



**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**

Recruitment of females into professorial  
research roles at ECU

## CONTENTS

GLOSSARY .....	4
KEY BARRIER .....	6
EVIDENCE OF BARRIER .....	6
Evidence for sub-barriers.....	6
ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS.....	10
OUTCOMES .....	12
IMPACT.....	18
FURTHER ACTION .....	20



**S A G E**

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA  
GENDER EQUITY

## SAGE Cygnet Award Application

<b>Name of Institution</b>	Edith Cowan University (ECU)
<b>Date of Application</b>	December 2023
<b>Contact for Application</b>	Professor Cobie Rudd, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) & Vice-President
<b>Email</b>	cobie.rudd@ecu.edu.au
<b>Telephone No.</b>	(+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(R)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
DVC RF	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)
ECU	Edith Cowan University
ECUASCC	ECU Athena Swan Charter Committee
FTE	Full Time Equivalent hours worked by one employee on a full-time basis
HRSC	Human Resources Service Centre
+M (after STEM)	Medicine [includes Schools of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM) and School of Medical and Health Sciences (SMHS)]
ODVC(R)	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
ODVC RF	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)
SENG	School of Engineering
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>
VC	Vice-Chancellor
VCPRF	Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellow
VCRF	Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellow
WA	Western Australia

## INSTITUTION NAME: SAGE CYGNET 4

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

	✓ Current Cygnet	<b>Barrier</b> · List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet · List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted
Institution-wide barrier		Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA)
Sub-group barrier		Inadequate support systems inhibiting the promotion of women in STEM(M), specifically into academic levels C - E
Sub-group barrier		Decreasing gender disparity in the School of Engineering (SENG)
Sub-group barrier	✓	Recruiting females into professorial research roles at ECU
Sub-group barrier		Addressing diversity in the School of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM)

### A note on language

ECU's data collection systems collect data on the basis of sex (male/female) rather than gender. This is reflected in the language used in this Cygnet application.

## KEY BARRIER

The Key Barrier was identified as the lack of recruitment of females into research roles, particularly professorial level research roles, at ECU.

At ECU, most, though not all, professors are professorial research roles. One academic staff member is a 'Teaching only' Professor. In addition, an Executive Dean of a School can be allocated the title of Professor when taking on that role. All academic staff perform combinations of teaching and learning, research and research training, and University leadership, within their respective capacities.

For the purposes of this Cygnet, the professorial data (Academic Level E [ALEVE]) presented reflects the professorial research cohort only.

## EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

ECU's previous *Strategic Plan 2017-2021* included the aim of recruiting highly skilled academics to the University. However, in 2017 as part of the work towards the Athena Swan (AS) Bronze Award and Action Plan (ASBAP), ECU assessed the recruitment of female academic staff into university research roles. It observed that a significant gender imbalance favouring males over females existed.

The *Key Barrier* to the recruitment of females into professorial research roles at ECU consists of three fundamental sub-barriers, all of which impacted the ability of ECU to address gender disparity.

These three sub-barriers are:

Sub-barrier 1:	The overall low number of females in professorial research roles both across ECU and at the individual school level.
Sub-barrier 2:	The lack of a pipeline of female research academics.
Sub-barrier 3:	A low number/proportion of females being appointed through the Vice Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellowship Scheme.

### Evidence for sub-barriers

#### 1. Overall low number of females in professorial research roles both across ECU and at the individual school level.

In 2017, ECU had female staff representing only 28% of the professorial cohort (*Table.1 & Figure.1<sup>1</sup>*). However, the disparity was more telling at the school-level, notably more male professors than female professors in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) schools, i.e., Schools of Science (SSCI) and Medical and Health Sciences (SMHS).

Also, the School of Engineering (SENG) and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) were noted for further investigation, as SENG had no professorial researchers (one male professor not included in the count was the Executive Dean of the School), and WAAPA had no female professors and only one male.

Additionally, it is important to note, while not as wide in disparity, the School of Business and Law (SBL) and Arts and Humanities (SAH) also demonstrated gender imbalances (*Table.1*). The School of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM), the School of Education (SEDU), (*Table.1*) had more or equivalent numbers of female professors.

#### **2017 Professorial (ALEVE) Staff Headcount (Female – F, Male – M)**

Gender	Headcount
# Female (F) staff at ALEVE	14 (28%)
# Male (M) staff at ALEVE	36 (72%)
Difference between F and M	-22

#### **2017 Professorial (ALEVE) Staff Headcount by School**

School	SAH	SBL	SEDU	SMHS	SNM	WAAPA	SENG	SSCI
# F ALEVE	3	2	2	4	3	0	0	0
# M ALEVE	5	7	0	14	0	1	0	9
Difference between F and M	-2	-5	+2	-10	+3	-1	=	-9

Table 1. 2017 Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender disaggregated into discipline areas.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers and percentages may be slightly different from previous reporting due to Human Resources Services Centre (HRSC) personnel reconciliation.

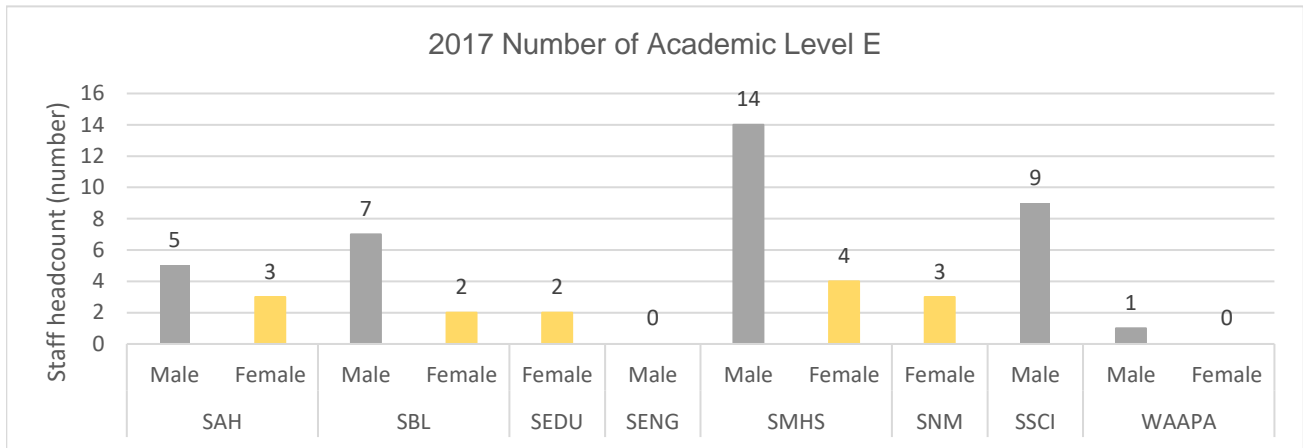


Figure 1. 2017 data of staff headcount females and males ALEVE

This low overall number of female professors across ECU had inadvertent consequences. Not only did it diminish the visibility of senior role models for aspiring female academics, particularly those working in male-dominated disciplines across STEM, but it also contributed to a widened Gender Pay Gap (GPG).

At this time, there were also disproportionately lower numbers of females in professorial positions compared to other academic levels. Overall, there were approximately equal numbers of females (30) and males (35) at ALEVD but a substantial reduction at ALEVE (Table.2). To further investigate, the University closely examined gendered breakdowns at each Academic Level to better understand the career trajectory of females and through what mechanisms they progress their careers (e.g., academic promotions - refer to ECU Cygnet Award #2).

#### 2017 Overall Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender

School	ALEVA	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
# Female staff	47 (59%)	140 (58%)	79 (51%)	30 (46%)	14 (28%)
# Male staff	33 (41%)	101 (42%)	77 (49%)	35 (54%)	36 (72%)
Difference between female and male	+14	+39	+2	-5	-22

Table 2. 2017 Overall Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender

## 2. The lack of a pipeline of female research academics

Analysis of the 2017 pipeline of female academics (Table.2) showed that overall, there was a substantial reduction in the proportion of females from ALEVD to ALEVE, though the downward trajectory of female's representation, actually began from ALEVB-C. This is 60% at ALEVA-ALEVC (266 females from 477 staff) decreasing to 40% at ALEVD/E (44 females from 115 staff).

In Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) schools, SENG and SSCI showed under-representation of females at all levels, dropping from only 27% females at ALEVA-ALEVC (21-55 females to males) to 14% at ALEVD/E, with no female professors. This showed little pipeline for females to be promoted into professorial roles.

#### 2017 Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Disciplines (SENG and SSCI)

School	ALEVA	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
# Female (F) staff	3 (27%)	15 (33%)	3 (14%)	4 (24%)	0 (0%)
# Male (M) staff	8 (73%)	28 (67%)	19 (86%)	13 (76%)	9 (100%)
Difference between female and male	-5	-13	-16	-9	-9

Table 3. 2017 STEM Schools Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender disaggregated into discipline areas.

In a reverse gender disparity pattern, females dominated ALEVA-ALEVC in SNM at 90% (36F:4M), and there were no men above ALEVB. In SMHS, female academics dominated at ALEVA-ALEVC at 68% (61F:29M) but this dropped to 42% (12F:19M) at ALEVD/E. The AS Bronze identified that this was a result of the recruitment of predominantly male professors in 2016/17.

It is evident that the downward trajectory in representation began at ALEVB to ALEV C (Table.4). While these disciplines did have a potential pool of females who could progress through to more senior levels, there was a 'bottleneck' at ALEVB-C (see Cygnet 2).

**2017 Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender for Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine (+M) Disciplines (SNM, SMHS)**

	ALEVA	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
# Female staff	14 (70%)	59 (80%)	24 (67%)	11 (69%)	7 (35%)
# Male staff	6 (30%)	15 (20%)	12 (33%)	5 (31%)	14 (65%)
Difference between female and male	+8	+44	+12	+6	-7

Table 4. 2017 Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender disaggregated into discipline areas.

As this Cygnet is about the whole professorial research cohort, not just in STEM(M), data for SBL, SAH, SEDU and WAAPA showed the gender representation is closest to parity in these schools, as shown in Table 5. However, gender disparity still existed, especially with increasing career seniority, with the lowest number/proportion of females in ALEVE in these schools.

**2017 Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender for Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law (AHSSBL) Disciplines (SBL, SAH, WAAPA, SEDU)**

	ALEVA	ALEVB	ALEVC	ALEVD	ALEVE
# Female staff	30 (61%)	66 (53%)	52 (53%)	15 (47%)	7 (35%)
# Male staff	19 (39%)	58 (47%)	43 (47%)	17 (53%)	13 (65%)
Difference between female and male	+11	+8	+9	-2	-6

Table 5. continued 2017 Staff Headcount by Academic Level and Gender disaggregated into discipline areas.

### 3. A low number/proportion of females being appointed through the Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellowship Scheme.

The Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellowship (VCPRF) Scheme enables the Vice-Chancellor to directly and rapidly respond to opportunities to recruit talented, world leading professors where the appointment will enhance the University's research profile and reputation, and where the appointee would be judged to be outstanding if being assessed through the normal recruitment processes.

While this is not the only way to be recruited into a professorial research role at ECU<sup>2</sup>, the Scheme allows a number of professors to be hired in a single targeted recruitment round and it has been the **principal** way in terms of sheer numbers, by which ECU has increased the number of females in ALEVE roles.

All VCPRFs appointees are recruited into research-only positions, though some appointees have had mixed teaching-research roles in the first three years of their appointment. At the end of the agreed three-year term, Schools, or an external funding body, are required to meet all costs of the ongoing appointment of the professorial appointees<sup>3</sup>.

The very first VCPRF campaign (2015-2017, preceding a systemic approach to AS at ECU) resulted in 14 males and 4 females being appointed.

A key issue was the attraction of applications from females, with 65 female applicants to 168 men (Figure.2/Table.6). Also noteworthy was the lower proportion of these female applicants being shortlisted, given their success rate when shortlisted was in fact slightly higher than their male counterparts. This demonstrated action was needed to increase applications from females and to improve equity in shortlisting.

<sup>2</sup> other routes include via the Academic Promotions process, through an industry-funded chair, or recruitment for an Executive Dean position.

<sup>3</sup> [https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/740666/Guidelines-Direct-Appointments.pdf](https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/740666/Guidelines-Direct-Appointments.pdf)





*Figure 2. Professorial Research Fellow appointment and applicant success by gender (2015-2017)*

The table area is a large rectangle with a black border. A horizontal yellow bar spans across the middle of the rectangle, containing the word "Redacted" in black, italicized text.

*Table 6. Professorial Research Fellow appointment and applicant success by gender (2015-2017)*

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Since 2015, to improve the recruitment of females into research roles, particularly professorial level research roles, ECU has focused on two key Schemes [both overseen by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)]; the **Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellowship (VCPRF)**, where there were already acknowledged gender barriers, and a subsequent new initiative in 2019, the **Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowship Scheme (VCRF)**.

Scheme Title	Description	Dates Active
<b>VCPRF: The Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellowship Scheme</b>	Commenced the first recruitment round in 2015. Aimed at the rapid recruitment of high-level professors (Academic Level E) across the University.	2015 - present
<b>VCRF: The Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowship Scheme</b>	Commenced the first recruitment round in 2019. Aimed at Academic Level B and C to build a pipeline of researchers and thus eventually grow the professorial research cohort. .	2019 - present

The schemes aim to achieve the following two objectives:

### **Objective 1) Grow the pool of research academics on the pathway to a professorial role.**

Activity	Description
2019 – Introduction of the <b>Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowship (VCRF) Scheme</b>	<p>ECU launched a new national recruitment campaign to attract outstanding early and mid-career researchers to ECU with a Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowship. The aims were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To build a pipeline of researchers to become professors in the future.</li> <li>To develop ECU's research capacity in specific areas.</li> <li>To maintain a focus on recruiting females into the area which ECU determined had an under-representation of a particular gender, (particularly females in STEM areas and males in the nursing discipline).</li> <li>To increase the number of females in the pipeline allowing ECU to 'grow their own' by having female research academics progress through the system and ultimately attain professorial status.</li> </ul>
2020-2022 – Recruitment freeze	Due to the global pandemic and its financial impacts, the VCRF recruitment campaign did not proceed over 2020-2022.
2021 - Formal review of the VCRF Scheme (along with VCPRF review below in Table 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An internal review of the two Schemes was conducted by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) [DVC(R)] in 2021. The review sought to understand the impact of the Schemes on the research performance and culture of the University, to identify any immediate improvements to the Schemes, and to inform decisions about the future design of the Schemes.</li> <li>The review involved four stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of the research excellence performance outcomes of the Fellows bearing in mind, this was only able to cover an 18-month period.</li> <li>Face-to-face interviews with eight Executive Deans.</li> <li>Online written surveys from the 12 continuing VCRFs</li> <li>Online written surveys from the HDR supervision and research grant writing mentors (VCRFs only).</li> </ul> </li> <li>The Key GEDI finding was that greater consideration is required in future recruitment rounds of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion factors.</li> </ul>
2023 – VCRF Guideline revision	<p>In July 2023, guidelines for the VCRF Scheme were revised to enhance gender equity in recruitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During VCRF recruitment round shortlisting, Schools are required to shortlist their top three candidates with at least one of the shortlisted applicants to be female.</li> <li>Recruitment Selection Panel Chairs have the power to co-opt up to two additional members to ensure balanced perspective, specialised knowledge, equity, and gender balance.</li> <li>Clause added to focus on equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, with efforts being directed to applicants from a range of diverse groups with particular attention to females.</li> </ul>

Table 7. Activities and outputs to: Grow the pool of research academics on the pathway to a professorial role.

**Objective 2) Recruit more female Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Research Fellows than males to ensure a gender-balanced pool of professorial researchers at ECU.**

Activity	Description
Leadership of the VCPRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A decision was made to ensure ongoing oversight, leadership and monitoring of the program by the DVC(R) to ensure deliberate actions to drive this initiative.</li> </ul>
2018-2019 – Updates to the recruitment process for the VCPRF Scheme	<p>Updates were made to the recruitment process for the 2018 and 2019 VCPRF Scheme.</p> <p><b>To improve application numbers from females these included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reframing the PRF Recruitment Campaign to target females. This was done in a number of ways including:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlighting ECUs female friendly culture.</li> <li>Including benefits which would appeal to females such as flexible working arrangements (for those who may have parental responsibilities).</li> <li>Gender neutral writing.</li> <li>Advertisements in diverse places rather than standardised recruitment agencies, for example,                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing recruitment information directly from ECU</li> <li>Utilising social media related to ECU schools such as LinkedIn platforms.</li> <li>Already employed professors sharing recruitment advertisement to their networks</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> <li>And overtly improving the identification of, and engagement with, potential female candidates through HR processes (such as early call back of applicants at time appropriate intervals).</li> </ul> <p><b>To improve female representation on the shortlist these included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving preference to female candidates for future PRF (an Athena Swan Action Item monitored by the DVC(R) and reported to the Athena Swan Charter Committee (ASCC) and University Executive (UE).</li> </ul>
2020-2022 – Recruitment freeze	Due to the global pandemic and its financial impacts, the VCPRF recruitment campaign did not proceed over 2020-2022.
2021 - Formal review of the VCPRF scheme (along with VCRF review above in Table 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See information about the review aims, process and findings in Table 7 above.</li> </ul>
2022 – VCPRF Guideline revision	<p>In October 2022, the Guidelines for the Scheme were updated and the VCPRF Scheme was re-opened with new parameters for 2022 and 2023 applications including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no longer a specific agenda to hire more females than males overall. The focus is now predominantly on hiring females in underrepresented areas and ensuring no men are hired into those areas instead. However, a gender balanced cohort overall continues to be a key consideration when selecting and hiring VCPRFs moving forward.</li> </ul> <p>In the Guide To Appointments Professorial Research Fellowships and the Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Guidelines there are updates including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updates to the ‘equity statement’ to now include more direction to guide around inclusion and belonging.</li> <li>Updated statement to ensure ‘each and every staff member to be responsible for fostering an inclusive culture, upholding the principles of equity and fairness, demonstrating behaviours consistent with ECU’s Code of Conduct including reflecting ECU’s Values’.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on the selection process not just the appointment process.</li> <li>Inclusion of a focus on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people as well as gender and other underrepresented groups.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Where a Recruitment Agent is engaged the recruitment activity will be conducted in accordance with <i>Position, Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy</i>. and the <i>Diversity and Inclusion Employment policy (specifically referring to the item on Gender Equality and committed to removing the barrier for this, and other, underrepresented equity groups</i>.</li> </ul>

Table 8. Activities and output: Recruit more female Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Research Fellows than male to ensure a gender-balanced pool of professorial researchers at ECU.

## OUTCOMES

ECU had the following targets to achieve:

Target 1:	Increased number of female research professors to achieve gender balance (40:40:20) across ECU and in individual schools (achieved overall, though with clear discipline differences. See Item 1 below)
Target 2	Increased pool of female research academics on the pathway to professorial roles (achieved, though with clear discipline differences. See Item 2.1 & 2.2 below)
Target 3:	More females than males appointed as VC Professorial Research Fellows (achieved. See Item 3 below)

### 1) Increased number of female research professors to achieve gender balance (40:40:20) across ECU and in individual schools.

Across ECU, over the past five years ECU has proactively tracked professorial hires and analysis has shown a 107% increase in the number of female ALEVEs, from 14 in 2017 to 29\* in 2023 (Table.9). Male professorial recruitment occurred at a lower rate, with a 19% increase from 2017 to 2023. Overall gender balance has been achieved with 40% of ECU's professorial cohort female, and 60% male, a substantial improvement from 2017 where 28% of ECU's professorial cohort were female compared to 72% male.

2017 v 2023 Professorial Staff Headcount (Male – M, Female – F)			
	2017	2023	Total
# Female staff at ALEVE	14 (28%)	29* (40%)	+15
# Male staff at ALEVE	36 (72%)	43* (60%)	+7
Difference between F and M	-22	-12	+8
Difference between the 2017 and 2023 gap		+10	

Table 9. 2017 v 2023 Professorial Staff Headcount

\*2023 data capture reflects the current status and hence does not cover the full year in totality.

Across ECU schools, there has been an increased **number** of female research professors in all Schools except WAAPA and SENG, which still have no female professors. However, there has also been an increased **number** of male research professors in SBL, SENG, SSCI.

The **proportion** of female research professors has increased in SAH, SMHS and SSCI. Gender disparity still prevails in all disciplines except SAH (57%F:43%M), most notably in STEM disciplines where females are underrepresented and in SNM and SEDU where men are underrepresented (Figure.3/Table10.).

2017 v 2023 Professorial Staff Headcount by School ALEVE – detailed breakdown								
School	SAH	SBL	SEDU	SMHS	SNM	WAAPA	SENG	SSCI
# F staff ALEVE 2017	3	2	2	4	3	0	0	0
# M staff ALEVE 2017	5	7	0	14	0	1	0	9
# F staff ALEVE 2023	8	3	4	6	6	0	0	2
# M staff ALEVE 2023	5	10	0	13	0	1	2	12
F and M - 2017 V 2023	+5F, =M	+1F, +3M	+2F, =M	+2F, -1	+3F, =M	=F, =M	=F, +2M	+2F, +3M
2023 Difference F to M	+3	-7	+4	-7	+6	-2	-3	-11
2017 Difference F to M	-2	-5	+2	-10	+3	-1	=	-9
2017 V 2023 gap change	+5	-2	+2	+3	+3	-1	-3	-2

Table 10. 2017 v 2023 Professorial Staff Headcount by School ALEVE

Action 2.2	Review outcomes of research data to further disaggregate by teaching, research and service roles
Action 3.1	Actively pursue recruitment for a female Professor in SENG who can provide an aspiration role model.

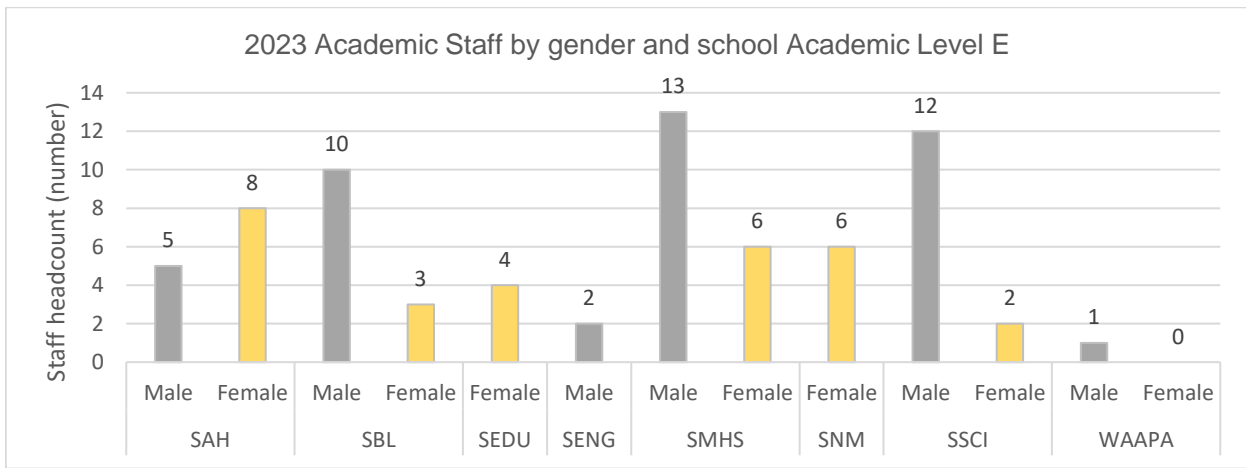


Figure 3. 2023 Professorial Staff Headcount by School ALEVE

School-level gender disparities will continue to be a focus for ECU into the future and for the Institutional Silver application. Schools such as SAH, which traditionally comprises female-dominated disciplines including with a female-dominated student cohort, is different to schools such as SBL and WAAPA, who have a more mixed student cohort. Humanities and social science disciplines attract more students than any other subject areas – the majority of whom are women. Stereotypes continue to prevail in schools and tertiary education institutions, that boys are better at maths and science, while girls excel at English and the humanities, and this impacts women and girls preference for humanities subjects.

The new Executive Dean for SAH (appointed Jan. 2022) is a member of University Executive and thus strongly subscribed to Athena Swan through the fortnightly Standing Item for the University Executive’s meetings. He is also a male champion and employed an active recruitment strategy in SAH under his leadership over the past two years.

In addition to the VCPRF scheme and normal recruitment practices, ECU does not just rely on only hiring females into professorial positions. There are deliberate plans to promote females within ECU, to contribute to achieving the gender-balanced professorial cohort. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic [text redacted] where senior female academic staff are already underrepresented.

As the gender-balanced was not achieved in all schools, this remains a gap for ECU that will be investigated as part of the Institutional Silver Award, to ensure if any strategies employed by high-performing schools can be used in those with low female professorial staff numbers.

## 2) Increased pool of female research academics on the pathway to professorial roles

### 2.1: Improved pipeline of female research academics

Overall, there has been an increase in the number of academics (2017: 592 academics, 2023: 679). The proportion of females overall has increased slightly (2017: 52% female, 2023: 56% Female), see Figure 4.

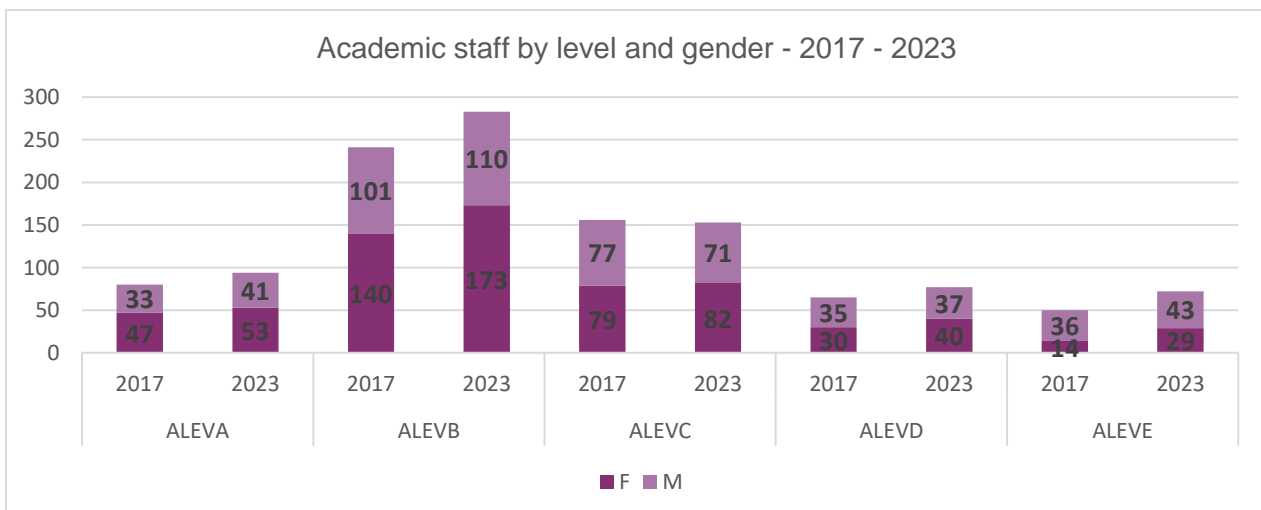


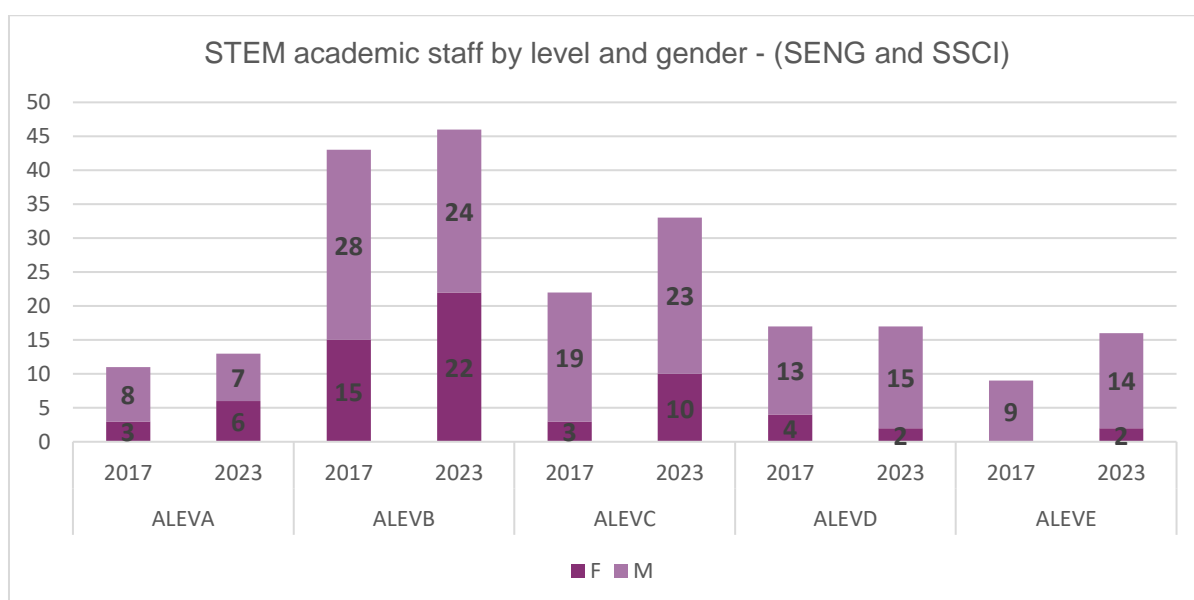
Figure 4. 2017 v 2023 Academic Staff Headcount by Gender and Academic Level

	Year	Females	Males	Females	Males
<b>ALEVA</b>	2017	47	33	59%	41%
	2023	53	41	56%	44%
<b>ALEVB</b>	2017	140	101	58%	42%
	2023	173	110	61%	39%
<b>ALEVC</b>	2017	79	77	51%	49%
	2023	82	71	54%	46%
<b>ALEVD</b>	2017	30	35	46%	54%
	2023	40	37	52%	48%
<b>ALEVE</b>	2017	14	36	28%	72%
	2023	29	43	40%	60%

Figure 4. 2017 v 2023 Academic Staff Headcount by Gender and Academic Level Continued

The proportion of females has grown at ALEVB (58% to 61%), ALEVC (51% to 54%), ALEVD (46% to 52%) and ALEVE (28% to 40%). This bodes well for the pipeline to senior levels.

In STEM Disciplines (SENG and SSCI), there is a developing pipeline of females (Figure.5), noting a slight decrease at ALEVD. Representation of females however is still very low at ALEVC-ALEVE.



	Year	Females	Males	Females	Males
<b>ALEVA</b>	2017	3	8	27%	73%
	2023	6	7	46%	54%
<b>ALEVB</b>	2017	15	28	35%	65%
	2023	22	24	48%	52%
<b>ALEVC</b>	2017	3	19	14%	86%
	2023	10	23	30%	70%
<b>ALEVD</b>	2017	4	13	24%	76%
	2023	2	15	12%	88%
<b>ALEVE</b>	2017	0	9	0%	100%
	2023	2	14	12%	88%

Figure 5. 2017 v 2023 STEM Academic Staff Headcount by Gender and Academic Level

In +M disciplines (SMHS and SNM), the proportion of females declined slightly at ALEVA and ALEVB, but grew slightly in ALEVC, ALEVD and ALEVE. This continues to develop a pipeline, while retaining the females in senior levels at ALEVC/D (Figure.6/Table.11.).

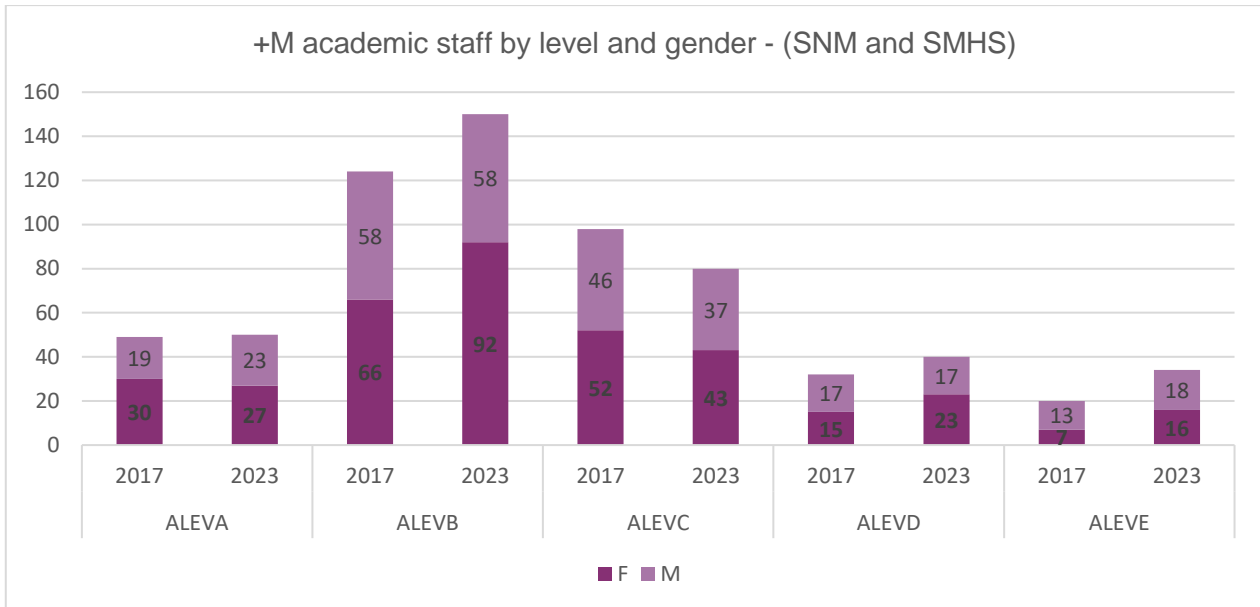


Figure 6. Continued 2017 v 2023 [+M] Academic Staff Headcount by Gender and Academic Level

Level	Year	Females	Males	Females (%)	Males (%)
ALEVA	2017	14	6	70%	30%
	2023	20	11	65%	35%
ALEVB	2017	59	15	80%	20%
	2023	71	25	74%	26%
ALEVC	2017	24	12	67%	33%
	2023	23	8	74%	26%
ALEVD	2017	11	5	69%	31%
	2023	11	4	73%	27%
ALEVE	2017	7	14	33%	67%
	2023	12	13	48%	52%

Table 11. 2017 v 2023 [+M] Academic Staff Headcount by Gender and Academic Level

Data for SBL, SAH, SEDU and WAAPA shows the proportion of females grew in ALEVB from 53% to 61% and ALEVD from 47% to 58% developing the pipeline (Figure.7). The headcount of ALEVE females grew from 7 to 16, with the proportion of females increasing from 35% to 47% because male ALEVE grew at a similar [13 to 18 (65% to 53%)].

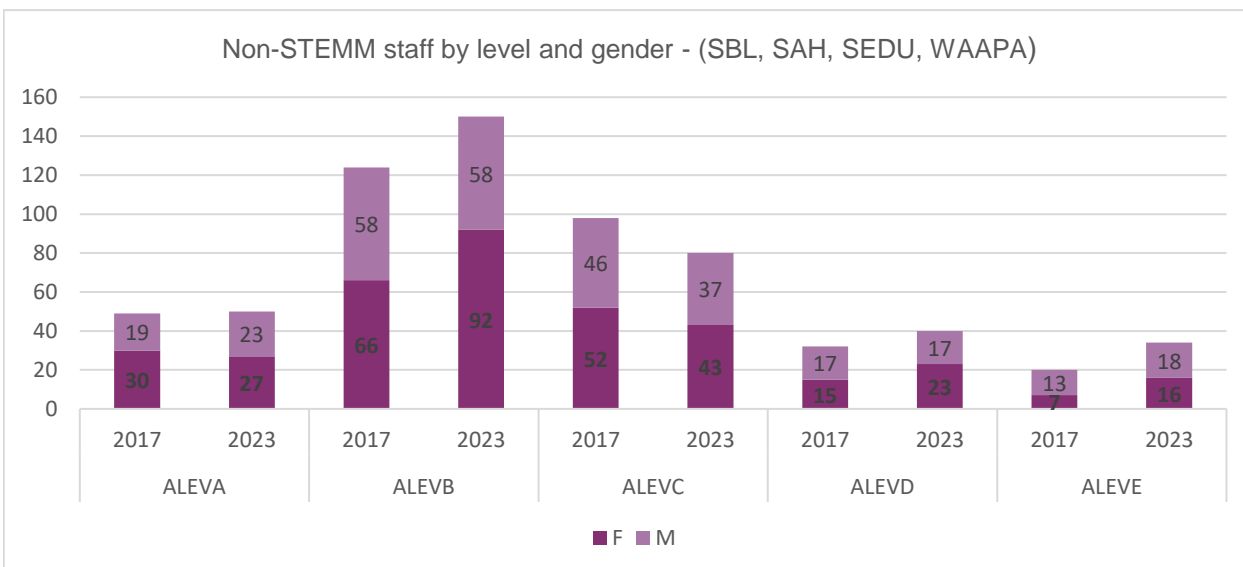


Figure 7. 2017 v 2023 Non-STEMM Academic Staff Headcount by Gender and Academic Level

	Year	Females	Males	Females	Males
<b>ALEVA</b>	2017	30	19	61%	39%
	2023	27	23	54%	46%
<b>ALEVB</b>	2017	66	58	53%	47%
	2023	92	58	61%	39%
<b>ALEVC</b>	2017	52	46	53%	47%
	2023	43	37	54%	46%
<b>ALEVD</b>	2017	15	17	47%	53%
	2023	23	17	58%	42%
<b>ALEVE</b>	2017	7	13	35%	65%
	2023	16	18	47%	53%

Figure 7. 2017 v 2023 Non-STEMM Academic Staff Headcount by Gender and Academic Level

Information on our efforts to increase the progression of females in STEMM to ALEVC and above can be found in Cygnet #2.

## 2) Increased pool of female research academics on the pathway to professorial roles

### 2.2. More females than males appointed via the Vice Chancellor’s Research Fellowship Scheme

Because the initial approach to recruiting research professors through the VCPRF resulted in a male-dominated series of appointments, when the VCRF was launched in 2019, a gendered lens was consciously applied.

Of the 12 academics recruited in total between 2019 and 2020 for the VCRF, eight females were hired

VCRF recruitment - Year	Females	Males
<b>2019</b>	0	2 (100%)
<b>2020</b>	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
<b>Total</b>	8 (67%)	4 (33%)

Table 12. VCRF recruitment rates across 2019 and 2020.

(67%) and four men (33%). Of these, three females were appointed in STEM disciplines (SSCI or SENG) and two females were appointed into +M disciplines (SNM or SMHS) (Table.12). Additionally, the DVC(R) provided an additional 3-year ‘Strategic Research (SF) Fellowships’ scheme to appoint three “near-miss” high calibre applicants, all of which were females in STEMM.

Due to the global pandemic and its financial impacts, the recruitment campaign did not proceed over 2020-2022. It recommenced in 2023 with revised parameters for data capture given in the preliminary years, application and shortlisting data was not collected. Moving forward to ensure a multifaceted approach to analysing and dissecting data, the latest data sets include applicant, eligibility, shortlisting and interview rates.

<i>Redacted</i>
-----------------

Table 13. Shortlisting and application rates for the VCRF in 2023.

\*\*Eligibility to apply for the Scheme relates to relevant Australian working rights and having been either a) awarded a PhD degree on or before the application round closing date; or b) been awarded their PhD within the last ten years (taking into consideration career breaks). The PhD must be in the relevant recruitment area for which they are applying.

1 - shortlist rate calculated as shortlisted/eligible (not shortlist/applications)

2 - application success rate calculated as appointed/eligible (not appointed/applied)



Of the 108 applicants, 80% of applicants were deemed eligible with no difference by gender (Table 13).  
 [Redacted text]

### 3) Increased proportion of females being appointed through the Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Research Fellowship Scheme

In 2018-2019, six VCPRFs were appointed through this Scheme: five females and one male. The sixth appointee, the male, was ECU’s first Aboriginal researcher appointed through this Scheme (Table 14). This was achieving our ASBAP Item to appoint more females than males.

For the 2018-2019 VCPRF campaign, for recruitment purposes, the Scheme was conducted in a different way to the previous 2015-2017 campaign. It was not opened for applicants in one big recruitment drive, but rather selected and targeted recruitment strategies were applied to focus on gender inequities. As such, no overarching application, shortlisting, or recruitment data was collected and consequently not reported on. In the future, ECU will look at the best ways to capture this data to ensure consistent reporting abilities.

Gender	School
Female	School of Education
Female	School of Nursing and Midwifery
Female	School of Science
Female	School of Nursing and Midwifery
Female	School of Nursing and Midwifery
Male	WAAPA

Table 14. New Vice-Chancellor Professorial Research Fellow appointments 2018-2019

As mentioned, due to the global pandemic and its financial impacts, the recruitment campaign did not proceed over 2020-2021. [Redacted text]

In 2022-2023, the VCPRF Scheme was reopened in the same recruitment strategy as 2018-2019, whereby ECU allowed Executive Deans to seek out applicants for their required areas or research focus. This was to target areas such as SENG, where there is a gap for female professors in the School. Also, there was not the same requirement as in 2018-2019 to only hire females and no males.

ECU hired three female professors and three male professors as new VCPRFs (Table 15). While it is pleasing to see a gender balanced cohort, there is still work to be done to reduce the risk of replicating existing gender inequities (for example, female professors recruited for female dominated schools).  
 [Redacted text].

Gender	School
Female	School of Arts and Humanities
Female	School of Nursing and Midwifery
Female	School of Education
Male	School of Business and Law
Male	School of Business and Law
Male	School of Science

Table 15. New Vice-Chancellor Professorial Research Fellow appointments 2022-2023

Throughout ECU’s VCPRF Scheme, a total of 30 professors have been appointed (11 females and 19 males). Since the 2018-2019 scheme ended, there has been eight females to seven males hired. The gender balance and representation are still very much a consideration and priority for ECU.

Action 1.1	Create formal data collection and reporting processes for the VCPRF and VCRF Scheme.
Action 2.1	Creation of the Athena Swan Research Data Dashboard.

## IMPACT

In alignment with the University’s ongoing AS journey, ECU has implemented strategies to attract and appoint females into Professorial Research roles to grow female research leadership capacity.

### 1) Impact of the Vice-Chancellor’s Research Fellowship Scheme on female research academics

As previously noted, in 2021, an internal review of both the Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Research Fellowship and Vice Chancellor’s Research Fellowship Schemes was conducted and anonymised staff feedback was collated.

The VCRF respondents reported strong positively perceived career benefits from their appointments (Table 16). Due to the Scheme, appointees were able to increase their publications, grow their research track record, submit successful funding applications, and supervise HDR students.

<b>Female VCRF participants particularly noted:</b>	
Importance of mentors	<p><i>“I am also very grateful to my mentor who has supported me and guided me to grow and develop as an academic”.</i></p> <p><i>“Consultation and assistance from my VCRF research and supervision mentors have greatly contributed to my research and career development”.</i></p>
Access to research facilities	[Quote redacted]
Opportunities for skills development	[Quote redacted]
<b>They noted they were able to:</b>	
Improve research and teaching skills	<p><i>“I have been able to practice both independent and collaborative research.”</i></p> <p><i>“The ECU staff development services provided (through workshops, seminar, and presentation) have helped me to develop my research and teaching knowledge and skills.”</i></p>
Improve funding applications	<i>“Through research services and ECU/school support, I have been able to apply for external research grants and improve my grant-writing skills.”</i>
Improve research profile	<i>“VC Research Fellowship Scheme is a golden opportunity to help early career researchers to build their research profile and grow as an academic.”</i>
Improve ability to supervise HDR students	<p><i>“The VCRF PhD scholarship has helped me to improve my supervision skills and develop leadership skills.”</i></p> <p><i>“ECU PSAP supervision program provided me the opportunity to have access to an immense pool of supervision resources and valuable presentations by experienced supervisors as well as the opportunity to practice and reflect on my learnings.”</i></p> <p><i>VCRF research support as well as the generous school start-up research support have helped me to develop my relevant research infrastructure within the school and support my PhD student much better.</i></p>

Table 16. Female participant feedback from Vice-Chancellor’s Research Fellowship Scheme Internal Review 2021

These findings bode well for the ‘trickle down’ effect of the VCRF in cultivating a research pipeline, however it should be noted, there were some gaps persisting though in the assistance available:

[Quote redacted]

With the changes and updates that have been made to the VCRF through the 2021 review, the female experience of the recruitment process through the Scheme would have been a beneficial area of exploration for the University. However, the focus of the VCRF review didn’t include specific recruitment questions. As a result, future steps will include the creation of formalised feedback and

mechanisms to ensure more targeted impact analysis of the Scheme (see Action Plan). As part of this, it will be important to regularly examine how a more gender-balanced research cohort (and professoriate) would directly benefit junior female researchers on their career journeys and if there is differential impact across all the schools.

## 2) Impact of the Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Research Fellowship Scheme on female professorial researchers

In 2021, an internal review of the Scheme was conducted and anonymised staff feedback from 23 participants (8 female and 15 male) was collated for thematic analysis. Insights reflected positive perceptions of how the initiative aligns to key ECU priorities in building research capacity (Figure.8).

*"Since being recruited to ECU, I have seen the VC Professorial Research Fellowship Scheme fulfil its goal of employing outstanding research leaders across a range of disciplines. During that time ECU has also moved to establish key research themes to guide future research planning, investment, and recruitment."*

*"I think it's an absolute privilege to be in this VCPRF role. I completely support what ECU is doing to employ more women professors across the University."*

**[Quote redacted]**

*[within the context of a joint appointment with industry] "Working at [organisation] has allowed me solve challenges for industry and deliver science for societal benefit. My role at ECU has allowed me to establish a group that builds capacity."*

Figure 8. Impact on the lived experience of the VCPRFs at ECU

Female participants noted positive experiences with the Scheme itself and actions in working towards a gender-balanced research professoriate (Figure.9).

*"...having a gender balanced professorial across the Uni is to be applauded. It's so important these days".*

*"This initiative has helped to increase the visibility of women in the School."*

**[Quote redacted]**

*"The culture of [my school] is fantastic. When I needed support, it was there – how can I fault it?"*

Figure 9. Quotes from the Review of the VC PRF Scheme (female academics)

Participants who responded to the recruitment questions did not notice gender playing a role. Emphasis appeared to focus on the experience of the individual, including their own research agendas as reflected in Figure 10.

*"I don't really notice the gender in [my school] my school during my recruitment. [The recruitment] just happened and I was happy with the outcome obviously"*

*"I don't think gender was part of the recruitment process for me. I was tapped on the shoulder by a senior colleague and already knew of people in the school."*

Figure 10. Impact on the lived experience of the VCPRFs at ECU

In examining these responses, it would be beneficial to dissect feedback at the school level to identify disciplined based themes as next steps if all possible. With such small numbers of VCPRFs often respondents' feedback is identifiable and unable to be presented with further detail on participant demographics.

## FURTHER ACTION

Reference	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professorial Research Fellow Recruitment Campaign in 2018/2019 resulted in more females than men being hired, and this positively impacted on the GPG.</li> <li>• Applications from females improved when there was a gendered lens on the Schemes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>1.1 Create formal data collection and reporting processes for the VCPRF and VCRF Scheme.</p> <p>1.1.1 ODVC (Research) to track the gender balance of recruitment into the VCPRF Scheme and the VCRF Scheme.</p> <p>1.1.2 Increase regular reporting to Athena Swan Charter Committee, Research and Higher Degrees Committee and Equity and Inclusion committee.</p> <p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>a) Improve tracking of staff gender and research profile through standardised reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>b) Annual gender equality reporting for the ODVC(R) to inform targeted succession planning for aspiring female academics ALEVC onwards.</p> <p>a) Consistent review through formalised and regular feedback mechanisms which ensure equity and inclusion initiatives are having a positive impact.</p>	Q1, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</li> <li>• Athena Swan Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)</li> </ul>	<p>i. Improve accessible data on applications and appointment of VCPRF scheme.</p> <p>ii. Increase female professorial numbers across disciplines, as well as the numbers of research-active Level B/C females to progress through promotion pipelines to more senior roles.</p> <p>*Individual targets to be developed for each school depending on gender balance needs.</p> <p>iii. Improved the gender balance of the ECU professorial research cohort.</p>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence shows that if gender equity data is measured it can support the case for action by highlighting key issues, challenges and solutions to address these respectively.</li> <li>• Studies have shown men often have higher research outputs than females and we need to</li> </ul>	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>2.1 Creation of the Athena Swan Research data Dashboard.</p> <p>2.1.1 AS Team to develop Research Dashboard</p> <p>2.1.2 AS to regularly report on gendered research data.</p> <p>2.2 Review outcomes of research data to further disaggregate by teaching, research and service roles.</p>	Q4, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athena Swan Team</li> <li>• Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</li> <li>• Research Services Research Analytics,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</li> </ul>	<p>i. The current staff research outputs dashboard to have increased gender and intersectoral reporting capability by December 2024</p> <p>ii. 100% of leaders and managers trained on use of dashboard by Dec. 2025</p>

Reference	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
	<p>assess the realisation of this trend at ECU.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current absence of accessible and transparent data that reflects the gendered profile of research.</li> <li>• Currently have a dashboard for individual schools/ADRs to interrogate, as can staff themselves. The standardised reporting for AS needs that is not yet functional.</li> <li>• Tracking and monitoring of gender application and monitoring allows for better decision making.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A dashboard that will provide a monitoring tool to assess our progress in addressing gender inequities and to provide early warning of slippage and gaps.</li> <li>Having increased Athena Swan data would allow for a more robust review of current data.</li> <li>The Athena Swan dashboard is used by managers to identify gender inequities within their own organisational unit profile and set appropriate targets and actions.</li> <li>Improve tracking of staff gender and research profile through standardised reporting mechanisms.</li> <li>Annual gender equality reporting for the ODVC(R) to inform targeted succession planning for aspiring female academics ALEVC onwards.</li> <li>Consistent review through formalised and regular feedback mechanisms which ensure equity and inclusion initiatives are having a positive impact.</li> </ol>		Systems and Performance Team		
<p><b>3. See SENG Cygnet 3 for reference</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In October 2023, there are still no females to have been promoted in SENG.</li> <li>• SENG need to hire senior females for role models with the idea of “you can’t be what you can’t see”.</li> </ul>	<p>3.1 Actively pursue recruitment for a female Professor in SENG who can provide an aspiration role model.</p>	Q4, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Dean (Engineering)</li> <li>• SENG Executive Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Dean (Engineering)</li> </ul>	<p>i. Increased number of female academics in School of Engineering (n=1 or more female professors)</p>