:</p> <p><i>“The mandating of undertaking the training prior to participating in a promotion panel etc means that it is more likely to arise in the discussion of the application and with a deepened awareness of importance.”</i></p> <p>The training materials provided were perceived as <i>“useful”, “really impressive and excellent”, “fit for purpose”, and “the scenarios are right to the point and very instructive”.</i></p> <p>Decision-makers commented on the importance of having such helpful resources in place to ensure candidates are assessed fairly and equitably:</p> <p><i>“ I have benefitted a lot from using the existing resources...I must say that I have learnt a lot in the last 3 years about how relative to opportunity affects an individual and how best a candidate can make a stronger case as a result of completing training offered by the university. “</i></p> <p><i>“The training and materials provide confidence to take into consideration structural gendered bias within the promotion process. As well, the increased awareness by the assessment committee as a collective has allowed for more collegiate and equitable voices to be heard during the discussion of applications and promoted more effective assessments as a whole. “</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates impact in addressing barriers relating to low confidence in how decision-makers apply Achievement Relative to Opportunity.</p> <p>Improved assessments relative to opportunity.</p> <p>Improved utilisation of the academic relative to opportunity sections in academic promotion by decision-makers.</p> <p>(Understanding)</p>

Equipping decision-makers: Support and understanding how to assess 'Relative to opportunity'

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
<p>Decision-makers reported that the targeted training had ensured decision-makers were more equipped to assess promotion applications relative to opportunity.</p> <p><i>"I think the training has helped panel members to speak up and share thoughts relative to opportunity statements. There is more acknowledgement of these statements in the review process."</i></p> <p>They also noted that relative to opportunity is</p> <p><i>"routinely discussed as part of promotions committees now and actively considered in the decision making."</i></p> <p>Chairs of Promotion Committees now make</p> <p><i>"explicit reference to relative to opportunity statements...which elevates the importance of these statements."</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates impact in addressing barriers relating to low confidence in how decision-makers apply Achievement Relative to Opportunity.</p> <p>Improved utilisation of the academic relative to opportunity sections in academic promotion by decision-makers.</p> <p>(Understanding)</p>

Improved Quality of 'Relative to Opportunity' statements

Lived Experience > feedback	Demonstrated Impact
<p>Promotion Committee members (decision-makers) unanimously commented on improved quality of statements:</p> <p><i>"quality of Achievement Relative to Opportunity statements is excellent"</i></p> <p>there is now</p> <p><i>"better clarity around what these statements pertain to"</i></p> <p><i>"applicants have improved the information that they include, such as explaining more explicitly how their performance was affected by their circumstances"</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>"applicants are more likely to discuss how 'despite' challenges they have been able to progress".</i></p>	<p>Demonstrates impact in addressing the barriers relating to how Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework is utilised by staff at Monash University.</p> <p>(Engagement and Understanding)</p>



Does staff feedback suggest that these changes are attributable to our actions?

Findings from our staff focus groups and surveys strongly indicate that interventions designed to improve staff understanding, perception and engagement with the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework were impactful, and attributable to our actions. Overall, we demonstrated:

- a) improved academic staff and decision-makers' knowledge and *understanding* of the Relative to Opportunity Framework;
- b) positively changed *perceptions* of utilising Relative to Opportunity;
- c) increased *confidence* in the Relative to Opportunity Framework and how it is applied by decision-makers;
- d) considerably improved *engagement* and *utilisation* of the academic relative to opportunity sections in academic promotion by all staff and decision-makers, and
- e) led to *greater success rates* among candidates utilising achievement relative to opportunity.

Final Reflections

Achievement Relative to Opportunity principles are critically important to facilitating equitable assessments of a person's performance and recognising their potential. The Framework has been in place at Monash University for more than a decade and feedback has clearly shown that it can be difficult to understand and even more challenging for decision-makers to apply.

The shift we have achieved over the past two to three years represents a cumulative effect of multiple interventions, targeted initiatives and collective actions. This work has been strongly supported by the University's leadership and has had phenomenal feedback from many stakeholder groups across the whole Monash community.

However, we appreciate the complexities and the varying levels of adoption and understanding of relative to opportunity principles at local levels, the lack of immunity to bias, assumptions and stereotyping. Therefore, our work in this space continues and equitable decision-making remains at the forefront of our staff equity, diversity and inclusion endeavours.

FURTHER ACTIONS

Ref. No.	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person / Team responsible	Senior Leader accountable	Success Indicators
1.	Feedback highlighted the value of interactive sessions on how to address Achievement Relative to Opportunity” (ARTO) and seeing examples how to prepare ARTO statements in promotion applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue refining Guidelines for Decision-Makers and Promotion Candidates to ensure relevant examples of ‘relative to opportunity’ are provided Ensure examples include non-traditional relationships and cases that typically fall into confidential declarations 	Annual	Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Vice Provost (Academic Affairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved confidence in how Achievement Relative to Opportunity is applied in promotion, evidenced by results of biennial Staff Equity and Diversity Survey
2.	Part-time staff remain under-represented among promotion applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct analysis of part-time staff who have not applied for promotion for a set number of years and determine how to encourage supervisors to provide more focused support for promotion of their staff 	2023-2024	Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Analytics	Vice Provost (Academic Affairs) Chief HR Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved promotion application rate by part-time staff
3.	Feedback from early adopters of newly introduced online training on Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity provides strong evidence that all academic staff should be completing it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make “Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity” mandatory for all academic supervisors. Monitor uptake and communicate completion rates 	Q3 2023	Vice Provost (Academic Affairs) Staff EDI Academic Performance	Vice Provost (Academic Affairs) Chief HR Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All promotion committee members have completed “Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity” There is an improved confidence in how Achievement Relative to Opportunity is applied in promotion, evidenced by results of biennial Staff Equity and Diversity Survey
4.	Focus groups participants expressed the need for a more targeted support leading up to promotion applications, such as mentoring, coaching or interviewing skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a mentoring program for academic women who are planning to apply for promotion; encourage participation of staff from linguistically diverse backgrounds and part-time staff 	2024	Athena Swan Steering Group supported by HR	Provost Vice Provost (Academic Affairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program participants found the experience valuable. Improved application rate by women, women from linguistically diverse backgrounds and part-time staff.
5.	Impact of caregiving and reduced fraction on academic career advancement is complex and staff continue to face systemic barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage an external consultant to undertake a study that examines persisting barriers to career advancement experienced by staff with caregiving commitments and those working part-time. Informed by evidence, present recommendations to remove them. 	2023-2024	Staff EDI Athena Swan Steering Group Dedicated Project Group	Provost Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Chief HR Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study is supported, funded and undertaken Key findings are reported to senior leadership. Actions are developed with accountabilities and timelines
6.	Data are powerful in driving action and achieving change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue monitoring and reporting promotion application data and outcomes through equity lens 	Annually	Staff EDI	Provost Chief HR Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on promotion data is provided to senior leadership with recommendations