



SAGE Cygnet Award Application

Name of Institution	University of Queensland.
Date of Application	31/10/2024
Contact for Application	Dawn Osborne
Email	dawn.osborne@uq.edu.au
Telephone No.	0423663660

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Queensland (UQ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society

University of Queensland: SAGE CYGNET #1

Improving Performance and Progression for Academic Women



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Key Barrier: Promotion/Pathways for career development

Barrier type:

- ☒ Institution-wide Barrier ⁱ
- ☐ Sub-group specific Barrier ⁱ

Barrier description: Institutional performance and progression processes for academic women were inconsistent and had gendered outcomes.

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A Note on Language

We acknowledge that the LGBTQIA+ community is richly diverse and that the language we have used may not encapsulate all identities and histories of our staff and students across diverse genders, sexualities, and bodies. Note that historical staff survey data collected for our SAGE Bronze application (2014-2018) and reproduced here conflates sex and gender. We have assumed male correlates to man and female to woman gender identities for the purpose of this document. We also acknowledge that this assumption may not fully represent the identities of the persons included in these datasets

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1. KEY BARRIER

Institutional performance and promotion processes for academic women are inconsistent and have gendered outcomes.

In 2018, while preparing the SAGE Athena Swan Bronze application and developing the subsequent Action Plan, the University of Queensland (UQ) identified key obstacles hindering the advancement of academic women within the institution. Further exploration revealed two main sub-barriers:

- 1.1 Inconsistency in the performance development process particularly in how it is implemented across the institution.
- 1.2 Bias in the academic promotions process, including insufficient consideration of performance relative to opportunity.

2. EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

1.1 Inconsistency in the performance development process, particularly in how it is implemented across the institution.

The Athena Swan Staff Engagement Survey (AS SS) 2018 highlighted that the absence of adequate support and a standardized framework for performance development disproportionately disadvantaged academic women. There was irregularity in how the appraisal process was carried out, with low numbers of appraisal completions. An analysis of data from 2015-2017 by gender and academic level highlighted that on average 52% of women academics completed appraisals. On average women were completing appraisals at higher rates than their male counterparts, however with only half receiving a formal appraisal, there was significant potential for informal feedback continuing a norm that has traditionally advantaged men (Eagly and Carli, 2011). The reasoning for the need to formalise the performance development process was that informal information on career progression and relative performance might be more readily available to men due to male networks and the higher number of men at Level D and Level E.

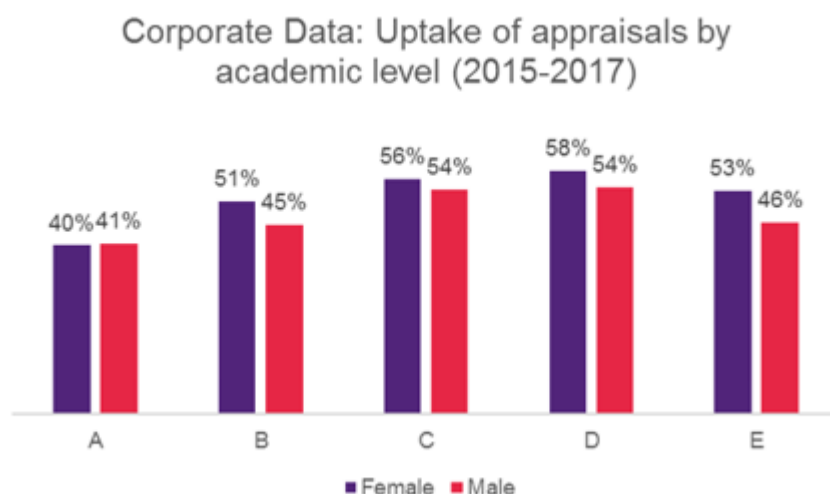


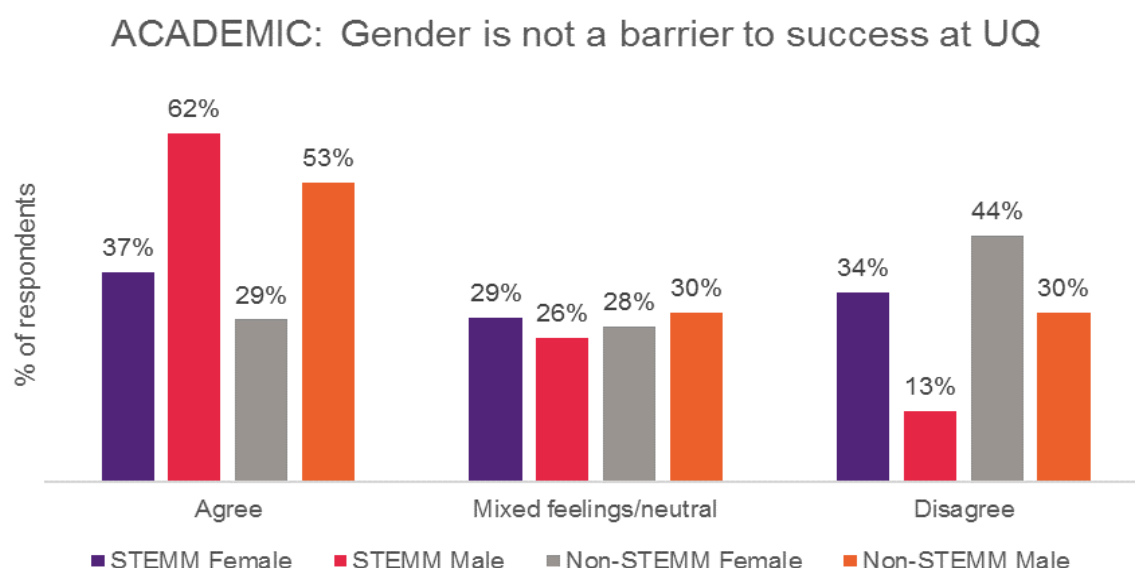
Figure 1: Aggregated annual uptake data for performance appraisals for academic staff by academic level as recorded in corporate systems between 2015 and 2017, Female N=3,645; Male N=5,305 [Corporate data taken yearly on 31 March, Reportal]

In relation to performance development support, AS SS 2018 shows that overall while career development needs were discussed in 51% of performance appraisals/reviews, only 16% (15% women, 19% men) of respondents indicated that promotion opportunities were discussed. This highlighted a gap in promotion support, especially for women. Women academics applying for or considering applying for promotion reported not receiving enough encouragement and support. This was seen as one of the contributing factors to the significant underrepresentation of women in Senior Academic roles at the university.

*"I have not received a performance appraisal or received any feedback at all regarding my performance."*¹

1.2 Bias in the academic promotions process including insufficient consideration of performance relative to opportunity

As shown in Figure 2, gender was perceived as a barrier by staff, especially academic women. The bias was identified as unfair processes in which certain groups are disadvantaged. This included: lack of transparency around the promotion process, lack of opportunity to meet criteria, lack of support from management, lack of balance in performance criteria, especially around teaching and service and unclear translation of promotion criteria for eligibility. Additionally, gender imbalance on the composition of Local Confirmations and Promotions Committees was raised.



¹ Athena Swan Staff Survey 2018

Figure 2: AS SS 2018: Academic staff agreement/disagreement to survey statement 'Gender is not a barrier to success at UQ', disaggregated by gender and STEMM/Non-STEMM

Figures 3 and 4 show the application and success rates of STEMM and non-STEMM men and women as shown in the Bronze plan, averaged across 2015-2107. The Bronze plan noted that while comparative application and success rates for men and women appeared to slightly favour women, other evidence suggested that unclear PRO considerations, the lack of adequate performance feedback and perceived biases within the promotion process may still be hampering greater numbers of women applying for and being successful in seeking promotion. Figures 9 and 10 in the Outcomes section provide evidence that by addressing these issues more women now apply for and are successful in gaining promotion.

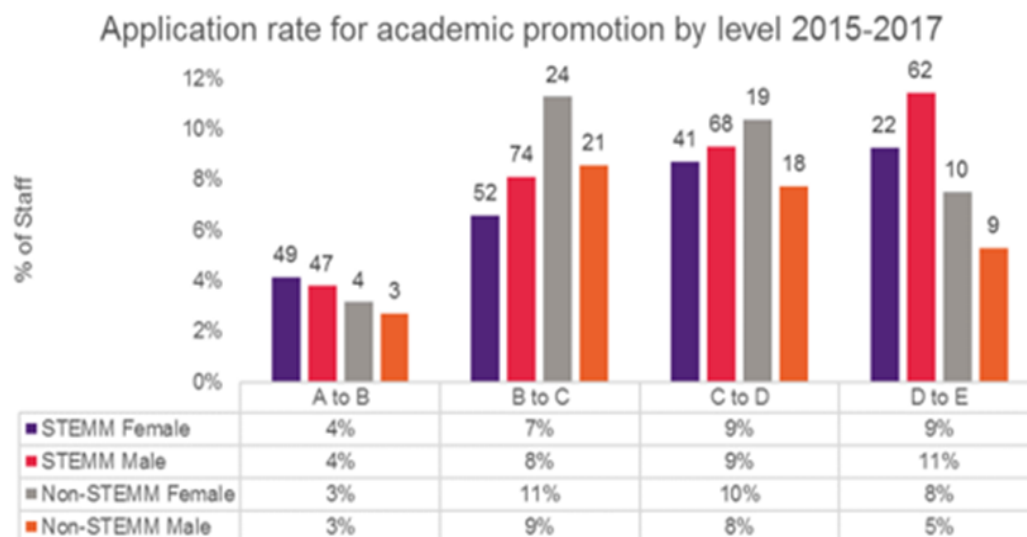


Figure 3: Proportion of male and female academics who applied for promotion by level in 2015, 2016 and 2017, A-B N=103; B-C N=171; C-D N=146; D-E N=103 [Corporate Data, promotion records]

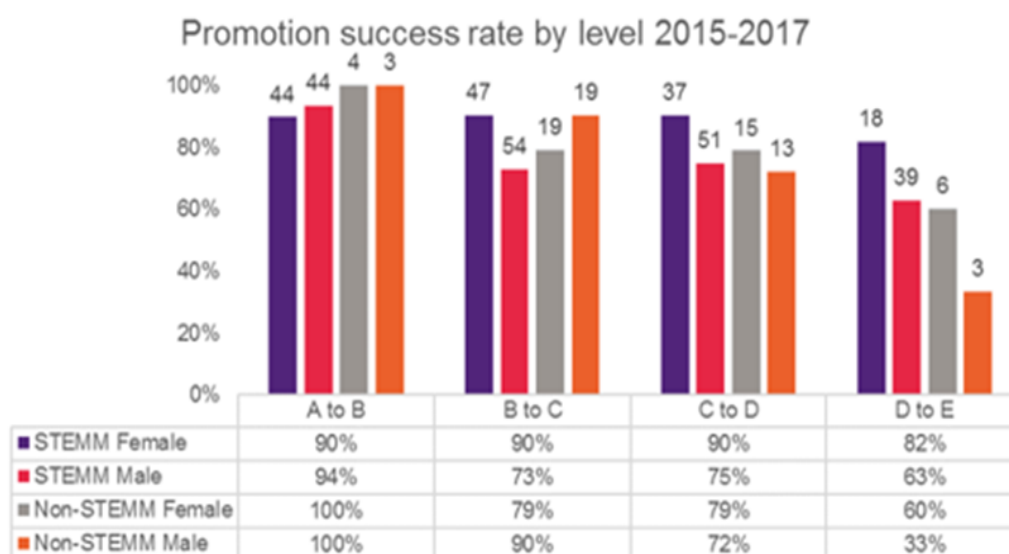


Figure 4: Proportion of male and female STEMM and Non-STEMM academics who applied for promotion and are successful by academic level in 2015, 2016 and 2017, A-B N=95; B-C N=139; C-D N=116; D-E N=66, [Corporate Data (promotion records)]

Participants in the AS SS identified that performance relative to opportunity (PRO) was offered as part of the promotion process in the University's policy documents, however it was not actively considered in practice. As part of an investigation² into promotion at UQ in 2022, a survey was sent via email to 564 UQ academics who had applied for a promotion within the past 5 years. One hundred and sixty-nine participants responded to the survey: 79

² Investigating Bias within the Academic Promotion Criteria and Process

Male (46%), 86 Female (51%), 1 Non-Binary (1%), 3 Did not specify their gender (2%). When asked about Performance Relative to Opportunity, 61 (38%) participants disclosed PRO at the time of their promotion, 74 (48%) did not disclose PRO whilst 23 (14%) did not know what PRO was or were unsure. Table 1 outlines the results of a thematic analysis of the comments box contained in the survey, showing the number of negative experiences and their cause. In each case, whether the mentioning participant was promoted and of these whether they responded as identifying as a woman is indicated.

Themes	Subthemes	Number of participants mentioned	Number of participants who were promoted	Number of participants identified as woman
Process	Difficult to Use	9	8	8
	Unclear Assessment	7	6	5
Negative Experience	Discomfort	9	8	8
	Disadvantage	5	3	3

Table 1. Key themes and number of participants within the themes in response to PRO consideration

'Unfortunately, PRO is not well-understood and/or consistently applied at UQ, but wider application may enhance women's promotion outcomes at all levels'¹

3. PROGRESS (ACTIONS AND OUTPUTS)

Action 1: Define Annual Performance, how it is measured and implement a new Annual Performance Development Process

We reprioritized, refined and developed new criteria for academic performance through further exploration of data collected for the Bronze Plan (2020), workshopped performance criteria with Faculties and Institutes with an eye towards equal consideration of research, teaching, citizenship & service and supervision and researcher development criteria, developed a new Annual Performance Development (APD) process and accompanying enterprise system (2021). This was supported via the delivery of University-wide training on the new criteria, system and processes related to APD through 2022-2023. After the first annual APD cycle in 2022, the rollout was expanded to also cover the Academic Promotion application process from 2023 (See Action 2). The aim was to increase the number of academic women undertaking annual performance reviews to 90% by 2023. Metrics included percentage and number of women undertaking annual performance reviews measured pre (see Figure 3) and post implementation. The Chief Human Resources Officer led the project team which included five HR Directors. The four-year timeline enabled thorough consultation, testing, training and revision. The APD process was used in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. The new Criteria and Process for Annual Performance Development addressed sub-barrier 1.1 and its attachment to the promotions process in 2023 contributed to addressing sub-barrier 1.2.

Action 2: Link and Implement APD Process to Promotion Application and Assessment Process

The new APD process and the criteria used to assess performance formed the basis of promotion applications in 2023 and 2024. Assessment of the process commenced in 2024 through a staff survey and focus groups. The aim was to increase the number of academic women's promotion applications and overall promotion rates. Metrics included percentage and number of women academics applying for promotion as well as percentage and number of women academics promotion success. Measures taken from analysis of staff survey feedback on promotion transparency, opportunity to meet criteria, support from management, balanced assessment of performance and translation of promotion criteria, also undertaken as part of the Bronze Plan, were used as a baseline to measure improvements (see Figures 7, 8, 9 & 10). The Chief Human Resources Officer led the project team which included five HR Directors. The four-year timeline noted above resulted in a robust set of APD criteria which could be applied to the promotion process. The annual promotion process has now been used twice; 2023 and 2024.

In parallel to the implementation of the new Promotion process, the need for a clearer and more consistent focus on gender balance within promotion assessment panels was reinforced through the development of a supplementary document to accompany the relevant policy and procedure. Added to the University's policy and procedure library in 2022, this document both formally articulated the requirements for gender balance as well as requiring endorsement and approval of each Faculty's committee by a central advisory body and the Provost respectively. The new Criteria for Academic Achievement, the embedding of these criteria in the promotion application form and adoption of gender balanced promotion panels addressed sub-barrier 1.2.

Action 3: Introduction of Performance Relative to Opportunity section in Promotion Application Documentation.

A specific Performance Relative to Opportunity (PRO) section was added to the Promotion Application Template in 2023. The aim was to encourage all staff to proactively indicate where their performance may have been impeded by a lack of opportunity to meet performance criteria (noting previous feedback that applicants often weren't sure at what stage of the process it was most appropriate to provide this information). Metrics included percentage and number of all staff reporting PRO considerations in promotion applications measured pre and post implementation. The Director - Organisational Culture and Capability led the project team which included several staff. The annual promotion process has now been used in 2023 and 2024. The introduction of a specific PRO section in the Promotion Application Template for staff contributed towards addressing sub-barrier 1.2.

4. OUTCOMES

Addressing Key Barrier 1.1: The Bronze Plan identified that women more so than men were disadvantaged by the low rate of annual performance reviews, particularly at higher levels. Ensuring that formal annual performance reviews took place, and criteria were transparent was a key goal in implementing the APD process. As Figure 5 shows, at every academic level the uptake of the APD process has dramatically increased. Prior to implementation, roughly half of women at each academic level received a performance appraisal each year, whereas post implementation only 2-3% of female staff did not receive an appraisal. This is the same for men. Note that averaged data has been used in Figure 5 as this data was taken from the Bronze plan. Since the 2024 appraisal round is yet to commence, only data from the 2023 APD round is available at the time of writing. This single year data has been used for the comparison.

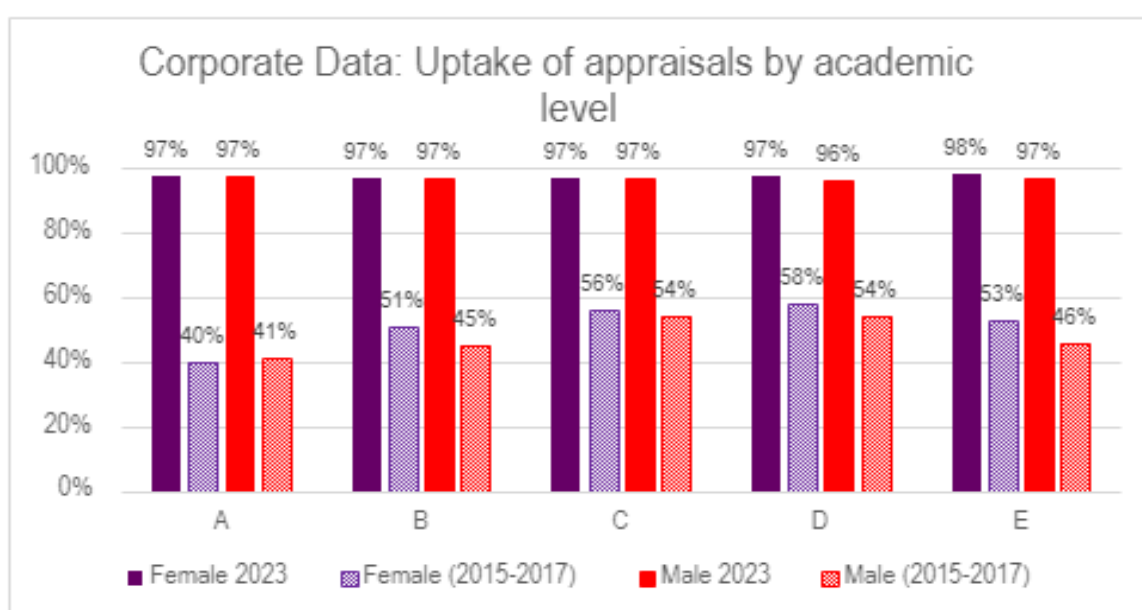


Figure 5 – Comparison of uptake of Annual Performance Development (APD) pre and post implementation

Further evidence of the impact of refining performance criteria and providing training to supervisors in the conduct of the new APD process is shown in Table 2. Responses pre and post implementation, provided by staff surveys around the key content of performance appraisals, indicate a dramatic increase in discussions around career development needs, career progression and promotion opportunities. Nonetheless, there is still some way to go towards achieving complete success in these discussions, indicating that operationalization of the APD Process still varies in some segments of the University

Survey Response	AS SS 2018			P & P Survey 2024		
	Women	Men	Total*	Women	Men	Total*
Yes - and work life balance was discussed	57%	51%	1411 55%	39%	52%	68 44%
Yes – and my career development needs were discussed	69%	69%	1770 69%	70%	82%	115 75%
Yes – and support for my career progression was discussed	44%	44%	1123 44%	72%	71%	110 72%
Yes - and promotion opportunities were discussed	20%	25%	566 22%	62%	71%	101 66%
No	36%	25%	923 26%	3%	0%	3 2%

Table 2 – Comparison 2018 to 2024: During the last 12 months, have you had an Annual Performance Review or similar? What was covered?

***Based on total excluding gender X.**

By defining performance criteria and ensuring that nearly all staff have a clear understanding of these criteria and their link to progression through annual appraisal, this has translated into a significant increase in the number of women applying for and succeeding in gaining promotion (See Figures 10 and 11).

Addressing Key Barrier 1.2:

The introduction of the APD process described in addressing Key Barrier 1.1 coupled with its linkage to addressing the promotions process described here, has significantly increased promotion applications for women academics, the rate and overall number of successful women applicants and significantly improved women's attitudes towards the promotion process overall.

As part of the Performance and Promotion survey (see impact section for further detail), staff were surveyed regarding 'gender not being a barrier to success at UQ', there being 'sufficient support offered around promotion', and the 'fairness of the process', as shown respectively in Figures 6, 7 and 8.

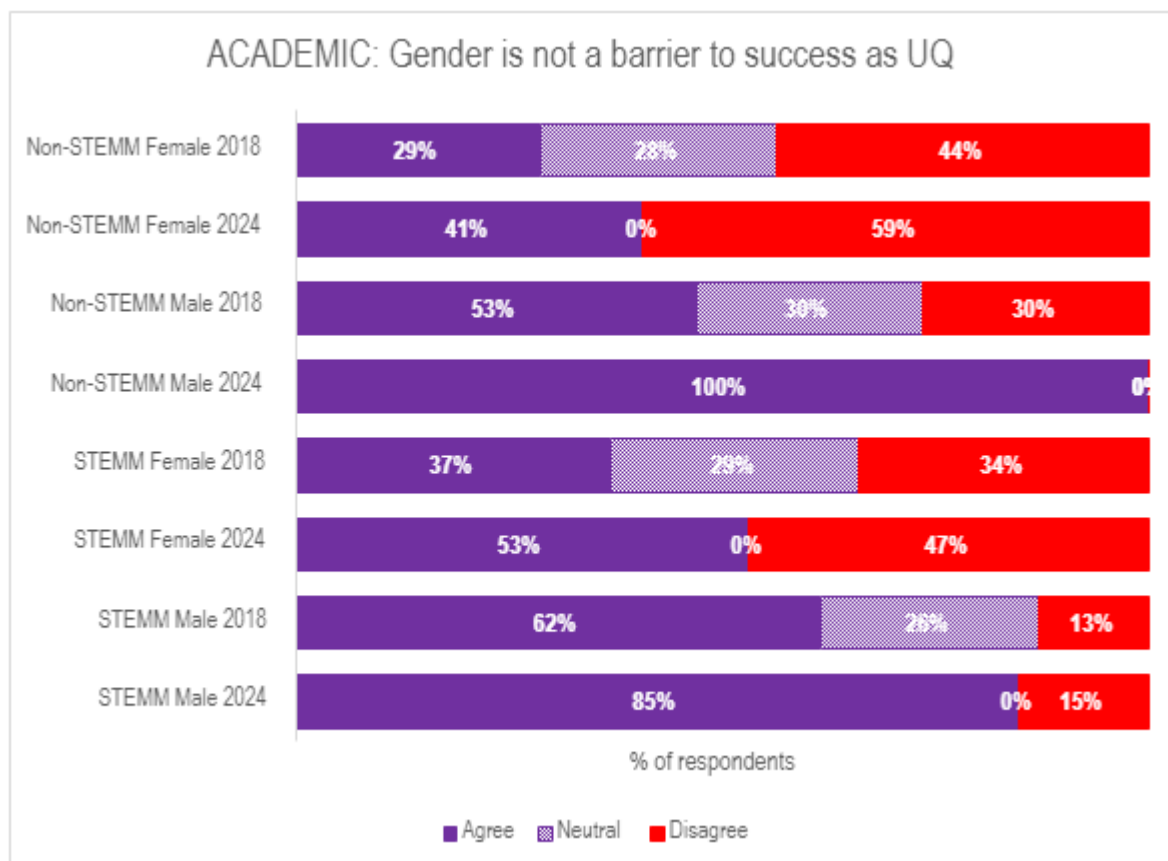


Figure 6 – Comparison ASS SS 2018 to PP 2024: Do you feel you have experienced any gender-based barriers to your career progression at UQ

On all measures there has been a dramatic increase in both STEMM and Non-STEMM women's positive views on the process. For example, in Figure 8, in the All-Staff survey conducted for the SAGE Bronze Plan in 2018, only 28% of STEMM women felt that the promotion process was fair, whereas in a survey undertaken in 2024 67% now feel that it is fair (Non-STEMM Women 28% vs 62%). Likewise Figure 7 in terms of support during the promotion process, only 25% of STEMM women agreed that they had sufficient support in 2018, whereas in the survey undertaken in 2024, 77% now report that they have sufficient support (Non-STEMM Women 35% vs 74%). On the question of agreeing that gender is not a barrier to success at UQ, while there has been a marked improvement from 37% to 53% for STEMM Women (29% to 41% for Non-STEMM women), clearly there is still more to do. Note that in the 2024 survey responses, no-one selected a neutral response.

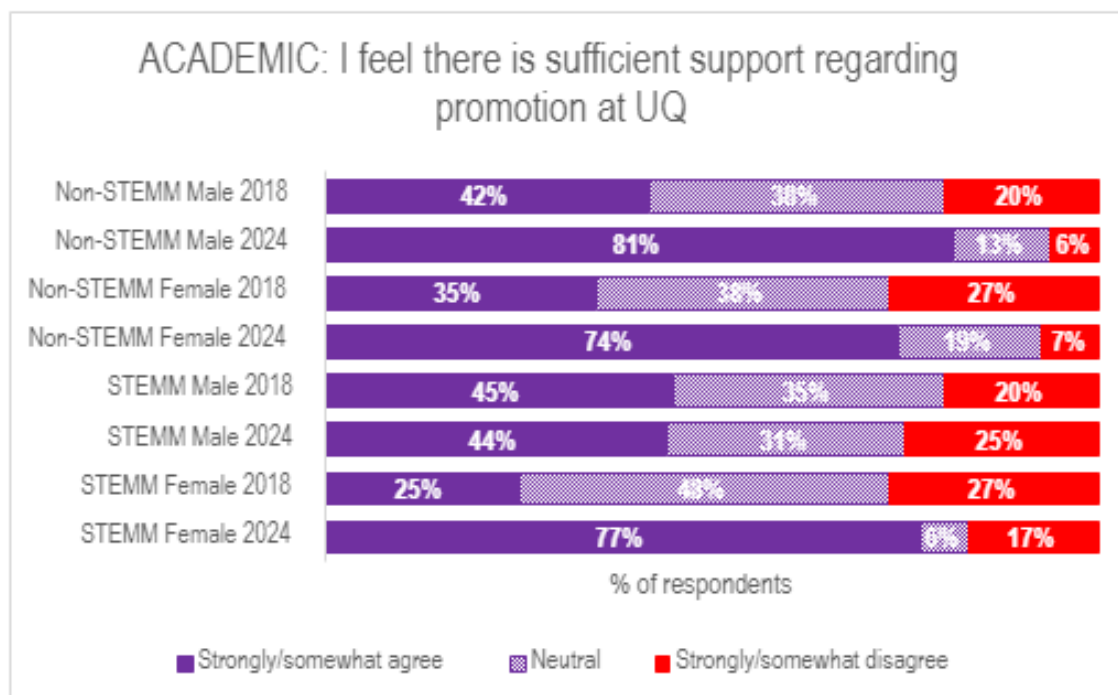


Figure 7 – I feel there is sufficient support regarding promotion at UQ, 2018 respondents Non-STEMM N= 294 STEMM N= 1151, 2024 respondents Non-STEMM N=49 STEMM N=132

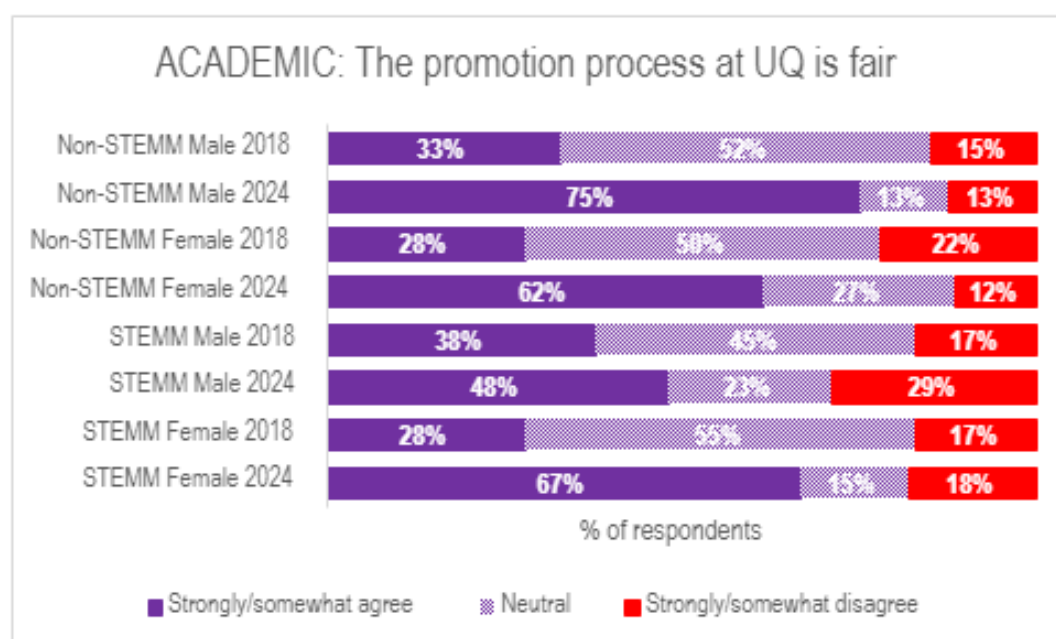


Figure 8 – The promotion process at UQ is fair, 2018 respondents Non-STEMM N= 293 STEMM N= 1145, 2024 respondents Non-STEMM N=48 STEMM N=133

The aim of Actions 1, 2 and 3 were to increase the number of academic women applying for promotion, as well as the number of women being promoted. This is a key outcome that will help to drive a closure of the gap between the number of men and women academics, particularly at Levels D and E. As Figures 9 and 10 show, the introduction of the APD-linked promotion process in 2023 not only drove an increase in the number and percentage of women successfully gaining promotion, but it has also driven a significant increase in the rate and number of academic women at all levels applying for promotion in 2024. This is relative to 2019 data collected prior to the introduction of the new promotions process and

the data contained in Figure 3, representing the years 2015-2017 as reported in the Bronze plan. When comparing to data for STEMM Women contained in the Bronze plan (See Figure 3) there is a 3% increase in the number of Level B women applying for promotion to Level C and a 4% increase in the number of women applying for promotion for C-D and D-E respectively. Figures 11 and 12 show that this has translated into an increase in successful promotions for women in both percentage terms, in promotions from Level C to D and D to E and overall in absolute terms. This is both in comparison to 2019 data collected prior to the introduction of the new promotions process and in comparison to the data contained in Figure 4 representing the years 2015-2017 as reported in the Bronze plan. For example, when comparing to data for non-STEMM Women contained in the Bronze plan (See Figure 4) there is an 11% increase in the number of Level B women applying for promotion to Level C and a 21% and 7% increase in the number of women applying for promotion for C-D and D-E respectively. Note that 2019 data has been used in Figures 9-11 as this provides a more reliable picture of promotions and success rates prior to the disruptions caused during the COVID period. Since only the results of the 2023 promotions round are available at the time of writing, this single year data has been used as comparison. We have used 2024 data for applications, as this is both the latest source of data and shows the increase more effectively than the 2023 data, since the process had only just been introduced in that year.

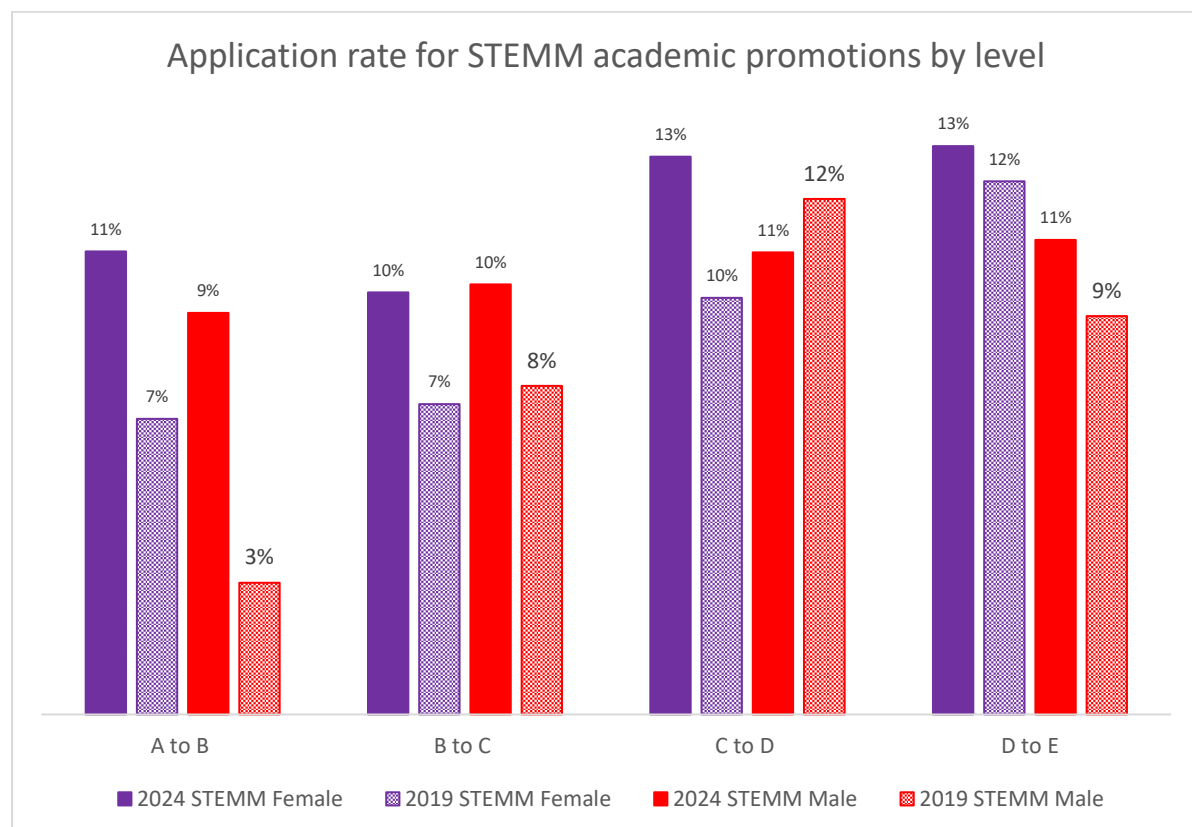


Figure 9 – Comparison application rate for STEMM Academic promotion 2019 and 2024

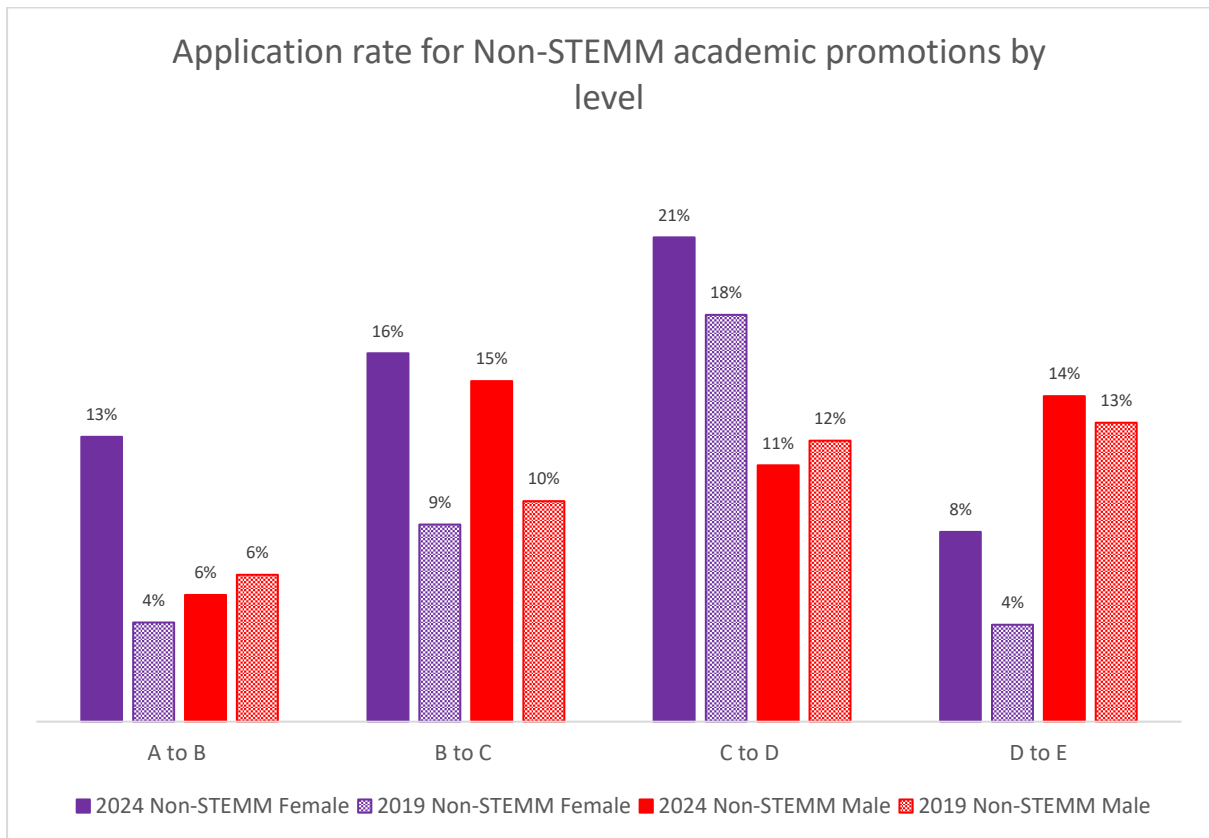


Figure 10 – Comparison application rate for Non-STEMM Academic promotion 2019 and 2024

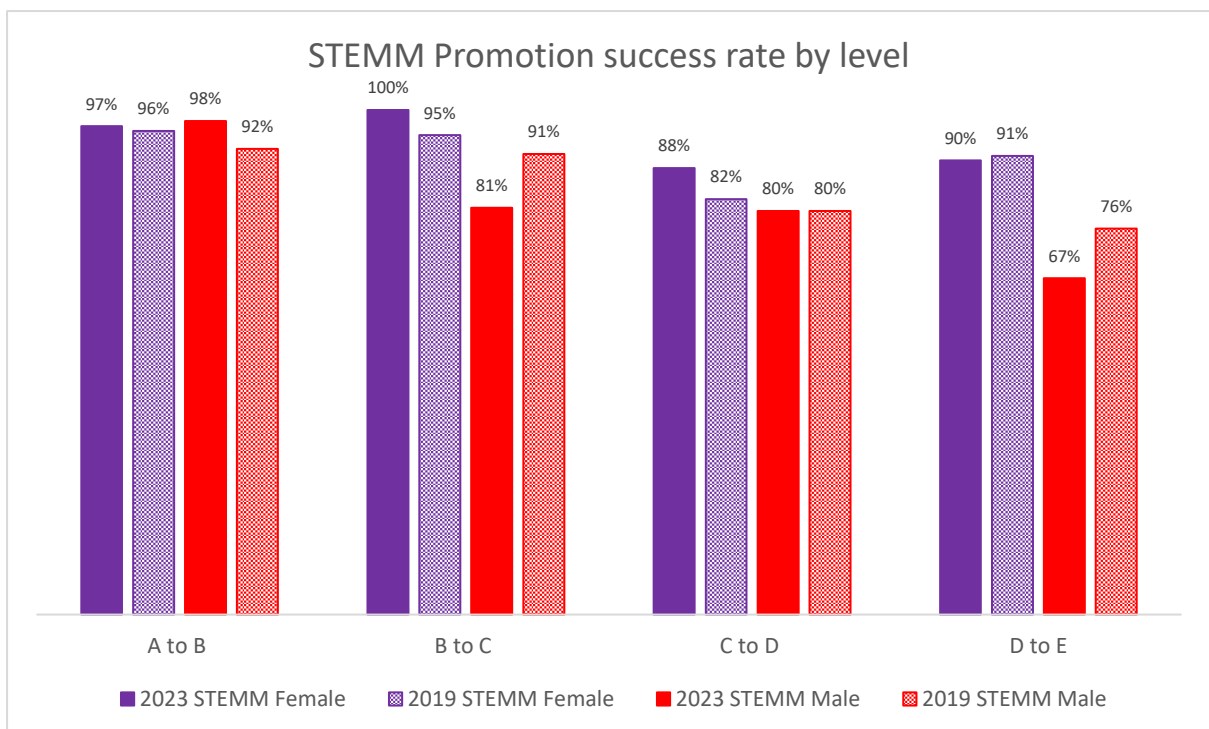


Figure 11 – Comparison success rate for promotion applications – STEMM 2019 and 2023

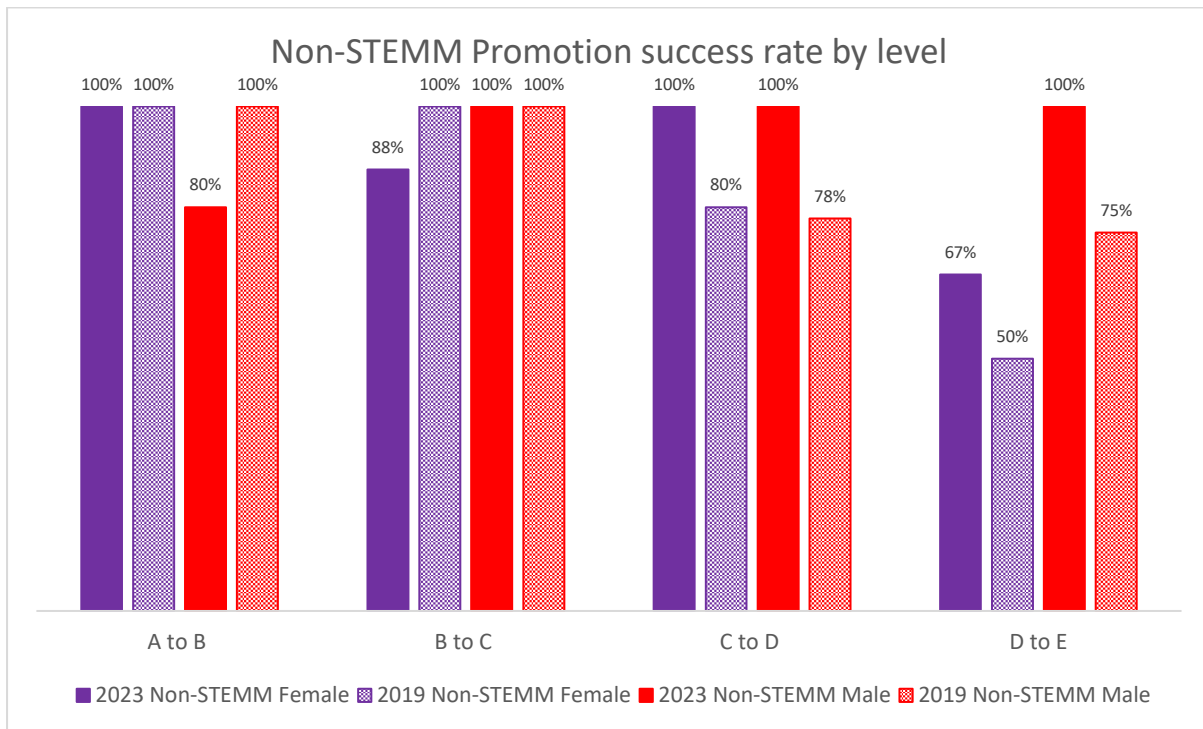


Figure 12 – Comparison success rate for promotion applications – Non-STEMM 2019 and 2023

*Figures 11 and 12 use 2023 data as the promotion success data for 2024 is not yet available.

This increase has been mapped into Figures 13, 14 and 15 using 2017 comparative data from the SAGE Bronze Plan to show the closing of the gap towards gender parity for Level A-E roles in STEMM and Non-STEMM. Figures 13 and 14 show that the gap between men and women STEMM and non-STEMM Teaching and Research focused academics, which comprise 40% of all academics at UQ, has closed at every academic level in 2024. Likewise Figure 15 shows a similar narrowing of the gap for all academic levels for STEMM research only academics, which comprise a further 55% of all academic staff.

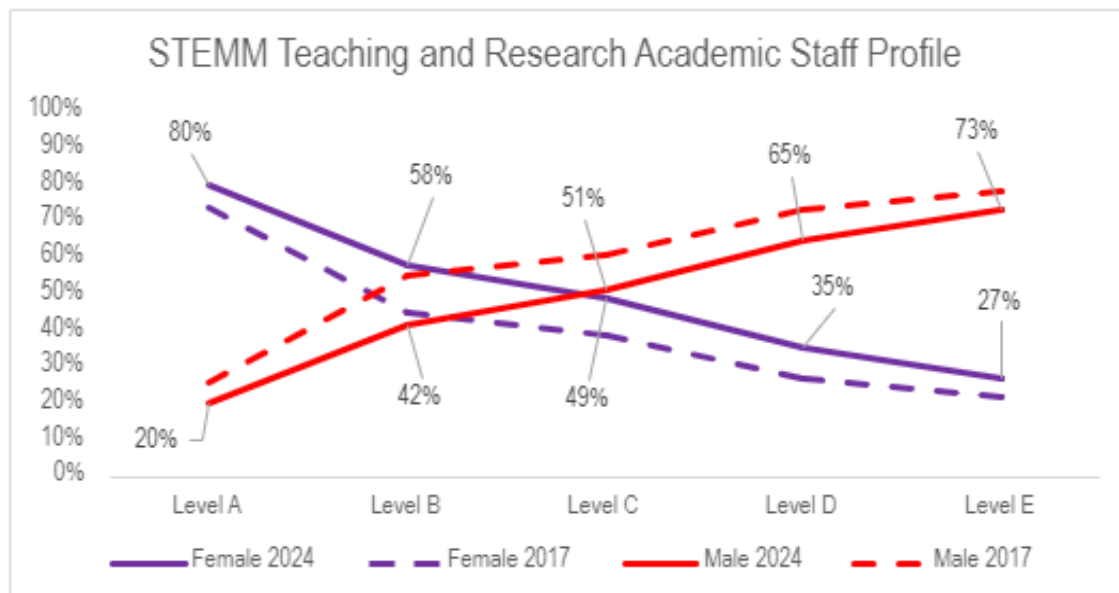


Figure 13 - Teaching and Research Focused Academic Staff Profile – STEMM N=688 2017, N=811 2024

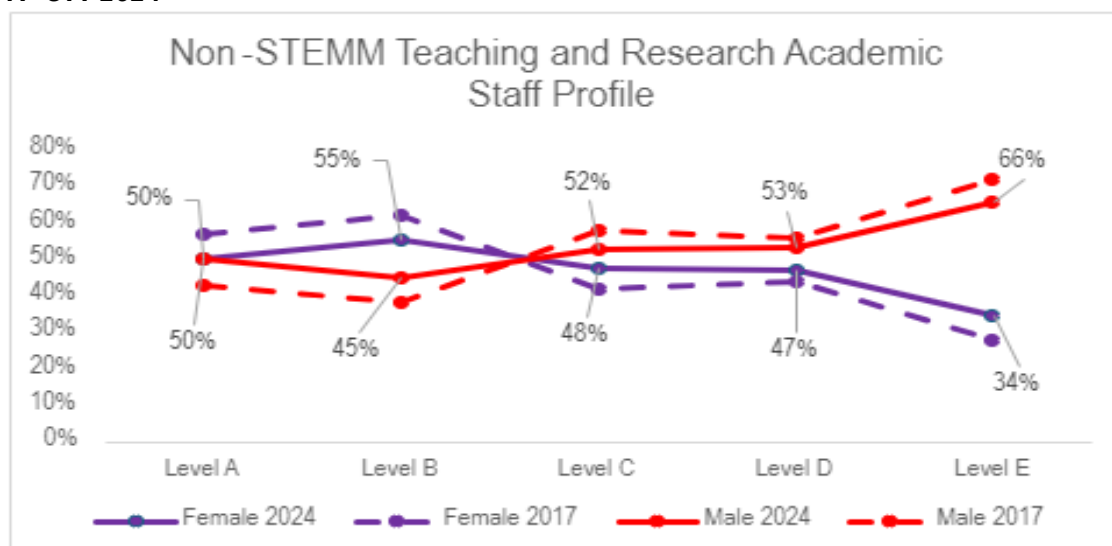


Figure 14 – Teaching and Research Focused Academic Staff Profile – Non-STEMM N=410 2017, N=422 2024)

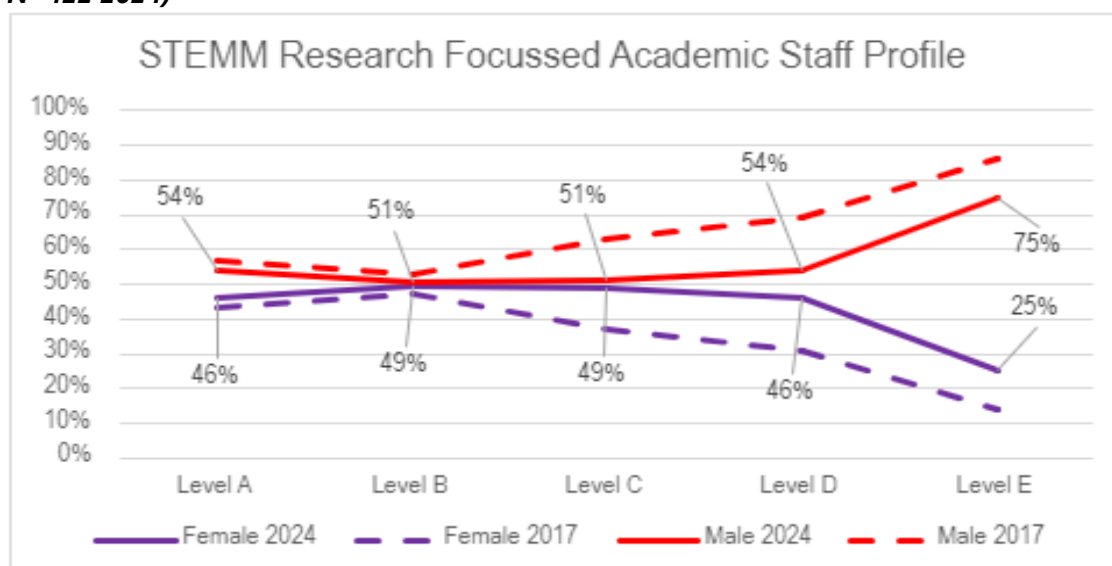


Figure 15 – Research Focused Academic Staff Profile – STEMM N=1435 2017 N=1695 2024

Finally, in 2018 as part of the SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze plan we modelled the time it would take to reach gender parity for all academic levels at trajectories at that time. Table 3 shows the application of an exponential population growth model to recent data (from 2019-24) to estimate the latest time required to achieve equal numbers of male and female academics within each level. For STEMM academics in Levels A to C, parity or an over-representation of females than males has already been achieved based on the recent data. For Levels D and E, parity for STEMM academics is now estimated to be achieved in 16.35 years and 14.67 years, respectively. These new estimates reflect UQ's more recent targeted efforts to address gender inequity in career progression that have accelerated the time to parity, especially in the STEMM Level E cohort (73.4 years versus 14.7 years). Based on the recent data, parity or over-representation of females to males has also been achieved in the non-STEMM Level A to D cohorts. The time to parity for non-STEMM Level E academics is 47.2 years which also reflects a considerable reduction from the previous estimate of 73.4 years.

Academic Exponential growth					
STEMM			Non-STEMM		
Academic Level	2008- 2017	2019-24	Academic Level	2008-2017	2019-24
Level A	Parity	Parity	Level A	Parity	F > M
Level B	3.94	F > M	Level B	3.94	F > M
Level C	9.34	Parity	Level C	9.34	F > M
Level D	18.21	16.35	Level D	18.21	F > M
Level E	73.36	14.67	Level E	73.36	47.24

Table 3 – Academic Exponential Growth Modelling – Years to Achieve Parity

Action 3 Outcome: The SAGE Bronze plan identified that performance relative to opportunity (PRO) was not being raised by women applicants in most promotion cases, despite anecdotal evidence suggesting that the PRO should have been a consideration for many of these applicants. As Table 4 shows, the formal introduction of a PRO Statement box within the promotion application template has seen an immediate increase in the number of women highlighting PRO considerations in their promotion applications. In the year prior to the introduction of the PRO box in the promotion document template only 42% of women referred to a PRO consideration, whereas post introduction the rate increased to 79%. It is also notable that men also increased their use of PRO statements, but to a lesser degree.

Source	2022 Promotion Survey ³				2023 Promotion Round				2024 Promotion Round			
Response	Used a PRO Statement		Did not use a PRO Statement		Used a PRO Statement		Did not use a PRO Statement		Used a PRO Statement		Did not use a PRO Statement	
Women	36	42%	50	58%	107	81%	25	19%	124	78%	35	22%
Men	26	33%	53	67%	114	75%	38	25%	102	67%	50	33%
Other	-	-	-	-	0	-					1	-
Total	62		103		221		63		226		86	

Table 4 - Use of PRO Statement in promotion application comparison sourced from 2022 Promotion Survey and promotion rounds data 2023 and 2024

5. IMPACT

In relation to Action 1, in 2021, the University Senior Executive Team (USET) requested that a post-implementation review be conducted on the APD process following two full annual cycles. Following USET approval of the review scope in January 2024, feedback was sought from staff across UQ between April and June 2024 via two surveys (for staff and supervisors respectively) and 8 consultation groups covering key cohorts. This feedback was coupled with other relevant data sources (e.g., Pulse Survey, Workday data, training records, etc) to identify key findings, areas for commendation and recommendations for action. Key commendations and areas that staff felt had been a positive impact for them in the new APD process were:

1. Overall increased engagement by staff and managers with the new APD process
2. Increased staff engagement with the goal setting process linking to promotion opportunities
3. Increased quality of staff performance feedback

Key recommendations for further improvement included:

1. Improve clarity of intended purpose and benefits of APD process
2. Improve clarity of rating application and purpose
3. Support a consistent approach to build supervisor capability
4. Improve the clarity of roles and responsibilities of staff and managers
5. Strengthen focus on career and development support

In relation to Actions 1, 2 and 3, in 2024, we undertook a survey of all academics who had applied for promotion in 2023 and 2024 (n=597). The survey included two text boxes which asked, 'Would you like to comment further on the academic promotion process in your work area?' and 'Would you like to comment further on the academic promotion process at UQ?'

³ Promotion Survey 2022 from 'Investigating bias within the academic promotion criteria and process'

A further question was asked to test whether the current process has addressed all the gender issues identified around performance and progression; 'Do you feel you have experienced any gender-based barriers to your career progression at UQ?'.

Staff were recruited via email invitations, with a response rate of 35% (n = 207). The participants included 58% women and 42% men staff members, with broad representation across Level A to Level E Academics and across all Faculties and Institutes. 6% of responses were from Level A academics who had applied for promotion in the past 2 years; 31% from Level B; 30% from Level C; 25% from Level D and 8% from Level E. (NB: at the date of the survey, promotion outcomes for the 2024 round remained unknown).

Qualitative data from text responses in the 2024 survey were compared with responses to the same questions which were asked as part of the Bronze Plan staff survey conducted in 2018 (See Figure 16). Responses to the text responses in the 2024 survey relating to performance and progression were thematically analysed using themes developed to report on the 2018 text responses in the Bronze Plan, to allow direct comparison of the results. The themes were:

1. Lack of Transparency of the Process
2. Flaws in the Promotion Process
3. Too much Focus on Research/Grants versus Teaching/Service
4. Lack of Opportunity to Meet Criteria
5. Lack of Support from Management
6. Unclear Translation of Criteria for Promotion Eligibility
7. Cost of Promotion cannot be met by current funding.

As Figure 16 shows there has been a dramatic improvement in each of the thematic areas for both men and women with the majority of respondents praising the equal weighting of the new criteria, the transparency and implementation of the process as well as support from management in navigating the new process. As one Level D woman noted:

'I think the promotion process has greatly improved now, and it has allowed me to catch up after slow progression relative to stage and track record. So, the process is now much clearer and fairer. The process has improved greatly in recent years, especially for women in STEMM.'

As another Level D woman noted:

'I was highly impressed with the positive and developmental support offered in my school and faculty towards promotion. I have worked at other places before, and I can honestly say I have never seen anything like it. The new alignment with annual APD and central capturing of data has made it much more straightforward to apply for promotion, preparing staff through the APD process as it should. There is also sufficient further explanation and examples on how to evidence certain elements.'

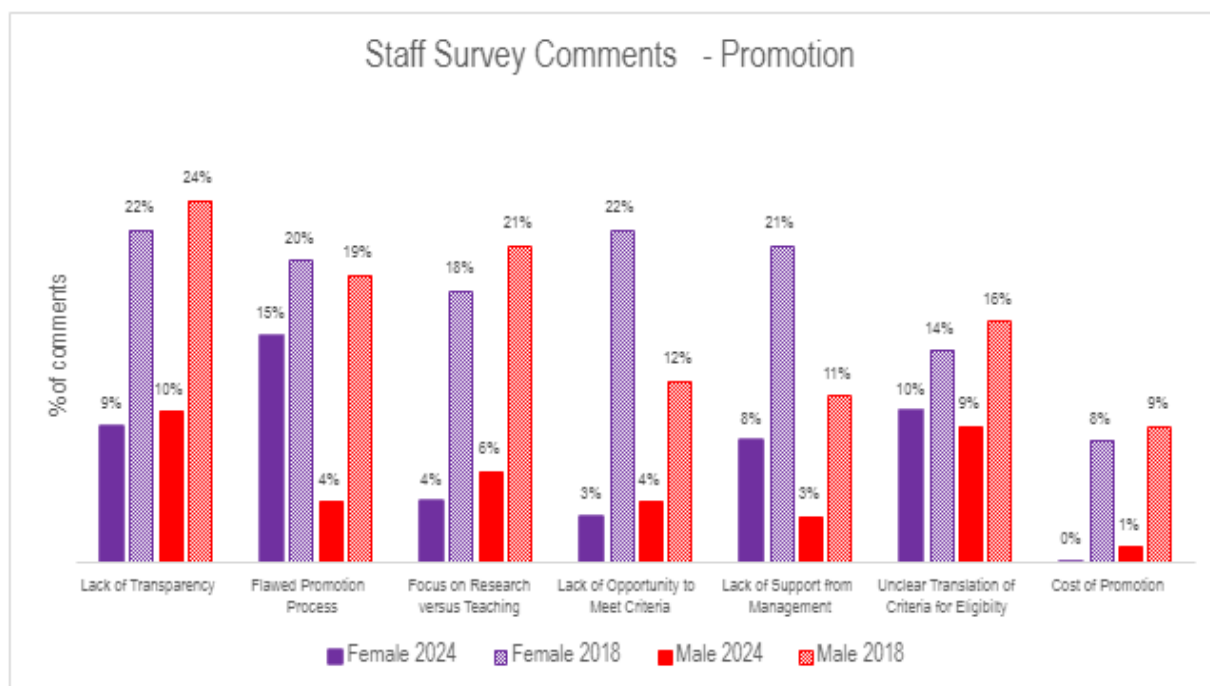


Figure 16 – Thematic Analysis of narrative survey statements

However, despite the improvements indicated in Figure 16, many concerns were raised about the potential subjectivity of promotion committee decisions, with a Level C stating:

'The committee expected candidates to perform in all criteria at level D with little recognition of the circumstances. The interview process would favour male colleagues who are less critical of themselves... There was a very strong emphasis on metrics alone (e.g. ARC grants) and to the exclusion of other externally funded grants. It seemed like the committee was only wanting to tick boxes, rather than look at candidates holistically against the criteria. The process favours people with large research grants and large numbers of PhD students and seems to not account for lack of funded grad school PhD studentships affecting opportunity as well as ignoring substantial service contributions.'

Likewise, issues were raised with the cultural appropriateness of the promotion process, with one Indigenous Level C woman commenting that *'I think the process is overly burdensome, it took months to complete and 'sell' myself, which is not culturally appropriate.'*

These remarks indicate that while progress has been made in both the performance development and promotions processes, there are still issues surrounding the implementation of the processes in some areas of the University as well as ongoing issues around the weighting or translation of criteria as it relates to promotion eligibility. There were a limited number of text responses to the question "Do you feel you have experienced any gender-based barriers to your career progression at UQ?" (n=40) and of these, roughly half indicated that gender biases still exist (n=22). Of greatest concern were male respondents reflecting a form of 'pushback' or belief that women were now advantaged in the new performance and progression system (n=7) and women noting that service roles are still disproportionately being undertaken by women and these were still viewed as relatively less valuable in terms of progression (n=6).

Analysis of the text responses indicates that further refinement is required to provide greater specificity in criteria definitions in the performance applications and Performance Relative to Opportunity (PRO) section and this needs to be addressed through a review of the current APD sub-criteria. It is also clear that some areas of the University are not implementing the processes as well as others. Finally, the lack of an intersectional lens across considerations in the development of the processes and their delivery in all three action areas requires immediate additional attention. The UQ Gender Steering Committee are currently overseeing a review of the process whereby PRO is defined and considered in promotion applications. Likewise, the above analysis has been passed to the UQ HR Team as part of a formal review of the first two years of the APD and Promotions process.

6. FURTHER ACTION

Through the UQ Bronze Award submission, we were able to recognise that the lack of consistent supportive processes in both performance development and promotion had been resulting in persistent barriers to progression for academic women.

We introduced a new annual performance development (APD) process, revised the academic performance criteria and promotions application process. This was supported by comprehensive training for supervisors and staff. On the approval for the new APD process in 2021 the target completion rates were set at 85% by 2022/2023 and 90% by 2023/2024⁴. The aim was to increase the number of academic women applying for promotion, as well as the number of women being promoted, particularly at Level D and E.

Although there were significant improvements to the take up of APD and a consistent increase in successful promotion applications from academic women, there continues to be ongoing opportunities for improvement. To continue this work, we have outlined SMART actions in the table below which came from our learning.

Challenges and Adaptation for Actions 1-3

Such a significant shift in three fundamental processes of the University through these three actions was not without significant pushbacks and wariness by users. However, metrics and feedback indicate that the new processes are viewed as significantly more favorable than the previous processes. Nonetheless, staff surveys also indicate that further refinement is required in four areas. Firstly, greater specificity in criteria definitions in the performance criteria. Secondly, operationalisation of the APD and Promotion Process still varies in some segments of the University. Thirdly, Performance Relative to Opportunity requires further definition and specific guidance for its consideration in promotion applications by staff and academic promotion panel members alike. Finally, intersectional considerations in all three action areas require additional attention.

⁴ USET, December 2022

Table 5 – Further SMART Actions to increase promotion application/success rates for women so that they are equal to or exceed those of men at all levels in STEMM/non-STEMM

Action name or reference	Rationale/evidence	Actions & outputs (description)	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired outcomes, targets or success indicators
1 - Continue to improve on variable nature of APD practice across UQ.	Analysis of survey text responses identified inconsistency in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas for improvement through APD Review process. Improve clarity of intended purpose, benefits, and roles and responsibilities in APD process. Continue to monitor deployment of the APD process at an organisational unit level and identify appropriate interventions as required. Development of reporting mechanisms to allow more consistent identification and 	Q.1 2025 to Q.4 2026	Director, Organisational Culture and Capability	Chief Human Resources Officer	<p>Improvement in relevant data points in annual staff pulse survey.</p> <p>More consistent distribution of performance ratings across organisation.</p> <p>Increased linkage between assessment of annual performance and promotion readiness.</p>

		support of development aspirations				
2 - Review academic performance criteria to ensure shared understanding and adaptability.	The current performance criteria covers all academic staff and does not specifically clarify the expectations/ nuances at the school/discipline level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of specific workshops for Heads/Directors/ Supervisors to ensure proactive calibration of local expectations prior to each annual performance review round. • Explore opportunities for more consistent involvement from Heads/Directors in the Academic Promotion process to build consistency of understanding. • Review the academic performance criteria through an EDI lens to identify potential areas of disadvantage. • Implement changes to clarify the criteria and address issues for 	<p>Q.4 2024 to Q.4 2025</p> <p>Q.4 2024 to Q.4 2025</p>	Director, Organisational Culture and Capability	<p>Chief Human Resources Officer</p> <p>Deputy Provost</p>	<p>70% Heads/Directors and Supervisors undertake the Workshop by end 2025</p> <p>Academic performance criteria incorporate an EDI focus to address disadvantage for certain cohorts by end 2025</p>

		underrepresented groups.				
3 - Develop PRO guidance and training.	Specific PRO guidance and training was identified in the Bronze Plan, however since the changes in the application (new PRO section) the GSC would like to explore further what guidance is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a range of case studies around PRO and its assessment to be incorporated in PRO guidance. • Analyse data from PRO section. 	Q.1 to Q.2 2025	Gender Steering Committee	Chief Human Resources Officer Deputy Provost	<p>Increased understanding of the application of PRO in promotion process measured through regular surveys.</p> <p>Monitor improvements in effective use of PRO section in promotions applications.</p>
4 - Collect and analyse disaggregated data to better reflect the challenges faced by women from diverse backgrounds.	The data baseline is needed to evidence and further explore the additional or unique barriers that culturally diverse academic women are experiencing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the collection of equity demographic information in Workday to ensure aligns with current best practice. • Conduct a communications campaign to increase staff completion of equity demographic information. • Undertake annual intersectional analysis 	<p>Q.4 2024 to Q.1 2025</p> <p>Q.2 to Q.3 2025</p>	<p>Associate Director, Workplace Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Associate Director, Governance, Transformation and Systems</p>	<p>Chief Human Resources Officer</p> <p>Chief Human Resources Officer</p>	<p>Increased completion rate for equity demographic information in Workday.</p> <p>Policy and practice address the specific needs of diverse women.</p> <p>Intersectional metrics are incorporated as part of EDI reporting mechanisms.</p>

		of Pulse survey data to identify actions and report to senior leadership.	Q.2 2025 and annually	Internal Communication s Manager Director, Organisational Culture and Capability	Chief Marketing and Communication s Officer	
5 - Address specific barriers for culturally diverse academic women.	Unique barriers identified in the Promotions Review and, in the Performance, and Promotion focus groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs of culturally diverse women through focus groups in partnership with UQ's Cultural Inclusion Council. Develop and implement changes to promotions and performance processes to better meet the specific needs of culturally diverse women 	<p>Q.1 TO Q.2 2025</p> <p>Q.4 2025 to Q.1 2026</p>	<p>Director, Workplace Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Director, Organisational Culture and Capability</p>	Chief Human Resources Officer	<p>Promotion rates for women from culturally diverse background are equal to those of all women.</p> <p>Pulse survey question average favourable response on career development/promotion for culturally diverse women is equal to the average response by all women.</p>