

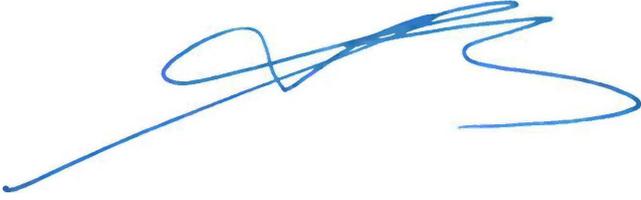


## Athena Swan Silver Award for Higher Education Institutions

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the information presented in this application (including data) is an honest, original, accurate and true representation of Monash University, and that the application complies with the 8,500-word limit.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the name of the signatory.

Professor Sharon Pickering  
Vice-Chancellor and President

## 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 and present.

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 Treaty discussions in the state of Victoria and the Yoorrook Justice Commission

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

**ABS:** Australian Bureau of Statistics

**ARC:** Australian Research Council

**AWEI:** Australian Workplace Equality Index

**CIA:** Chief Investigator 'A'

**CGPES:** Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

**DECRA:** Discovery Early Career Researcher Award

**DVC:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor

**DVCE:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education

**DVCRE:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise

**EAL:** English as an Additional Language

**EDI:** Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

**EPL:** English as Primary Language

**FIT:** Faculty of Information Technology

**FTE:** Full-Time Equivalent

**GPG:** Gender Pay Gap

**HASS:** Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

**KPI:** Key Performance Indicator

**LGBTIQA+:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning, asexual and aromantic plus other related identities

**NB / GD:** Non-binary or gender diverse

**NHMRC:** National Health and Medical Research Council

**STEMM:** Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine

**TED:** Talent, Engagement, Development

**PoC:** Persons of Colour

**VC:** Vice-Chancellor

## Context

### Data sources

Monash University uses a wide range of dashboards and analytical tools that provide actionable insights, drive performance and cultural shifts, support decision-makers and equity practitioners, and aid in strategic planning. This includes bespoke dashboards for gender equity reporting, trend analysis, as well as SAGE Athena Swan requirements. Additionally, we conduct regular consultations through focus groups and surveys to better understand staff experiences and challenges, particularly those faced by marginalised groups. An overview of the main data sources and consultation activities is provided in Table 1. Participation rates are provided for surveys, where applicable, while focus groups and interviews only include headcount, as they prioritise the depth of data and richer understanding of lived and living experiences.

Table 1 - Overview of main data sources for Athena Swan Silver application

Data source	Participant count	W	M	GD/NB	Further information
Gender Equality Focus Groups December 2024 (external facilitator) <i>Coded as 'GEFG' when reporting qualitative data.</i>	83	44	33	6	Participants identified as: 41% academic staff; 45% professional staff; 11% part-time staff; 13% persons of colour; 57% parents/carers.
Focus Groups with LGBTIQ+ staff; June 2022 (external facilitator) <i>Coded as 'FG LGBTIQ+' when reporting qualitative data.</i>	29	16	10	3	Additional LGBTIQ+ Focus groups are scheduled in 2025.
2023 Employee Experience Survey (21% response rate) "Agreement rate" refers to the % of respondents who Strongly Agree or Agree <i>Coded as 'EES' when reporting qualitative data.</i>	1965	1276	601	15	Participants identified as: 38% academic staff; 58% professional staff; 32% staff with English as an additional language, 12% LGBTIQ+ staff; 55% parents/carers; 8% staff living with a disability; 1% First Nations staff. 73 did not share gender.
2024 Staff Engagement Survey (65% response rate)	6585	3924	2650	11	Participants identified as: 38% academic staff; 61% professional staff. Additional demographic data not available.
Staff exit survey (internal ongoing survey)	263	168	95	3	2023-2024 data: 39% academic staff; 61% professional staff; <1% (n= 3) First Nations staff.
Interviews with academic staff <i>Coded as 'Interview' when reporting qualitative data.</i>	72	59	12	2	Conducted by Athena Swan Chair throughout 2023 and 2024.
Promotion Candidate Experience survey (61% response rate)	123	58	56	0	202 staff who applied for academic promotion were invited to participate (2024).
Anonymous feedback mechanisms (ongoing) <i>Coded as 'Anonymous Feedback' when reporting qualitative data.</i>	This includes post-event feedback forms, evaluation forms and polling questions designed to assess the effectiveness of each initiative as well as inviting feedback and suggestions. We have intentionally incorporated questions about staff experiences and perceptions around gender equity at Monash, designed to inform our progress and our future actions.				
Monash workforce data	Gender workforce composition; promotions, retention, staff exits; gender pay gap, flexible work and leave utilisation; gender composition of applicants for research funding. Demographic data is limited and includes staff members' gender, age, country of birth and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity.				

## Data rigour, limitations and ethical considerations

Qualitative data was collected from multiple sources to capture a diverse range of perspectives across Monash (**Table 1**). A thematic analysis was conducted using deidentified data, informed by the approach of Braun & Clarke (2006, 2023). All qualitative data were coded systematically and illustrative quotes include excerpts with associated coding to reflect the diversity of voices and perspectives. When selecting illustrative quotes for this application, we endeavoured to ensure that: a) quotes from staff feedback reflected diversity of perspectives within each dataset; b) quotes were chosen to illustrate the complexity of the findings; and c) the selection process was systematically documented through a shared consultation log detailing thematic alignment and reflections.

To protect privacy and honour the trust shown by participants, coding identifiers used in this application are limited to a combination of demographic markers such as data source, staff type and additional characteristics where relevant, balancing contextual richness with the risk of re-identification.

For example: *academic\_woman\_carer\_STEMM*.

While deliberate efforts were made to apply a comprehensive intersectional lens, we acknowledge limitations and challenges in fully capturing the breadth of staff identity data. These include current system limitations in what type of optional demographic data is collected from employees, as well as the understandable caution staff may feel in disclosing personal information in consultation activities. We found that balancing the need for this data with ensuring psychological safety is crucial. Where possible, we engage external facilitators for data-gathering activities to minimise risks though we acknowledge some participants may still hesitate to share aspects of their identity.

Building trust and emphasising the value of data collection remain ongoing priorities in improving both participation and insights. During our self-evaluation, we also identified actions to further enhance data collection processes, enabling analysis through an intersectional framework.

Importantly, the breadth of consultation activities offered diverse and flexible avenues for anonymous participation, specifically designed to reach staff with varied lived and living experiences. This inclusive approach helped mitigate some of the identified limitations, ensuring that a broad spectrum of perspectives was meaningfully represented and that future actions are grounded in lived experience.

In 2021, the Victorian Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector introduced a mandatory Employee Experience Survey under the Gender Equality Act 2020, which took precedence over our Athena Swan longitudinal survey (conducted every two years from 2017 to 2021). Despite this, the Employee Experience Survey has provided a new baseline for data collection. Although the shift was outside our control, we are adapting to this new format and using it to continue gathering meaningful insights.

## Terminology

### Gender

A system of social categorisation forming part of a person's social identity. Monash University is proud of the gender diversity of its community, which comprises women, men, non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals.

### LGBTIQA+

Monash uses the LGBTIQA+ acronym to be as inclusive as possible. We acknowledge that other variations of this acronym exist, which are also valid. LGBTIQA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender-diverse, intersex, queer and questioning, asexual and aromantic plus other identities.

### Disability

A contemporary understanding of disability is that it is multifaceted, fluid and interactional. It encompasses disabilities that are hidden and/or visible, and those which are short or long term, or fluctuating. Monash adopts the social model of disability, which does not deny the reality of impairments nor their impacts on the individual, but rather focuses action on changing environments to enhance accessibility and accommodate disability as part of the diversity of human experience.

## English as an Additional Language

At Monash, the term 'English as an Additional Language (EAL)' describes individuals born in countries other than those classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as "main English-speaking countries." We identify EAL staff by using workforce data, specifically through the country of birth information provided by staff. We acknowledge there is a limitation to this data as it does not fully capture the complexity of an individual's background; however, this proxy provides valuable insights into additional barriers in the workplace. We compare employment data of EAL staff against English as a Primary Language (EPL).

## Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities include individuals who are born overseas, have migrated to Australia, and/or speak English as an additional language. Many organisations and agencies in Australia use this term when engaging with these communities, recognising that their experiences, outcomes, and needs may differ due to the greater challenges and barriers they may face. We recognise that the term can be perceived as a broad and potentially homogenising label, overlooking the nuances of diverse experiences and implying a default "mainstream" culture. Therefore, we acknowledge it does not fully capture the complexity of cultural and linguistic diversity or the varied lived experiences within Australia. It is used here with caution, understanding that other terms may be preferred by individuals to highlight specific aspects of their identity. Where possible, we provided participants the option to self-identify their background, which is reflected in the focus group quotes.

## Culturally and Racially Marginalised

Diversity Council Australia uses this term to refer to people who are non-White and may experience marginalisation because of their culture, race or religion. We recognise that Culturally and Racially Marginalised people face systemic workplace barriers, regardless of their linguistic background and not limited to first- or second-generation Australians. Monash does not currently collect data on employees' cultural identity, making it challenging to more fully understand and specifically address the unique challenges and experiences of culturally and racially marginalised individuals within our workforce.

## Persons of Colour

The term Persons of Colour acknowledges the diversity of racial and ethnic identities within the context of social inequality. It is important to note that this is a self-identifying descriptor and should not be imposed or applied by others without the individual's consent. In this application, it is used rarely and only when staff self-identified.

## Marginalisation

This term refers to people with lived experiences of marginalisation. Marginalisation stems from inequality that people experience due to power imbalances built into our systems, which create barriers to career advancement or exclusion from career-building opportunities. Marginalisation is intersectional and individuals can experience multiple forms simultaneously based on their intersecting identities.

## Intersectionality

We approach intersectionality as a critical lens that explores the overlapping nature of marginalised identities, which can compound and amplify experiences of discrimination. Intersectionality, a term coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, highlights how various forms of oppression, like race, gender, and class, intersect and create unique, compounded experiences of marginalisation. The concept was developed to address the complexities of discrimination. It also draws from earlier feminist movements, such as the Combahee River Collective. At Monash, we aim to understand intersectional inequities by analysing staff experiences and outcomes across multiple dimensions. However, we recognise the limitations in fully capturing the complexity of people's living and lived experiences, which are essential to gaining a more nuanced understanding of social inequalities.

## Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM)

STEMM encompasses five out of the ten faculties at Monash University: 1) Information Technology; 2) Engineering; 3) Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences; 4) Science; and 5) Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. This classification, introduced during the Athena Swan Bronze process, is now part of our institutional reporting, allowing progress tracking by comparing STEMM and HASS faculties.

## Parent/Carer/Caregiver

Parents/carers/caregivers refers to staff who have responsibility for the care of a dependent. A dependent may include a child under the age of 18 years and/or completing their secondary education, an elderly parent or other relative with a disability or chronic medical condition.

## Summary of key barriers targeted since Bronze

Table 2 - Overview of Cygnet 1

<b>Cygnet 1 - Relative to Opportunity in academic promotion</b> We identified that key barriers in academic promotion were largely due to a limited understanding of the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework and a low confidence among academic staff in how its principles were applied in decision-making. These barriers had gendered impacts, with women being three times more likely to work part-time and face longer career interruptions due to caregiving.	
Examples of impactful actions	Examples of outcomes and positive impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated information sessions and online training on “Addressing Achievement Relative to Opportunity” and making the training mandatory for all academic supervisors, panel members and decision-makers.</li> <li>• Amended policy to ensure that Promotion Committee Chairs are trained on unconscious bias.</li> <li>• Improved guidelines for decision-makers and for promotion candidates on assessing achievement relative to opportunity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased utilisation of ‘relevant circumstances’ on promotion applications.</li> <li>• Increased success rate of promotion candidates who utilised ‘relevant circumstances’ and part-time .</li> <li>• Improved confidence in the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework across all demographic groups, most notably by academic women with caregiving commitments and staff with disability.</li> <li>• Enhanced understanding by promotion committee members and improved confidence in ‘relative to opportunity statements’.</li> </ul>

Table 3 - Overview of Cygnet 2

<p><b>Cygnet 2 - Reducing barriers to Indigenous recruitment</b></p> <p>Despite our strong commitment to Indigenous employment, systemic and structural barriers have hindered our ability to recruit Indigenous talent. These barriers included the lack of prioritisation of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, as well as the need for appointing Indigenous staff in senior roles to lead transformational change. This progress report outlined efforts to address these challenges by ensuring that Indigenous recruitment strategies are Indigenous-led, emphasising the importance of integrating Indigenous perspectives into recruitment processes and leadership.</p>	
Examples of impactful actions	Examples of outcomes and positive impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established new Indigenous leadership positions.</li> <li>Introduced Indigenous Graduate Program.</li> <li>Adopted Indigenous-led recruitment process with culturally-informed candidate care.</li> <li>Reviewed Indigenous Employment Policy and Procedure.</li> <li>Made Indigenous appointments exempt from FTE caps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased the number of Indigenous staff.</li> <li>New hires described recruitment as culturally safe</li> <li>Niche advertising channels reached wider Indigenous communities.</li> <li>Indigenous Graduate Program seen as developing future leaders and described as a key differentiator in a competitive marketplace for Indigenous talent.</li> <li>Hiring managers felt supported by the Indigenous employment team.</li> </ul>

Table 4 - Overview of Cygnet 3

<p><b>Cygnet 3 - Improving the representation of senior academic women in STEMM</b></p> <p>This Cygnet described major factors contributing to women’s underrepresentation in senior academic positions within STEMM disciplines at Monash University and highlighted the effectiveness of multifaceted strategies and actions aimed at dismantling systemic barriers. In addition to increasing women’s representation among Professors in STEMM, their retention rate improved considerably, along with greater confidence in the institutional commitment to gender equity and recognition of an important cultural change.</p>	
Examples of impactful actions	Examples of outcomes and positive impact
<p><b>Renewed, visible commitment from senior leaders to gender equity, diversity and inclusion.</b></p> <p><b>Addressing unconscious bias.</b></p> <p><b>Enhanced equitable-decision-making.</b></p> <p><b>Established STEMM Women Academic network</b></p> <p><b>Provided peer mentoring and tailored support. for women’s career progression.</b></p>	<p><b>Gender equity seen as a strategic goal.</b></p> <p><b>Accelerated improvements in women’s representation in senior academic roles.</b></p> <p><b>Improved promotion application and success rates.</b></p> <p><b>Improved retention rates of academic women in STEMM.</b></p> <p><b>Visibility of women in senior positions seen as indicative of important cultural change.</b></p>

Table 5 - Overview of Cygnet 4

<p><b>Cygnet 4 - Supporting academic staff with caregiving responsibilities in the Faculty of Information Technology (FIT)</b></p> <p>We found that caring responsibilities hindered academic career momentum, research competitiveness, and success. Addressing these challenges required a multifaceted approach, including cultural shifts to combat biases and stereotypes around parenting roles, encouraging staff of all genders to actively engage in caregiving. This led to better awareness of policies, improved experience with inclusive scheduling, greater workplace flexibility and ultimately higher staff retention rates in the Faculty of Information Technology.</p>	
Examples of impactful actions	Examples of outcomes and positive impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised awareness of relevant policies and resources.</li> <li>• Developed new website and a parenting guide.</li> <li>• Established Carers Travel Support Scheme.</li> <li>• Workload adjustments for academics who are parents and carers.</li> <li>• Inclusive scheduling of meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved knowledge of support options, parenting rooms and targeted initiatives.</li> <li>• Enhanced perception of workplace flexibility.</li> <li>• Increased uptake of carer's leave by staff of all genders.</li> <li>• Increased use of part-time work and partner leave.</li> <li>• Increased staff retention rate of FIT academic staff.</li> <li>• Improved experience for staff who are carers.</li> </ul>

Table 6 - Overview of Cygnet 5

<p><b>Cygnet 5 - Inclusion of transgender and gender diverse staff</b></p> <p>Our journey towards LGBTIQ+ inclusion revealed key areas for improvement, particularly in supporting transgender and gender diverse staff. Consultation highlighted the need for dedicated gender affirmation leave, expanded training, better data collection methods, and more supportive practices. It emphasised that policies and training development must be inclusive to effectively support transgender and gender diverse staff.</p>	
Examples of impactful actions	Examples of outcomes and positive impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced Institutional commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion.</li> <li>• Participated in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI).</li> <li>• Promoted inclusive terminology in policy, practice.</li> <li>• Inclusive policy development through engaging with trans and gender diverse staff.</li> <li>• Introduced paid Gender Affirmation Leave .</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visible allyship from senior leaders, providing institutional support.</li> <li>• Increased number of non-binary/gender-diverse staff</li> <li>• Improved perception of inclusivity towards LGBTIQ+ staff.</li> <li>• Positive impact of Gender Affirmation Leave on promoting wellbeing and reducing stress.</li> <li>• Training initiatives described as making a tangible difference in fostering inclusive practice.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 1 – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Alignment of SAGE Athena Swan principles to Monash University strategy

Our focus on gender equity spans more than three decades, beginning with the formal appointment of our first Equal Opportunity Coordinator in 1987. Monash joined the SAGE Athena Swan program in 2015, established the Athena Swan Committee in January 2016 and submitted its application for the Athena Swan Bronze Award as part of Cohort 1 in March 2018.

As part of our long-term commitment to Athena Swan, Monash University has actively taken steps to align the Athena Swan objectives with the organisation plans (**Table 7**). This includes embedding Athena Swan principles into the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025, the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework 2022-2030, and most recently, the 2025 Implementation Plan, which outlines university-wide strategic priorities (**Athena Swan Principle 10**).

The University's strategic plan Impact 2030 declares our purpose and commits us to responding to major challenges that are global in their scale and implications. With campuses and presence in Australia, Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Italy and China, our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion extends beyond Monash Australia. We are dedicated to fostering inclusive environments that reflect the diverse communities we serve globally. While the key barriers addressed in this application are based on evidence from Monash Australia, our goals and actions will inform and support endeavours to further equity, diversity and inclusion at our overseas workplace locations.

Table 7 - Athena Swan principles embedded in Monash University's strategic commitments

Strategic Commitment	Description
Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025	Following the completion of the Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan 2018-2021, Monash developed a new four-year Gender Equality Action Plan <sup>1</sup> , informed by a comprehensive gender equality audit ( <b>Athena Swan Principles 2, 3</b> ). In its multifaceted approach, the Action Plan aspires to mitigate gender imbalances and achieve a more inclusive Monash community by dismantling systemic and cultural barriers to equity. It also emphasises the importance of consciously considering all genders ( <b>Athena Swan Principle 6</b> ) and recognising and applying intersectional perspectives in the development of policies, strategies and action plans ( <b>Athena Swan Principle 7</b> ).
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2022-2030 ('EDI Framework')	The EDI Framework puts into effect the 'Inclusive' goal of Monash's strategic plan, <i>Impact 2030</i> , which communicates our commitment to advancing inclusion within the Monash community, and Monash's role as a global leader by visibly championing and advocating for change in the broader society. The EDI Framework draws on the multitude of lived experiences of Monash community members ( <b>Athena Swan Principles 8, 10</b> ) and promotes intersectionality as one of four core principles that guide our practices and actions ( <b>Athena Swan Principle 7</b> ).
Impact 2030 - 2025 Implementation Plan	Guided by Monash University's Strategic Plan, <i>Impact 2030</i> , the 2025 Implementation Plan underscores the University's commitment to Athena Swan accreditation. It also outlines key quantitative KPIs, including gender composition in senior roles, the gender pay gap, staff engagement, retention, and staff diversity profiles, alongside clear accountability for change ( <b>Athena Swan Principles 4, 10</b> ).
Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019-2030	The Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework outlines our commitments and strategic priorities to embed Indigenous perspectives and content into curriculum, enhance research contributions that address and serve the needs of Indigenous people and communities, and uphold traditional knowledge and respective Indigenous students, staff and communities ( <b>Athena Swan Principle 5</b> ). An example of this commitment includes the launch of the Indigenous Research Action Plan 2023-2026, which emphasises the unwavering commitment to Indigenous-led research.
Disability and Accessibility Action Plan 2024-2030	The Plan establishes the actions that Monash will take to create a more inclusive and accessible University environment for staff, students and third parties ( <b>Athena Swan Principle 9</b> ). These actions are aligned with <i>Impact 2030</i> and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, and a series of international, federal and state legislative and policy imperatives. The Disability and Accessibility Action Plan 2024-2030 commits to a number of large projects across all our campuses and international locations to propel us beyond mandatory baseline commitments, and ensure our entire University is working together to advance accessibility and disability inclusion ( <b>Athena Swan Principle 10</b> ).
Strategic Commitment to Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harm Prevention and Response	This Strategic Commitment operationalises Monash's work preventing, and responding to, gender-based violence and sexual harm, and maintains the broader commitment to building safer, respectful and more inclusive communities. Senior leaders play a vital role in influencing sector change, ensuring robust governance systems and visibly championing a culture that prioritises safety, respect, inclusion and gender equality ( <b>Athena Swan Principles 9, 10</b> ). Progress is reported annually and published publicly in line with the University's commitment to accountability and transparency ( <b>Athena Swan Principle 2</b> ).

<sup>1</sup> A legislative requirement of the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)

## Governance Structure

Athena Swan has been incorporated into the University’s governance structure, reporting to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, which reports to the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Committee (**Figure 1**). The Chair of the Athena Swan Steering Group is a member of Monash’s EDI Committee and provides regular updates on Athena Swan through a standing agenda item. The Athena Swan Steering Group includes representatives from all Monash Faculties in Australia and representatives from Monash Malaysia.

Figure 1 - Monash University’s EDI Governance Structure (2024)



## Achievements, Challenges and Learnings

### Integrated approach

At Monash University, our EDI work is distributed across both academic and professional staff, ensuring a highly integrated approach. To ensure Monash’s commitment to EDI translates into meaningful action, the Monash EDI team within the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) has been created. Made up of subject-matter experts, this team enables the implementation and evaluation of EDI practise across the University.

The People function has a dedicated Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team that leads strategies to enhance workplace EDI, including managing the SAGE Athena Swan accreditation in partnership with the Athena Swan Steering Group (**Athena Swan Principle 1**). This Group is chaired by an academic staff member, appointed by the Provost and Senior Vice-President. With just two academic leads over the past decade, we have maintained strong stability, while supporting the natural turnover of Steering Group members.

The Staff EDI team works closely with HR teams to embed EDI objectives throughout the employee lifecycle, including recruitment, promotion and talent development. The Workforce Analytics team supports this work through the provision of data analytics and bespoke reporting dashboards. In policy review development, we have adopted EDI impact assessments to address the needs of diverse and marginalised groups. Examples of actions arising from these impact assessments include improvements in inclusive language and campus accessibility of period care products.

Faculties actively contribute through local EDI committees, with strong participation from academic staff. Chairs of these Faculty-level EDI Committees are also members of the Athena Swan Steering Group, creating a key platform for collaboration, idea exchange, consultation, and support.

However, challenges remain in balancing the workload for each Associate Dean, who chairs Faculty-level EDI Committees, to ensure it reflects their responsibilities and goals. Furthermore, it is evident that our expanding EDI commitments across the university are outpacing the dedicated resources available to address them, highlighting the increasing importance of an integrated approach to EDI (**Enabling Action 1**).

As of March 2025, 9 of 10 Monash faculties have their own EDI Committee. This collaborative structure ensures that EDI efforts are not isolated, but are embedded throughout the institution, regularly highlighted in strategic conversations and initiatives (**Athena Swan Principle 1**).

### Reporting and leadership accountability

- Progress on the Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan 2018-2021, and now the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2022-2025, is reported to the University's central EDI Committee
- Monash reports progress on EDI goals both internally and externally. The University's Annual Report includes a dedicated section on Inclusive Goals, summarising progress in gender equity, as well as EDI more broadly, including key Athena Swan initiatives. This ensures that our commitment to transparency and accountability are clearly communicated (**Athena Swan Principles 4, 10**).
- Updates are also posted on the Monash University website. Overall, 81% of the 109 actions in our Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan were successfully implemented. Some actions, such as those related to flexible work, were accelerated during the COVID-related work-from-home period, while others were delayed or shifted due to changes in direction or other policies.
- As part of the SAGE Cygnet process, updates were presented by the Athena Swan Chair at EDI meetings with Cygnet applications endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor's Group. Leaders actively championed each SAGE Cygnet award both internally and externally, amplifying the impact. Each Cygnet application was treated as an opportunity to highlight measurable progress toward long-term EDI goals, using storytelling and data to illustrate how the robust, evidence-based approach of the SAGE Athena Swan framework has accelerated improvements (**Athena Swan Principle 10**).

### Staff engagement, co-design and visibility

In our EDI efforts, we embrace co-design principles and prioritise staff involvement in shaping programs, policies and practices, recognising the value of lived and living experiences (**Athena Swan Principle 2**). Through events, initiatives and focus groups, we gather diverse perspectives on EDI issues, increase visibility of institutional barriers and identify strategies for improvement (**Athena Swan Principle 8**). We also draw on institutional data and best practices to shape and refine initiatives (**Athena Swan Principle 3**).

For each SAGE Cygnet application, we invited feedback from relevant staff cohorts through focus groups, interviews, and anonymous forms, gathering insights that helped demonstrate impact and identify future actions. Examples of staff engagement activities are provided in **Table 8**. In addition, we briefed and consulted internal groups like the Monash Research Committee, STEMM Women Academic Network, and Monash Career Disruption Working Group. The 2023 Employee Experience Survey provided broader feedback, analysed by demographic indicators, and reported to senior leadership (**Athena Swan Principle 7**).

To foster a two-way engagement, we endeavour to close the feedback loop where possible. For example, a summary of findings from interviews on the topic of academic promotion were shared with participants, informing them about proposed actions and results from the Staff Engagement Survey were cascaded from leaders to teams. However, we acknowledge this practice has not been consistent across all data-gathering activities and actions have been developed to drive improvements (**Enabling action 2**).

Table 8 - Examples of 2024 staff engagement initiatives in equity, diversity and inclusion

Event/Initiative/Activity	Description of purpose	Target audience - Monash staff
International Day of Girls and Women in Science (2024) <i>Hybrid event</i>	To discuss barriers to academic success and strategies to overcome them; to raise the visibility of gender equity challenges unique to academics and researchers in STEMM disciplines. Participants provided feedback through registration and post-event forms, as well as during the event	Academics in STEMM 118 attendees
Improving LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace (2024) <i>Webinar</i>	To discuss strategies to cultivate a more supportive, safe and respectful environment for our LGBTIQ+ employees. Participants provided feedback through registration, post-event forms, and during the event.	130 attendees
The Culture Add: Measuring Cultural Diversity and Inclusion at Work (2024) <i>Hybrid event</i>	To discuss the role of equity and belonging through an intersectional lens. This event delved into how workplaces can effectively develop cross-cultural competencies, diversity and inclusion – and how this elevates productivity.	80 attendees
Supporting menopause in the workplace (2024) <i>Webinar</i>	To discuss and explore the challenges of staff going through (peri) menopause in the workplace. Participants provided feedback through registration form and during the session.	236 attendees
Supporting new parents and carers (2024) <i>In person workshops</i>	To support parents and carers in successfully navigating common challenges and form connections.	58 participants
Amplifying Academic Promotion Success (2024) <i>Two-day hybrid program</i>	Targeted skills development with a focus on enhancing strategic writing and facilitating peer mentoring. Participants provided feedback during and post program.	Women applying for promotion 100 participants
Academic promotion candidates <i>feedback form</i> (2024)	A survey inviting feedback on academic promotion support provided to candidates in 2024	220 promotion candidates; 61% response rate
Advancing Women's Success Grant <i>feedback form</i> (2024)	A survey inviting feedback on program benefits and on further opportunities to support women who have caregiving commitments	Grant recipients, 33 Level B and C women carers
Empowering neurodiversity in the workplace - insights gathering session ( <i>hybrid</i> )	An externally facilitated session seeking feedback on how to foster a more neuro-inclusive workplace	Neurodivergent staff; 40 participants
Gender equity focus groups (2024) ( <i>online</i> )	A series of externally facilitated focus groups inviting feedback on progress made and future actions to improve gender equity at Monash	83 participants ( <b>Table 1</b> )

## Reward and recognition in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We have an annual awards program to recognise staff who have made outstanding contributions to advancing equity and diversity and fostering inclusion at Monash and beyond. The Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, established in 2010 (formerly "Social Inclusion Awards"), highlight the exceptional work of staff who drive positive change.

A historical challenge, however, was ensuring that EDI awards were viewed as equal in prestige to research and education awards. To elevate the status of EDI awards, the Vice-Chancellor integrated them into the broader Vice-Chancellor's awards program in 2020, alongside Education, Research, and Professional Excellence awards (**Athena Swan Principle 10**).

We use internal communications to celebrate staff leading transformational EDI work. While we strive to highlight intersectional characteristics, we recognise challenges in ensuring diverse experiences are accurately represented and staff feel comfortable sharing personal attributes (**Athena Swan Principles 1, 7, 9**).

## Remaining Challenges and Key Enablers

Despite progress in advancing EDI at Monash through Athena Swan, we still face challenges. Although we established a strong governance structure after encouraging faculties to set up local EDI committees, turnover in Faculty Chair roles and membership over time has led to reduced knowledge and understanding of the Athena Swan objectives. This issue extends to newly established EDI initiatives and committees. Ensuring all staff engaged in EDI are familiar with the Athena Swan framework and understand how they can contribute to its goals remains a priority (**Enabling Action 3**).

Another challenge remains deepening staff understanding of how intersectionality can be applied within their contexts. While we have incorporated intersectionality into policies, guidelines, and events, many staff are still navigating the concept. To address this, we plan to embed intersectionality as a framework within staff training and learning (**Enabling Action 4**).

Additionally, our workforce data lacks a detailed intersectional framework, particularly in relation to disability and cultural diversity. A recent session with neurodivergent staff underscored the importance of supporting self-identification. Enhancing data collection, participation, trust, and privacy will be essential in addressing these gaps through an intersectional framework (**Enabling Action 5**).

While our multi-year journey demonstrates solid progress, our ongoing self-assessment highlights opportunities to better understand the overall effectiveness of gender equity interventions, consistently integrating evidence-based practice and iteratively improving the maturity of our internal processes. Applying the Maturity Matrix developed by the Monash-led Partnership Centre for Gender Equality and Leadership Advancement will help us drive change beyond Athena Swan Silver (**Enabling Action 6**).

## Enabling actions

Ref.	Rationale / Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Person / Group responsible	Senior Leader accountable
1.	Support the University's ongoing commitment to EDI by ensuring Faculty-level EDI Committees can function effectively.	Positions for Associate Deans EDI are filled in each faculty with appropriate workload allocation and resources.	January to December 2026 Ongoing	Faculty Deans	Provost and Senior Vice-president
2.	Two-way engagement and closing the feedback loop in gender equity are essential for creating an inclusive, responsive environment. This dialogue fosters trust, accountability, and continuous improvement.	Share the findings from data-gathering activities, such as surveys and staff focus groups, with participants, demonstrating how consultations informed gender equity, diversity and inclusion strategies.	Ongoing	Project leads of data-gathering activities	Head of unit (Portfolio/Faculty) where data gathering takes place
3.	Increase awareness of the positive impact of Athena SWAN objectives across the Monash community, including new staff in business units with newly established or refreshed EDI initiatives and committees. This will be achieved by promoting Athena SWAN's benefits through targeted Monash articles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Deliver presentations to local (Faculty/School) EDI Committees on Athena Swan objectives, ensuring they understand how they can actively contribute to achieving the goals.</li> <li>b) Ensure graduate researchers in STEM are advised about Athena Swan, its objectives and activities as part of Faculty inductions.</li> <li>c) Undertake six-monthly updates to Athena Swan website to ensure the content remains current.</li> <li>d) Publish Monash articles through internal channels, highlighting the positive impact of Athena Swan on advancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion.</li> </ul>	August 2025 to August 2026;  Ongoing  August 2025 Ongoing	Chair, Athena Swan Steering Group  Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)  Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Monash HR	Chief People Officer

## SECTION 2 – KEY BARRIERS TO ATTRACTION, RETENTION AND / OR PROGRESSION

### KEY BARRIER 1: Women’s progression to senior academic roles in STEMM

#### 1.1 Barrier statement

**Disclaimer:** This section focuses on barriers that impact women’s progression to senior academic positions in STEMM at Monash University, excluding recruitment-related challenges.

The sector still faces gender disparities in senior academic roles, with structural and cultural barriers hindering women’s career progression. These barriers affect the pipeline of emerging leaders, the promotion of a positive culture, and equitable career promotion decisions. In STEMM fields, the challenge is intensified by a hyper-competitive culture, fewer diverse role models, limited networking, unconscious bias, and structural barriers in performance assessments.

#### 1.2 Monash context

Monash is dedicated to advancing gender equity in STEMM disciplines, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment and improving gender composition at senior levels. This commitment is outlined in the Environmental, Social and Governance Statement 2021-2025 and Gender Equity Action Plan 2022-2025.

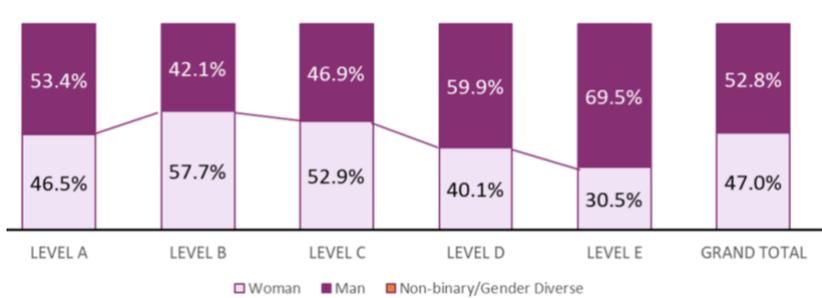
Since our Bronze application, Monash has introduced interventions to improve women’s representation in senior academic roles in STEMM (**Cygnets 4**). These include addressing career interruptions, removing barriers to promotion, revising policies, promoting leadership development and facilitating networking opportunities (STEMM Women Academic Network).

#### 1.3 Evidence

##### Representation

Despite notable progress in the past decade, Monash women remain underrepresented in senior academic roles within STEMM, with their participation still falling below the workforce representation of 47% (**Figure 1.1**).

Figure 1.1 Gender composition of academics staff in STEMM at Monash University (2024)\*



\* This includes 3 non-binary/gender-diverse staff (1 Level A, 1 Level B, 1 Level C)

From 2022 to 2024, the proportion of women at Level E increased from 25.6% (n=90) to 30.5% (n=124). Improvements were seen in four of five STEMM faculties (**Tables 10 to 15**), with Engineering having the largest disparity at 6.6% women professors (**Table 11**).

Table 9 - Representation of academic women in STEMM at Monash University (2022-2024)

STEMM FACULTIES COMBINED	Women's representation			2022				2023				2024			
	2022	2023	2024	W	M	NB/GD	Total	W	M	NB/GD	Total	W	M	NB/GD	Total
LEVEL A	48.7%	45.0%	46.5%	318	334	1	653	348	424	1	774	416	478	1	895
LEVEL B	54.8%	57.4%	57.7%	327	270	0	597	361	268	0	629	367	268	1	636
LEVEL C	47.0%	50.9%	52.9%	187	211	0	398	209	202	0	411	221	196	1	418
LEVEL D	40.8%	41.1%	40.1%	113	164	0	277	120	172	0	292	114	170	0	284
LEVEL E	25.6%	28.6%	30.5%	90	261	0	351	108	269	0	377	124	283	0	407
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>46.2%</b>	<b>47.0%</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2276</b>	<b>1146</b>	<b>1335</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2483</b>	<b>1242</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2640</b>

Table 10 - Representation of academic women in the Faculty of Engineering (2022-2024)

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING	Women's representation			2022			2023			2024		
	2022	2023	2024	W	M	Total	W	M	Total	W	M	Total
LEVEL A	25.0%	25.8%	24.6%	25	75	100	25	72	97	29	89	118
LEVEL B	39.7%	41.7%	42.9%	23	35	58	20	28	48	18	24	42
LEVEL C	20.0%	27.8%	30.8%	7	28	35	10	26	36	12	27	39
LEVEL D	15.8%	19.5%	17.9%	6	32	38	8	33	41	7	32	39
LEVEL E	6.8%	3.5%	6.6%	4	55	59	2	55	57	4	57	61
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>299</b>

Table 11 - Representation of academic women in the Faculty of Information Technology (2022-2024)

FACULTY OF INFO. TECHNOLOGY	Women's representation			2022			2023			2024		
	2022	2023	2024	W	M	Total	W	M	Total	W	M	Total
LEVEL A	48.5%	34.6%	34.2%	16	17	33	36	68	104	41	79	120
LEVEL B	46.4%	40.7%	47.2%	39	45	84	35	51	86	34	38	72
LEVEL C	14.7%	34.3%	46.7%	5	29	34	12	23	35	14	16	30
LEVEL D	25.0%	23.3%	12.1%	5	15	20	7	23	30	4	29	33
LEVEL E	25.0%	29.0%	29.7%	7	21	28	9	22	31	11	26	37
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>36.2%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>35.6%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>292</b>

Table 12 - Representation of academic women in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (2022-2024)

FACULTY OF MED., NURSING & HEALTH SCIENCES	Women's representation			2022				2023				2024			
	2022	2023	2024	W	M	NB/GD	Total	W	M	NB/GD	Total	W	M	NB/GD	Total
LEVEL A	60.1%	55.7%	56.8%	188	124	1	313	185	146	1	332	225	171	0	396
LEVEL B	61.0%	64.5%	64.0%	219	140	0	359	251	138	0	389	261	146	1	408
LEVEL C	57.9%	58.6%	59.3%	150	109	0	259	163	115	0	278	169	115	1	285
LEVEL D	51.8%	54.0%	54.7%	85	79	0	164	87	74	0	161	81	67	0	148
LEVEL E	37.5%	41.1%	44.0%	63	105	0	168	76	109	0	185	88	112	0	200
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>56.7%</b>	<b>57.3%</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1263</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1345</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1437</b>

Table 13 - Representation of academic women in the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (2022-2024)

FACULTY OF PHARMACY & PHARM SCI	Women's representation			2022			2023			2024		
	2022	2023	2024	W	M	Total	W	M	Total	W	M	Total
LEVEL A	48.9%	50.0%	55.6%	43	45	88	48	48	96	55	44	99
LEVEL B	49.1%	54.4%	53.3%	27	28	55	31	26	57	32	28	60
LEVEL C	34.6%	42.3%	48.4%	9	17	26	11	15	26	15	16	31
LEVEL D	53.8%	38.5%	36.8%	7	6	13	5	8	13	7	12	19
LEVEL E	23.8%	28.0%	25.9%	5	16	21	7	18	25	7	20	27
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>44.8%</b>	<b>47.0%</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>236</b>

Table 14 - Representation of academic women in the Faculty of Science (2022-2024)

FACULTY OF SCIENCE	Women's representation			2022				2023				2024			
	2022	2023	2024	W	M	GD	Total	W	M	GD	Total	W	M	GD	Total
LEVEL A	38.7%	37.2%	40.7%	46	73	1	119	54	90	1	145	66	95	1	162
LEVEL B	46.3%	49.0%	40.7%	19	22	0	41	24	25	0	49	22	32	0	54
LEVEL C	36.4%	36.1%	33.3%	16	28	0	44	13	23	0	36	11	22	0	33
LEVEL D	23.8%	27.7%	33.3%	10	32	0	42	13	34	0	47	15	30	0	45
LEVEL E	14.7%	17.7%	17.1%	11	64	0	75	14	65	0	79	14	68	0	82
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>34.0%</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>376</b>

The impact of promotions to Level E highlights a persisting concern in the career pipeline, as the number of women at Level D has remained virtually unchanged between 2022 (n= 113) and 2024 (n=114). While we acknowledge positive staff movements due to promotion to and from Level D, there are emerging signs that this level may be at risk of stagnation, which could slow the continued progress at Level E.

Intersectional analysis revealed deeper systemic inequalities, with EAL women being significantly underrepresented in senior academic roles in STEMM (Table 15; Table 16).

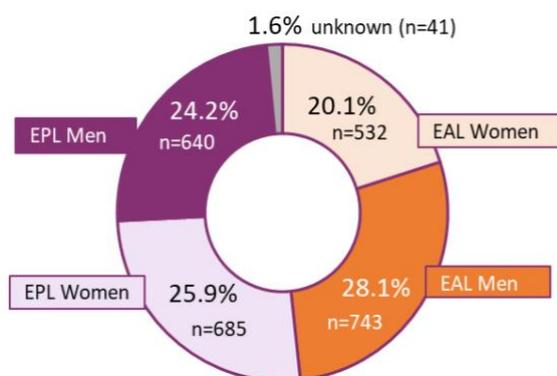
Table 15 - English as Additional Language (EAL): Headcount of EAL academic staff in STEMM (2022-2024)

Academic Level	Proportion of EAL staff in STEMM			Headcount of EAL staff in STEMM		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
LEVEL A	61.4%	63.8%	64.6%	401	494	578
LEVEL B	46.1%	45.2%	44.8%	275	284	285
LEVEL C	37.7%	40.4%	38.3%	150	166	160
LEVEL D	37.9%	39.7%	41.2%	105	116	117
LEVEL E	32.5%	32.6%	33.4%	114	123	136
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>45.9%</b>	<b>47.6%</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>1045</b>	<b>1183</b>	<b>1276</b>

Table 16 - English as Additional Language (EAL): Gender composition of EAL academic staff in STEMM (2024)

Academic Level	Gender composition of EAL staff in STEMM			Headcount of EAL staff		
	W	M	NB/GD	W	M	NB/GD
LEVEL A	44.8%	55.0%	0.2%	259	318	1
LEVEL B	49.5%	50.5%	0.0%	141	144	0
LEVEL C	44.4%	55.6%	0.0%	71	89	0
LEVEL D	29.1%	70.9%	0.0%	34	83	0
LEVEL E	19.9%	80.1%	0.0%	27	109	0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>58.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>1</b>

Figure 1.2 - Composition of academic staff in STEMM by gender and linguistic diversity (2024)\*



\*Of the three NB/GD academic staff in STEMM, 1 is EAL, 2 are EPL.

Nearly half (48.3%) of all STEMM academic staff have EAL<sup>2</sup> backgrounds, an increase from 45.9% in 2022 (Table 15), representing a significant pool of our talent (Figure 1.2).

Among EAL academics, a higher proportion are men (58.2%) compared to women (41.7%), and EAL men are more strongly represented at Levels D and E (Table 16). Specifically, 11% of all EAL women hold senior roles (n=61) compared to 26% of EAL men (n=192).

Although Figure 1.1 showed that women make up 30.5% of STEMM Professors, a larger gender gap emerges when broken down by EAL and EPL status. EAL women account for just 19.9% of STEMM Professors, compared to 35.9% of EPL women (Figure 1.3; Figure 1.4).

<sup>2</sup> Derived from Country of Birth and ABS classification of countries where English is not the major language. This is an optional field for staff to share and it has been provided by 98.4% of academic staff in STEMM.

Figure 1.3 - Composition of senior academic roles by gender and EAL/EPL status

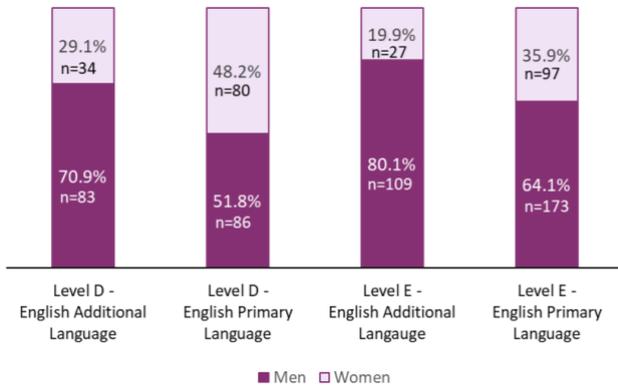
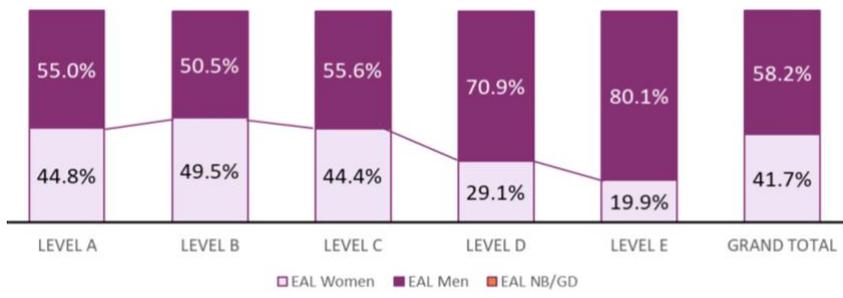
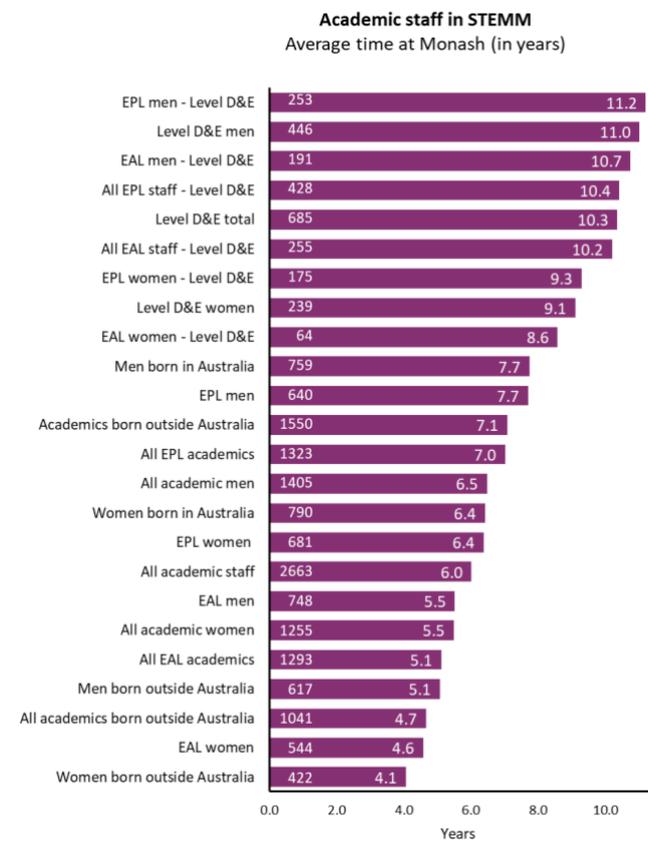


Figure 1.4 - English as Additional Language (EAL): Gender composition of EAL academic staff in STEMM (2024)\*



*This includes one NB/GD staff member.*

Figure 1.5 - Average tenure at Monash (Years) of EAL and EPL academic staff in STEMM (2024)



### Retention

Women's retention in STEMM is crucial to cultivate a strong pipeline into senior roles. The average tenure among academic staff at Monash is 6 years (women: 5.5 years; men: 6.5 years).

Women consistently have shorter tenures than men (Figure 1.5). Notably, academic women born outside Australia and EAL staff have the shortest tenures, averaging 4.1 and 4.6 years, respectively.

Among Levels D and E, the average tenure is longer (10.3 years) with a 1.9-year gap between women and men. The gap is wider for EAL staff, with a 2.2 years difference favouring men (Figure 1.5).

These shorter tenures highlight potential barriers to career advancement and the need for better retention and support for women and EAL academics in STEMM.

Table 17 - Actions designed to support the retention of academic women in STEMM

Ref.	Action
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Establish a data-driven process to monitor turnover rates among women in STEMM and analyse reasons for exits to understand turnover.</li> <li>b) Use insights to introduce targeted retention strategies at Faculty level.</li> <li>c) Provide targeted support to women commencing STEMM graduate research degrees.</li> </ul>
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Facilitate regular networking events and peer mentoring circles to provide a safe space for academic women in STEMM to connect and share experiences.</li> <li>b) Actively promote the existing STEMM Women Academic Network through all-staff and graduate research channels to increase membership and raise awareness.</li> <li>c) Co-design a Cultural Inclusion Network with staff who have living and lived experiences.</li> </ul>

#### 1.4 Underlying barriers and contributing factors

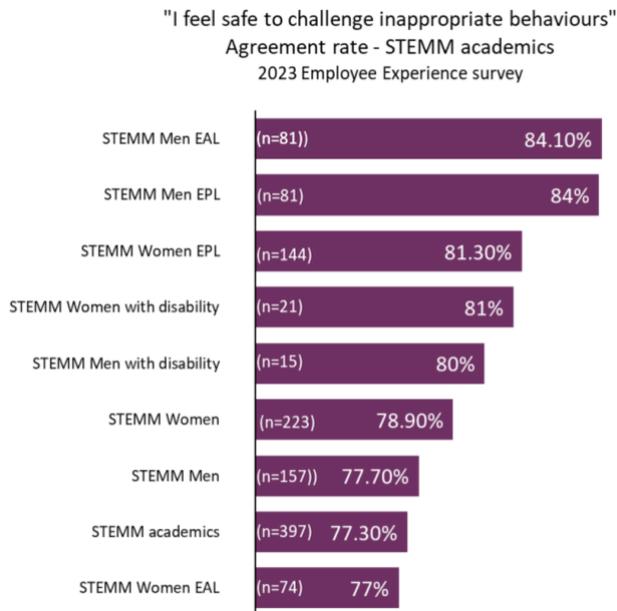
Through our consultations (**Table 1**), several key themes emerged as significant challenges affecting the representation and progression of women in senior roles in STEMM. These barriers are closely interconnected and include the need for a supportive culture, as well as challenges faced by individuals with EAL backgrounds, part-time staff, and those with caregiving responsibilities.

##### Workplace culture within STEMM

Staff Exit Survey data revealed that workplace culture is the primary reason STEMM academic women leave Monash, while men cite job security and career progression. Our intersectional analysis of the 2023 Employee Experience Survey found that STEMM EAL women reported the lowest agreement rate on whether Monash encourages respectful workplace behaviours, contrasting with higher agreement rates among EPL academics (**Figure 1.6**).

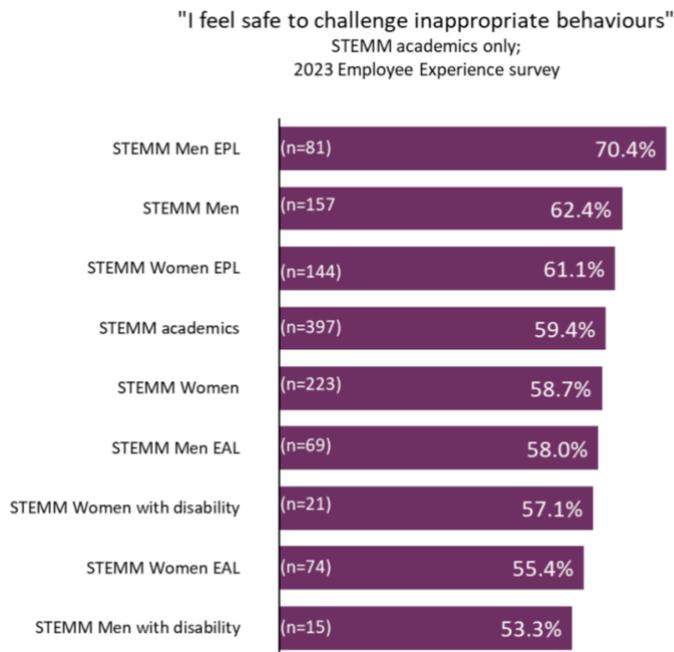
Additionally, only 55.4% EAL women felt safe challenging inappropriate behaviour, compared to 70.4% of EPL men (**Figure 1.7**). Other factors, like disability, further emphasise the compounded layers of intersectionality and the importance of EDI initiatives that go beyond gender.

Figure 1.6 - Agreement rate for the statement “My organisation encourages respectful workplace behaviours” (2023 Employee Experience Survey)\*



\*Fewer than 6 survey responses were received from non-binary/gender-diverse staff.

Figure 1.7 - Agreement rate for the statement “I feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour” (2023 Employee Experience Survey)\*



\*Fewer than 6 survey responses were received from non-binary /gender-diverse staff.

Qualitative feedback acknowledged the University's strong leadership and policies promoting a respectful workplace but highlighted the need for more consistent messaging and actions at all managerial levels to support inclusivity and safety (Table 18).

Table 18 - Examples of feedback on inclusive and respectful workplace culture

Selection of quotes commenting on the need for more consistent messaging and behaviours to support inclusivity.
<i>"The University leadership is strong about establishing an inclusive and respectful workplace, but there are many managerial layers within the University and we need to ensure that messaging and behaviours are enshrined throughout the organisation."</i> EES Respondent28_academic_man_carer
<i>"While my manager is awesome, he is an exception in our department. Many other managers are talking down to women, especially if they are younger."</i> EES Respondent168_academic_woman_carer_STEMM_EAL
<i>"We should just care about people across the board, be intersectional, be kind"</i> FG LGBTIQ+ Respondent9
<i>"We need a culture shift so people feel ok to speak up but I think something like this will take time."</i> GEFG Respondent39_academic_woman_STEMM
<i>"People generally want to do good they lack the knowledge or vocabulary or the basic idea of what sex and gender actually means, and the differences and all the definitions..."</i> FG LGBTIQ+ Respondent8

Our self-assessment revealed disparities in completion rates for the mandatory "Respect at Monash" training, with men, especially in STEMM, having the lowest rates (Table 19). This points to opportunities for improvement and greater accountability (Action 1.3). Additionally, it was found that the completion rates of "Respectful supervision of students" training (which is not mandatory) have declined significantly in recent years, with only 22 completions across Monash in 2024. This highlights the need for a broader promotional campaign (Table 20).

Table 19 - Completion rates of Respect at Monash (January 2025)

Discipline	Academic staff completion rate				Completion headcount			
	W	M	NB/GD	Total	W	M	NB/GD	Total
STEMM	80.1%	78.2%	100.0%	79.1%	955	1074	2	2031
Non-STEMM	89.3%	86.3%	100.0%	88.1%	834	619	7	1460

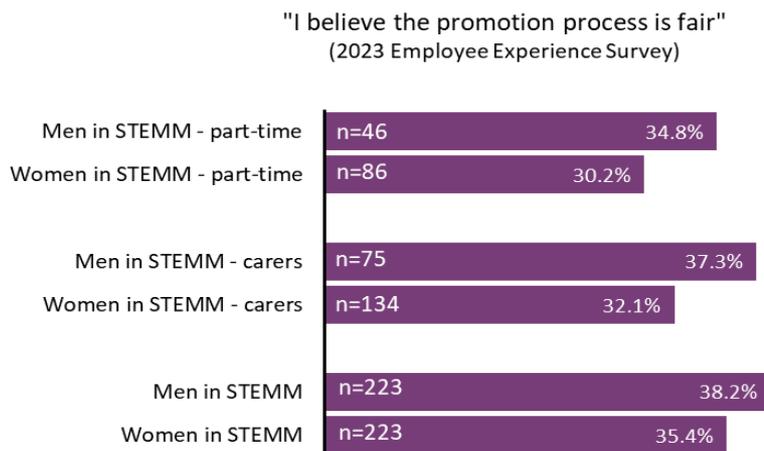
Table 20 - Actions designed to promote respectful workplace culture

Ref.	Action
<b>1.3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Schedule and promote information sessions on Respectful Conduct, delivered by the Respectful and Ethical Conduct team.</li> <li>b) Leverage faculty / portfolio 'town hall' meetings to deliver 'Respectful Conduct' segments in partnership with heads of units.</li> <li>c) Actively promote the uptake of 'Respect at Monash' and 'Respectful Supervision of Students' online training modules.</li> </ul>
<b>1.4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Academic leaders actively promote zero tolerance of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours (town halls, panel discussions).</li> <li>b) Monitor and report completion rates of the 'Respect at Monash' (mandatory training) and completions of 'Respectful Supervision of Students' module.</li> </ul>

## Perception of academic promotion

The University has a robust academic promotion process grounded in principles of equal opportunity and fairness, aimed at fostering excellence, continuous learning, and growth. In **Cygnets 1**, we highlighted efforts to enhance understanding of the 'Achievement Relative to Opportunity' Framework. Despite significant improvements in the academic promotion process, the survey item "I believe the promotion process is fair" had one of the lowest agreement rates. STEMM women, part-time staff and caregivers consistently reported lower perceptions of fairness than men (**Figure 1.8**).

Figure 1.8 - Agreement rate for the statement "I think the promotion process is fair" by STEMM academics (2023 Employee Experience Survey)\*



\*Fewer than 6 survey responses were received from non-binary/gender-diverse staff.

This aligns with focus group findings where staff discussed the impact of caregiving on their career aspirations (**Table 21**) as well as the ongoing Staff Exit Survey, which identified caregiving responsibilities as the second most common reason academic women in STEMM leave Monash, with EAL women citing it as the primary reason.

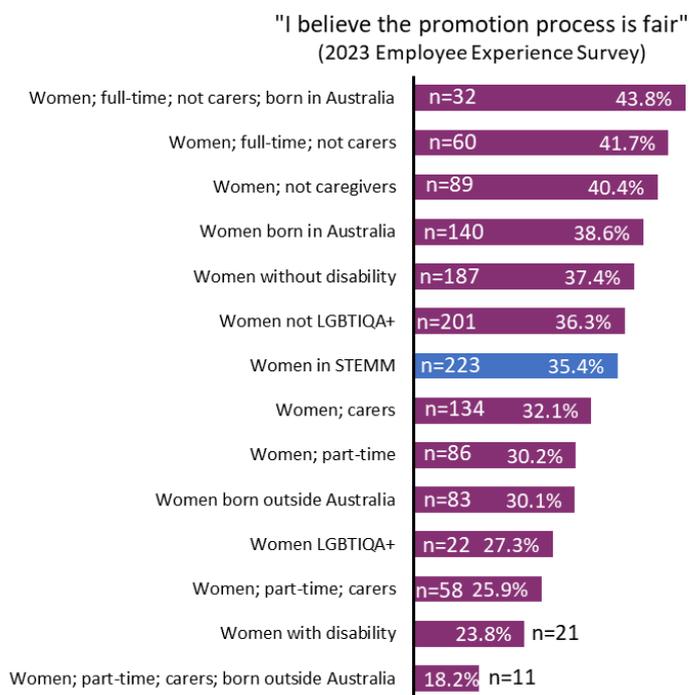
Table 21 - Examples of quotes on the pressure of balancing work in STEMM and care-giving responsibilities

Selection of quotes from staff interviews commenting on the pressure of balancing work in STEMM and caregiving responsibilities
<p><i>“When I think about my future career, it’s really hard to picture becoming a professor and reaching that level because the people that I see at that level in my position, the amount of time that they dedicate to it, I can’t imagine. Like I’m going on maternity leave again in January, I just don’t see...”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent1_academic_woman_STEMM</p>
<p><i>“I’ve definitely seen an increased number of women at all academic levels, I’ve been at Monash since 2007 – in my area I’ve seen a lot more women in the kind of mid-career stages having success, but – there’s always a but – I suppose when I think of who those women are and I think of all of them really openly expressing quite a lot of stress relating to their work/life balance and in particular being able to support their families.”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent19_academic_man_STEMM</p>
<p><i>“It’s difficult to compete against those with no family or caring commitments.”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent16_academic_woman_carer_STEMM</p>
<p><i>“There is a need to rethink promotion applications so that they don't require such an enormous investment of time, it disadvantages those who have caring responsibilities.”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent27_academic_woman_carer_region of birth East Asia</p>
<p><i>“Promotion relative to opportunity needs clarity on how it can be operationalised/applied when seeking promotion or new roles. Caring responsibilities, family death, health challenges have impacted my productivity this year, but it's not explicit as to how this can be accounted for down the track - although my manager has been very supportive with time off etc, work output expectations remain the same.”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent48_academic_woman_carer_STEMM</p>
<p><i>“We need more opportunities for women who may have had significant career disruptions because of family, or other work, for promotions.”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent49_academic_woman_STEMM_region of birth South Asia</p>

Addressing this requires further improving equitable performance assessments and continued efforts aimed at promoting deeper understanding of the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Framework by decision-makers (**Action 1.5**).

As women in STEMM are not a homogenous group, we know that their lived experiences vary greatly. Unfortunately, we cannot analyse promotion or career progression data by caregiving status, as this data is not collected. Instead, we analysed women’s survey responses using intersectional indicators. This revealed previously unseen gaps and highlighted how overlapping identities, particularly caregiving, part-time work and being born outside Australia, contribute to systemic disadvantage (**Figure 1.9**).

Figure 1.9 - Agreement rate for the statement “I think the promotion process is fair” by academic women in STEMM (2023 Employee Experience Survey)

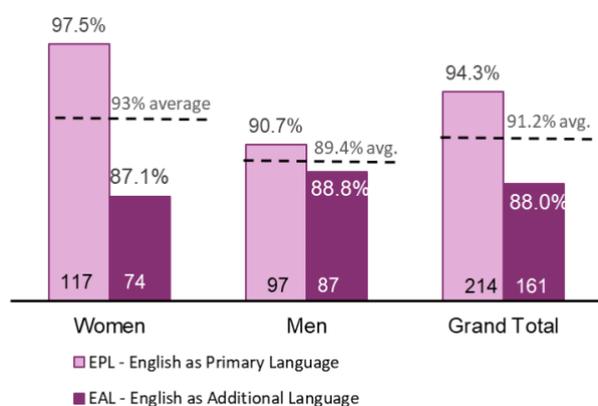


A targeted action to improve equity in academic promotion was the creation of a compulsory training module on assessing ‘Achievement Relative to Opportunity’ for academic leaders in 2023. However, completion rates among STEMM Professors are currently 37.5% (Table 22), highlighting the need for targeted action (Action 1.5).

Table 22 - Completion rates of “Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity” training (January 2025)

Discipline	Professors - completion rates				Professors - headcount			
	W	M	NB/GD	Total	W	M	NB/GD	Total
STEMM	46.8%	33.3%	NA	37.5%	165	99	0	264
Non-STEMM	56.6%	47.3%	NA	50.8%	273	124	0	397
<b>Monash Total</b>	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>38.6%</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>42.8%</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>661</b>

Figure 1.10 - Promotion success rates for academic staff in STEMM; all promotion levels combined (2021-2023)



Considering the intersectionality framework, we analysed academic promotion data<sup>3</sup> and found a success gap between EAL and EPL, especially for women (Figure 1.10).

Disaggregation by promotion level showed that EAL women consistently had lower success rates compared to their EPL counterparts (Table 23).

<sup>3</sup> To ensure a sufficient sample size, data from the past three promotion rounds was combined. Annual data still showed this pattern, but the numbers were too low to draw significant conclusions.

Table 23 - Promotion applications and success rate for EAL and EPL women in STEMM by level sought (2021-23 rounds combined)

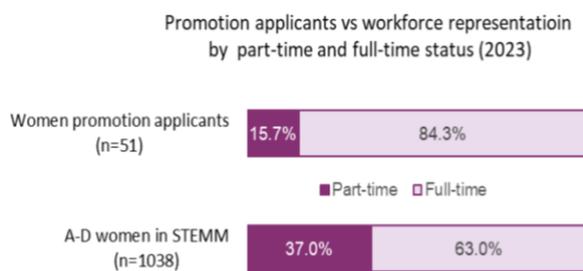
Level Sought	Women applicants		Women's success rate	
	EAL	EPL	EAL	EPL
Level B	23	22	91%	100%
Level C	35	36	91%	97%
Level D	19	39	74%	95%
Level E	8	23	88%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>98%</b>

Note: There were no applications from non-binary staff.

Building on Monash’s women’s information session initiative, additional resources and programs were introduced to support women’s academic advancement. To address the success gap for EAL women, we will provide tailored support in existing programs (**Action 1.3**) and report promotion outcomes by EAL and EPL status (**Action 1.4**). We will also incorporate examples of intersectionality into the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Guidelines (**Action 1.5**).

As discussed in **Cygnets 4**, part-time women remain underrepresented among promotion applicants. In the 2023 promotion round, only 15.7% (8/51) of STEMM women applicants were part-time, despite comprising 37% of the promotion pool (**Figure 1.11**). All 8 part-time women were successfully promoted but supporting part-time staff to apply and ensuring equitable assessments remains a key goal, including raising awareness of how pro-rata output quantification can overlook systemic challenges (**Action 1.5**).

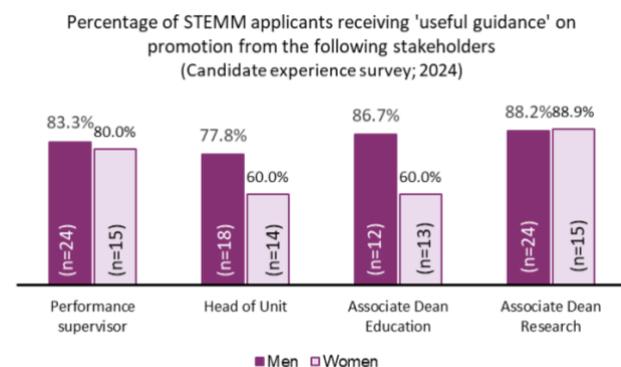
Figure 1.11 - Gender and employment status: Women promotion applicants vs workforce representation



Feedback from 2024 promotion candidates on the usefulness of guidance and support received during the application process showed that while women in STEMM sought guidance from performance supervisors at similar rates to men (80% vs. 83%), a gap emerged in support from Heads of Unit (60% vs. 77.8%) (**Figure 1.12**).

When asked what type of guidance they received from their supervisor or head of unit, men were more likely to receive tactical advice and feedback on their draft than women (**Figures 1.13; 1.14**).

Figure 1.12 - Promotion applicants in STEMM who received useful guidance, by gender (2024 Promotion Applicant feedback)



Due to survey limitations and a small sample size, a more detailed analysis was not possible. However, results will be reported to senior leaders, and the survey will be repeated in 2025 (**Action 1.6**).

Figure 1.13 - Type of support received from the supervisor by promotion applicants in STEMM (2024 Promotion Applicant feedback)

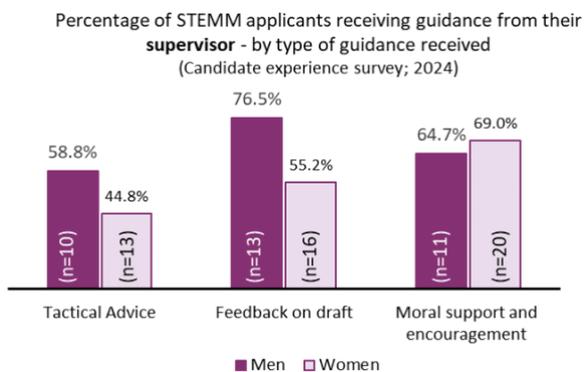


Figure 1.14 - Type of support received from Head of Unit - promotion applicants in STEMM (2024 Promotion Applicant feedback)

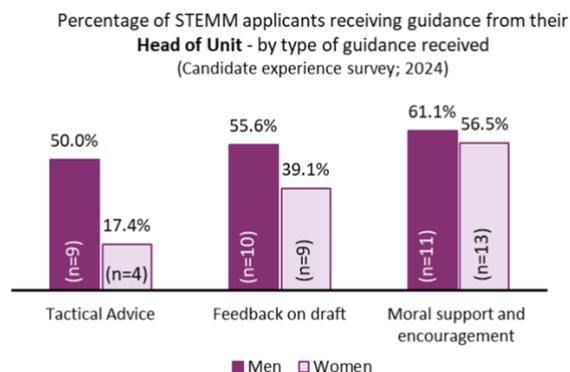


Table 24 - Actions designed to enhance equity in academic promotion

Ref.	Action
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Enhance existing Achievement Relative to Opportunity material to raise awareness of the long-term cumulative impact of caregiving on academic success.</li> <li>b) Monitor and report completion rates of the Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity training module by academic leaders in STEMM.</li> <li>c) Review the recruitment of graduate research students into STEMM fields by gender to ensure support for a pipeline for women in STEMM.</li> </ul>
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Report the results of Academic Support Survey to senior leaders, highlighting gender disparities through an intersectional lens.</li> <li>b) Continue to administer the Academic Support Survey to help identify remaining barriers for promotion candidates.</li> </ul>

### Limited support for (peri)menopause-related symptoms

One-third of women experience menopause symptoms that can affect work performance, leading to absences or women leaving, especially in senior roles. These challenges are often due to a lack of workplace support than from menopause itself.

To address this, we've begun hosting events led by senior leaders and experts to explore better support for women during menopause and raise awareness in the workplace. Feedback on the internal panel event was positive, with participants emphasising the importance of normalising menopausal symptoms' impact on work. (Table 25). Key recommendations included improving workplace flexibility, leave options, and raising awareness to encourage open conversations between staff and supervisors (Table 26).

In 2024, Monash updated its personal leave provisions to recognise menopausal and menstrual symptoms as valid reasons for staff absence. While a positive step, leading practice in Australia is moving toward standalone provisions for menopause and menstrual health (Action 1.7).

Table 25 - Examples of feedback and suggestions by staff on supporting menopause in the workplace

Selection of quotes from Monash staff on menopause in the workplace	
<i>"We experience menopause. This adds additional pressure and makes leadership harder and no one acknowledges this or wants to talk about this."</i>	Interview Respondent68_senior academic_woman_STEMM
<i>"Menopause can really impact a woman being able, or feeling able, to take on a leadership role as there is additional pressure...so this may impact women taking on leadership and senior roles."</i>	Interview Respondent71_senior academic_woman_HASS
<i>"Include women's menstrual and menopausal health issues as suitable reasons for staff to request and be eligible for flexible work arrangements."</i>	Anonymous feedback (Supporting Menopause in the Workplace webinar) Respondent11_professional_woman
<i>"Webinars on menopause so women can recognise symptoms and know where to go for assistance and keep the conversation going - we need to spread awareness and normalise this as every woman goes through it."</i>	Anonymous feedback (Supporting Menopause in the Workplace webinar) Respondent14_professional_woman
<i>"Provide specific training to staff and supervisors to raise awareness of menopause symptoms."</i>	Anonymous feedback (Supporting Menopause in the Workplace webinar) Respondent2_professional_woman
<i>"Advice or tips to aid self-care and support in managing various symptoms (including extreme emotions) during perimenopause and menopause, while attempting to maintain a respectful leadership role. How can we set some boundaries?"</i>	Anonymous feedback (Supporting Menopause in the Workplace webinar) Respondent7_professional_woman

Table 26 - Actions designed to reduce workplace barriers associated with (peri)menopause-related symptoms

Ref.	Action
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop a standalone leave provision specifically for menopause, in collaboration with experts in women's health.</li> <li>b) Promote awareness sessions and events on supporting menopause in the workplace.</li> <li>c) Incorporate (peri)menopause support into HR policies such as Reasonable Adjustments and Flexible Work.</li> </ul>

## Key Barrier 1 : Women’s progression to senior academic roles in STEMM

Ref.	Rationale / Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Person / Group responsible	Senior Leader accountable	Desired Outcome and Impact
1.1	By monitoring retention, turnover rates and analysing reasons for exit among staff and graduate researchers, we can identify factors contributing to the departure of women from STEMM and improve retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Establish a data-driven process to monitor turnover rates among women in STEMM and analyse reasons for exits to understand turnover.</li> <li>b) Use insights to introduce targeted retention strategies at Faculty level.</li> <li>c) Provide targeted support to women commencing STEMM graduate research degrees</li> </ul>	<p>Six-monthly from July 2025</p> <p>Q4 2026-Q4 2027</p>	<p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>HR Business Partnering</p> <p>ODVC (Research and Enterprise)</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p> <p>DVC (Research and Enterprise)</p>	<p>There is no gender gap in retention rates in STEMM. Improved representation of academic women in STEMM across all classifications and in graduate research degrees.</p>
1.2	Foster a supportive and inclusive environment for women in STEMM, promoting networking and enhancing professional connections, improving retention and career progression for women in STEMM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Facilitate regular networking events and peer mentoring circles to provide a safe space for academic women in STEMM to connect and share experiences.</li> <li>b) Actively promote the existing STEMM Women Academic Network through all-staff and graduate research channels to increase membership and raise awareness.</li> <li>c) Co-design a Cultural Inclusion Network with staff who have living and lived experiences.</li> </ul>	<p>Feb 2026, then six-monthly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Feb to July 2026</p>	<p>Chair, STEMM Women Academic Network</p> <p>Athena Swan Steering Group</p> <p>Athena Swan Steering Group</p>	<p>STEMM Faculty Deans</p> <p>Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Improved perception of workplace culture, evidenced by feedback from the 2025, 2027 and 2029 Employee Experience survey and focus groups.</p> <p>Increased number of members in the STEMM Women Academic network.</p> <p>Successful Network launch evidenced by staff membership and feedback.</p>
1.3	Intensify education and awareness raising; improve staff understanding of what qualifies as unacceptable behaviour and the existing reporting options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Schedule and promote information sessions on Respectful Conduct, delivered by the Respectful and Ethical Conduct team.</li> <li>b) Leverage faculty / portfolio ‘town hall’ meetings to deliver ‘Respectful Conduct’ segments in partnership with heads of units.</li> <li>c) Actively promote the uptake of ‘Respect at Monash’ and ‘Respectful Supervision of Students’ online training modules.</li> </ul>	<p>Sept 2025 - ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Respectful and Ethical Conduct Team</p> <p>Chairs, Faculty EDI Committees</p> <p>EDI team (DVCE) Talent, Engagement Development</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Improved perception of respectful workplace culture.</p> <p>Improved confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour.</p> <p>Improved understanding of reporting options.</p> <p>These will be evidenced by the biennial Employee Experience Survey (2025; 2027; 2029).</p>
1.4	Strengthen accountability for creating an inclusive, respectful and safe work environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Academic leaders actively promote zero tolerance of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours (town halls, panel discussions).</li> <li>b) Actively monitor and report completion rates of the ‘Respect at Monash’ and ‘Respectful Supervision at Monash’ modules.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Heads of Units (Head of School, Head of Department)</p> <p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p>	<p>Deans of STEMM Faculties</p> <p>Academic Director - Research Training</p>	<p>Improved staff perception of fairness in academic promotion for those with caregiving commitments, as reflected in the Employee Experience Survey (2025; 2027; 2029).</p>
1.5	Continue improving equity in academic assessments to account for the long-term impact of caregiving, including ongoing responsibilities beyond career breaks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Enhance existing Achievement Relative to Opportunity material to raise awareness of the long-term cumulative impact of caregiving on academic success.</li> <li>b) Monitor and report completion rates of the Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity training module by academic leaders in STEMM.</li> <li>c) Review the recruitment of graduate research students into STEMM fields by gender to ensure support for a pipeline for women in STEMM</li> </ul>	<p>July 2025</p> <p>Six-monthly</p> <p>March 2026 ongoing</p>	<p>Academic Performance, Monash HR</p> <p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>PVC - Research Training</p>	<p>Senior Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)</p> <p>DVC (Research and Enterprise)</p>	<p>Improved staff perception of fairness in academic promotion for those with caregiving commitments, as reflected in the Employee Experience Survey (2025; 2027; 2029).</p> <p>Completion rates improved, with 100% promotion committee members having completed the training. Improved gender composition of graduate research students in STEMM and women’s success.</p>
1.6	Identify and address barriers to staff seeking additional support for academic promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Report the results of Academic Support Survey to senior leaders, highlighting gender disparities through an intersectional lens.</li> <li>b) Continue to administer the Academic Support Survey to help identify remaining barriers for promotion candidates.</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Dec - Jan annually</p>	<p>Academic Performance, Monash HR</p>	<p>Senior Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)</p>	<p>Reduction in gender disparities in academic promotion support, as evidenced by improved Academic Support Survey results over time.</p>
1.7	Foster an inclusive, supportive workplace that addresses (peri)menopause symptoms and their impact on work, promoting well-being, retention and productivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop a standalone leave provision specifically for menopause, in collaboration with experts in women’s health.</li> <li>b) Promote awareness sessions and events on supporting menopause in the workplace.</li> <li>c) Incorporate (peri)menopause support into HR policies such as Reasonable Adjustments and Flexible Work.</li> </ul>	<p>Sept. 2025 to Feb. 2026</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>May 2026</p>	<p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Monash Centre for Health Research &amp; Implementation</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Introduction of a new policy suite that recognises (peri)menopause among valid reasons</p> <p>Staff satisfaction on perceived support for menopause as evidenced in surveys and focus groups.</p>

## KEY BARRIER 2: Addressing gender gaps in recognition of research success

### 2.1 Barrier statement

Gender disparities in research success are well documented across the higher education sector in Australia and globally. A complex interplay of systemic and structural factors significantly hinder women’s ability to showcase their achievements and advance their research careers. This is further exacerbated by caregiving responsibilities, which disproportionately impact women, limiting their time and resources for research. Additionally, biases - both implicit and explicit - often affect career advancement, perpetuating existing inequalities.

**Disclaimer:** Due to the issue's complexity, addressing all contributing factors is beyond the scope of this application, as many are sector-wide or specific to national funding bodies. For this self-assessment, we focus on key factors within our direct influence and exclude assessment and success rates in national research grants.

### 2.2 Monash context

Monash University is dedicated to fostering inclusion in all research careers and seeks to improve gender equity outcomes across research, a commitment articulated in the University’s Research Implementation Plan 2022-2025 and Indigenous Research Plan 2023-2026. We recognise that diversity of thought, expertise and experience are key to research and innovation and that improving equity and inclusion encourages and empowers people to reach their full potential.

For context, Monash employs 4274 academic staff (fixed-term and continuing) with women representing 50.5% of these positions (**Figure 2.2**). Research-only positions account for 42% of all contract types (**Figure 2.1**). These positions are notably more prevalent in STEMM disciplines, comprising 83.3% of the 1801 research-only roles at the University (**Figure 2.3**). Nearly three quarters (72.6%) of these roles are Levels A and B (**Table 27**).

Figure 2.1 - Gender composition of academic staff by contract type (Dec. 2024)

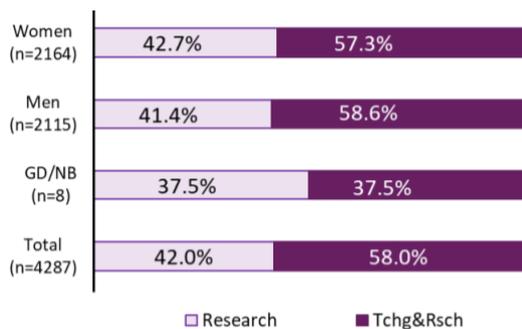


Figure 2.2 - Distribution of academic contract types by gender (Dec. 2024)

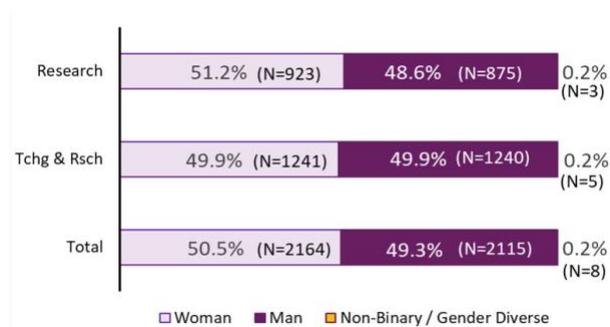
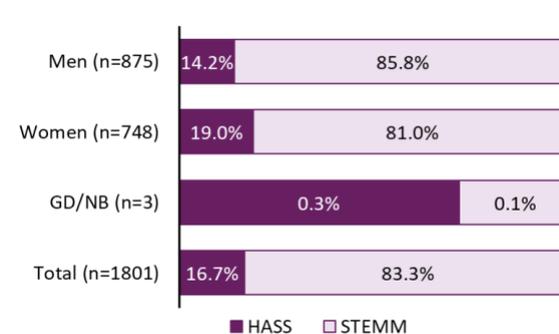


Table 27 - Headcount of Research-only staff by gender and academic Level (Dec 2024)

Academic Level	W	M	NB/GD	Total	% W
LEVEL A	370	389	1	760	49%
LEVEL B	313	234	1	548	57%
LEVEL C	127	112	1	240	53%
LEVEL D	60	52	0	112	54%
LEVEL E	53	88	0	141	38%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1801</b>	<b>51%</b>

Figure 2.3 - Composition of Research Only staff by HASS and STEMM (Dec 2024)



## 2.3 Evidence

### Grant Applications

Women consistently submit significantly fewer Primary/Chief Investigator Category 1 applications across all ARC and NHMRC schemes when compared to men, despite making up 50.9% of our academic workforce (**Figure 2.4**).

When considering ARC Fellowships, women submitted fewer DECRA Fellowships (**Figure 2.5**; **Table 28**), ARC Future Fellowships (**Figure 2.6** ; **Table 29**) and ARC Laureate Fellowships (**Figure 2.7**; **Table 30**) than men.

Table 28 - Number of Monash ARC DECRA applications (2021-2023)

DECRA	Women	Men	Total
2021	29	53	82
2022	38	70	108
2023	32	57	89

Table 29 - Number of Monash ARC Future Fellowship applicants (2021-2023)

Future Fellowship	Women	Men	Total
2021	17	32	49
2022	8	38	46
2023	10	20	30

Table 30 - Headcount of Monash Laureate Fellowship applicants (2021-2023) \*No NB/GD applicants

Laureate Fellowship	Women	Men	Total
2021	4	12	16
2022	2	15	17
2023	3	9	12

Figure 2.4 - Number of Category 1 applications (ARC and NHMRC) by gender of primary lead investigator (CIA) (2021-2023)\*

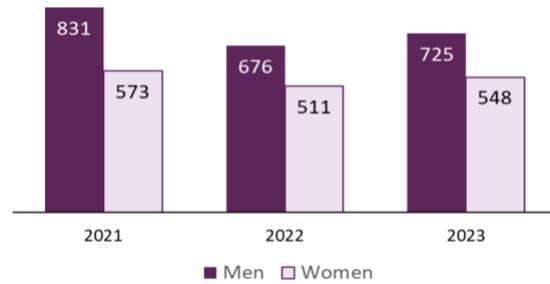


Figure 2.5 - Gender composition of Monash ARC DECRA applicants (2021-2023)

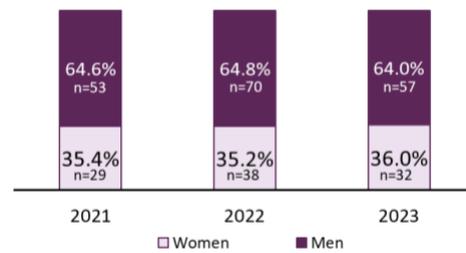


Figure 2.6 - Gender composition of Monash ARC Future Fellowship applicants (2021-2023) Monash ARC Future Fellowship applicants (2021-2023)

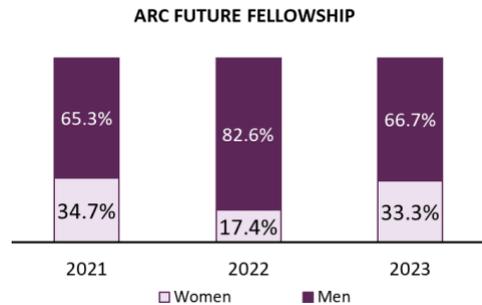
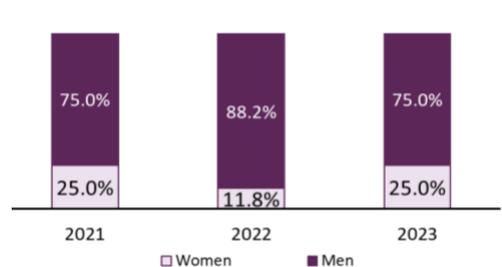


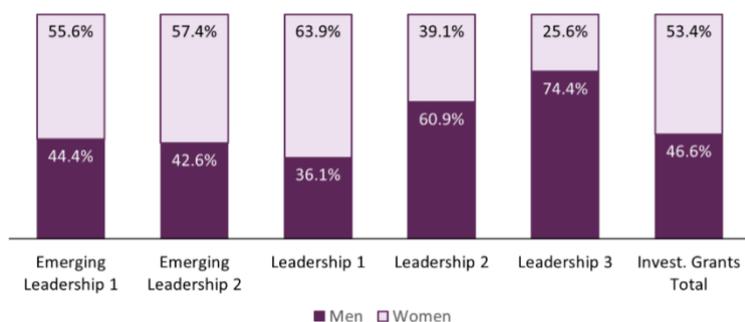
Figure 2.7 - Gender composition of Monash Laureate Fellowship applicants (2021-2023)



Regarding NHMRC Fellowships, although a greater proportion of women submitted applications than men for the NHMRC Emerging Leader 1, Emerging Leader 2, and Leadership 1 Schemes, it was evident they remain underrepresented in the Senior Research Leadership Schemes (NHMRC Leadership 2 and 3) (**Figure 2.8**). This finding is consistent with the national pattern published by NHMRC each year, suggesting this is a sector-wide issue.

\* Each year, 0.1% applicants were staff who identified as non-binary, however, this data is too low to be represented in the figure.

Figure 2.8 - Average gender composition of NHMRC Fellowship Submissions (2021-2023 combined)



The underrepresentation of women in NHRMC Leadership 3 applications (25.6%) as well as ARC Laureate (20.6%) is well below their representation among Professors in STEMM at Monash (30.4%).

## Citations

Gender bias in citations emerged as one of the key themes in our consultation activities with academic staff consistently highlighting ongoing inequities in citation-based metrics. This aligns with our analysis of Monash staff who were included on the Clarivate’s List of Highly Cited Researchers (**Figure 2.9; Table 31**).

Figure 2.9 - Gender composition of Monash staff on Clarivate’s Highly Cited Researchers by gender (2022-2024)

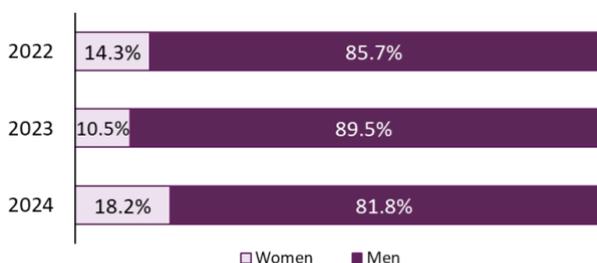


Table 31 - Headcount of Monash staff on Clarivate’s Highly Cited Researchers by gender (2022-2024)

Year	W	M	GD/NB	Total
2024	4	18	0	22
2023	2	17	0	19
2022	3	18	0	21

These disparities stem from historical challenges faced by women, including systemic barriers to publishing, historical under-representation in STEMM fields, bias in peer review, differences in publication patterns, discipline-specific factors, and potential implicit bias within academic networks dominated by men.

While addressing bias in citations falls outside the scope of our university-specific action plan, staff recommended internal measures to mitigate its effects. These include increasing awareness of gender biases in research evaluation and integrating these gender considerations into research performance assessments and decision-making processes (**Action 2.2**).

## 2.4 Underlying barriers and contributing factors

Through our consultation activities, the top themes which repeatedly emerged as disproportionately impacting women’s ability to gain recognition for their contributions were:

- Over reliance on traditional research metrics and quantification of outputs
- Confidence and time to apply for competitive research grants
- Barriers to travel for research associated with caregiving commitments and disability

### Over reliance on traditional research metrics and quantification of outputs

Research grants, awards, research outputs as well as citations have been historically considered the hallmark metrics of academic success. However, focus group feedback revealed that women feel these metrics undervalue collaborative and interdisciplinary work, with many describing them as part of a patriarchal system that favours men.

Participants noted that reliance on metrics, like citation counts, prioritises short-term success over long-term, impactful research, often conducted by women addressing societal and community needs. They also highlighted the cumulative impact of career interruptions, which disproportionately affect women navigating systems "designed with men's experiences and priorities in mind."

Despite the University's focus on quality over quantity in research and the importance of an overall narrative in showcasing achievements, focus group participants expressed concerns about the potential negative effect of a metric-driven culture, exacerbated by limitations in research performance reporting systems (**Action 2.1**).

*"Focus on metrics can drive unhealthy competition and poor behaviours."* GEFG Respondent29\_academic\_woman

*"A focus on metrics can neglect the meaningful and impactful work that aligns with Monash and broader societal values."* GEFG Respondent45\_academic\_woman

*"The way they look at career progression and metrics is also very colonial"* GEFG Respondent14\_academic\_woman\_LGBTIQ+

Table 32 - Actions to enhance reporting of research outputs

Ref.	Action
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Enhance the reporting system to implement a more refined approach for weighting research performance standards, factoring in staff absences by adjusting the staff member's annual cumulative FTE based on cumulative non-annual leave taken.</li> <li>b) Evaluate the effectiveness of system improvements by inviting feedback from researchers.</li> </ul>

While participants spoke positively about the University's efforts to improve equity and inclusion in the research environment, they continued to highlight factors such as career interruptions, part-time work, and gender disparities in citation indices, as barriers that undermine women's competitiveness and success. They acknowledged that Monash has made significant strides in raising awareness around unconscious bias but women felt that gender bias continued to affect evaluations of research and their recognition.

Addressing these challenges will be guided by the Monash University Responsible Research Framework, which recognises the risks of misapplying of narrow research metrics and the importance to gender equity in research (**Action 2.2**)

Table 33 - Actions designed to raise awareness of gender bias

Ref.	Action
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Host safe space panel events with senior stakeholders for members of the research community to raise awareness of gender bias in research evaluations and discuss how to integrate gender considerations into performance assessments.</li> <li>b) Update internal guidelines documents to include examples of gender bias in citations and the importance to proactively consider the gendered impact in performance assessments.</li> </ul>

### Confidence and time to apply for competitive research grants

The underrepresentation of women as Primary/Chief Investigators (CIA) on grant application mirrors national trends. Focus groups and interviews revealed that a lack of confidence and fear of rejection were key barriers for women in applying for grants.

*"...due to the high likelihood of failure, women often lack the confidence to submit funding applications" and "request lower amounts."* Interview Respondent65\_senior academic\_woman\_STEMM

It was also noted that the competitive nature of securing funding not only undermines confidence but also exacerbates the sense that researchers are at a disadvantage, further limiting their ability to thrive in this environment.

Throughout consultations, women often stated a need for a women-only scheme to support grant proposal development that could “*nurture staff through the grant process, including the process of potential grant rejection.*” This was described as essential for overcoming the unique challenges faced in the grant application process (**Action 2.3**).

Time constraints also emerged as a major factor, with women struggling to balance grant writing with teaching service duties and departmental meetings. Women with children reported additional pressures in trying to manage intensive periods of grant writing with caring responsibilities. Other participants described sacrificing time with their families to meet grant deadlines. This aligns with the 2022 report “Gender inclusive practices and work-life balance in Australian Universities”, which identified time as a key barrier to research success for women. During the Covid years, initiatives like ‘Research Catch up Fridays’ or ‘Meeting-free Fridays’ helped protect research time, an inclusive practice also valued by neurodivergent academics for providing time to ‘hyperfocus’ (**Action 2.4**).

Despite the ‘Relative to Opportunity’ framework, Monash women expressed feeling exhausted and sometimes considering “*giving up due to these pressures.*”

*“... getting NHMRC Investigator Grants or even Ideas Grants or any kind of support to go through the system is very, very hard these days, and when you just put on top of that a little bit more stress which might be a 60% versus 40% responsibility at home or whatever it is, I think that’s enough to tip the balance. We’re all sitting on the edge and I just think the margins are too tight and it’s too easy to just feel like you have to give it up because it’s too hard to make it in the system.”*

Interview Respondent55\_academic\_woman\_\_STEMM

*“You know that when people review your grant applications or fellowship applications that although they theoretically should do it relative to opportunity it’s very hard to do it in a balanced way if you get two applicants, one who’s been full-time, one who’s been part-time and the full-time one’s been more productive, it’s very hard to score the part-time one as higher.”*

Interview Respondent62\_senior academic\_man

Table 34 - Actions designed to reduce barriers for women applying for research grants

Ref.	Action
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Co-design an initiative to improve the number and proportion of women applying for NHMRC Leadership Level 3 Fellowships.</li> <li>b) Develop a peer-mentoring, networking scheme for women researchers, in partnership with the STEMM Women Academic Network, to foster a thriving environment that empowers and supports women applying for grants.</li> <li>c) Host a series of grant development sessions where experienced Monash researchers share tips and strategies for success, and help build confidence.</li> </ul>
2.4	Encourage faculties and schools to champion a meeting-free day each week.

### Barriers to travel for research purposes

Across a wide range of consultation activities, spanning multiple years, this topic consistently emerges as a persisting systemic barrier, primarily impacting women due to caregiving commitments. Barriers associated with caregiving responsibilities describe limitations in one's ability to travel away for work, participate in interstate or international conferences, where networking often supports the development of essential partnerships and collaborations that are crucial for leading international research.

*“Conference attendance is very challenging for mothers and there is not much support to bring along babies or young children.”* GEFG Respondent73\_academic\_woman\_carer

To alleviate the effects of caregiving responsibilities on staff travel to conferences, fieldwork, and research, Monash introduced the Advancing Women’s Success Grant 14 years ago. The program supports early to mid-career academic women who have caregiving responsibilities through the provision of funding or academic activities that would otherwise be difficult to pursue due to caregiving responsibilities. The unique component is ‘extraordinary carer’ support, which allows eligible staff to use the awarded funds to cover the cost of travel for a family member to care for dependents at the staff member’s location.

In evaluating the program, we found both evidence of positive feedback on this initiative and opportunity for further refining this program.

*“This is a wonderful grant scheme that greatly supports women returning to their academic careers after periods of disruption...It allowed me to fund my conference travel and re-establish research networks, which has opened up opportunities for further research, engagement and funding.”*

Anonymous feedback (Advancing Women’s Success Grant) Respondent23\_academic\_woman\_HASS\_carer

*“This grant produces a great deal of support for someone like myself who has caring commitments with a dependent child that I single-parent and also elderly parents with cancer.”*

Anonymous feedback (Advancing Women’s Success Grant) Respondent8\_academic\_woman\_STEMM\_carer

On the other hand, applicants highlighted they found the annual application cycle restrictive, as it prevented them from applying when opportunities arose throughout the year. To address this, we will improve flexibility for applicants by offering multiple application rounds each year (**Action 2.5**).

Finally, we found that while caregiving responsibilities continue to disproportionately impact women, men who participated in our 2024 focus groups spoke about the importance of acknowledging co-parenting and that in the volume of women-specific initiatives, men are experiencing a sense of exclusion (**Action 2.6**).

*“A father is no less important in a child’s life. It’s not about reducing the support available to women – it’s about raising everyone’s access to the same level of support services.”*

Interview Respondent33\_academic\_man\_carer\_STEMM

Finally, as part of our consultation activities, we also interviewed two academic women with a disability who emphasised the importance of providing financial support for researchers to help with travel costs associated with their accompanying carers and other accommodations that may incur additional expenses (**Action 2.7**).

Table 35 - Actions designed to reduce barriers to research travel

Ref.	Action
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Revise the administration cycle of the Advancing Women’s Success Grant by piloting two application rounds per year.</li> <li>b) Assess effectiveness by inviting feedback before making further revisions.</li> </ul>
2.6	Undertake the consultation with senior stakeholders to expand the eligibility of the Advancing Women’s Success Grant program to academic caregivers of all genders and rename the program accordingly.
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Consult with senior stakeholders and researchers with living experiences on travel support for academic staff with disability.</li> <li>b) Co-design and launch a new travel support scheme for academics with disability, informed by consultation activities.</li> </ul>

## Key Barrier 2 : Addressing gender gaps in recognition of research success

Ref.	Rationale / Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Person / Group responsible	Senior Leader accountable	Desired Outcome and Impact
2.1	For a more equitable measure of research output, systems must account for not only prolonged periods of leave but also more frequent, shorter absences that cause a cumulative impact.	<p>a) Enhance the reporting system to implement a more refined approach for weighting research performance standards, factoring in staff absences by adjusting the staff member's annual cumulative FTE based on cumulative non-annual leave taken.</p> <p>b) Evaluate the effectiveness of system improvements by inviting feedback from researchers.</p>	<p>March 2025</p> <p>May 2026</p>	eSolutions	Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)	<p>System enhancements are completed.</p> <p>Evidence of positive impact gathered through Employee Experience Survey (2025; 2027;2029) and focus groups.</p>
2.2	Increasing awareness of gender bias in citations and research evaluations to promote equity and encourage fair recognition of contributions.	<p>a) Host safe space panel events with senior stakeholders for members of the research community to raise awareness of gender bias in research evaluations and discuss how to integrate gender considerations into performance assessments.</p> <p>b) Update internal guidelines documents to include examples of gender bias in citations and the importance to proactively consider the gendered impact in performance assessments.</p>	<p>Q2-Q4 2026</p> <p>Q4 2025</p>	<p>Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</p> <p>Athena Swan Steering Group</p> <p>Academic Performance, Monash HR</p>	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</p> <p>Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)</p>	<p>High engagement by staff in panel events evidenced by participation, Q&amp;A engagement and follow-up discussions.</p> <p>Improved confidence in the equity in research evaluations through post-event feedback.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback from the research community on the usefulness of the updated guideline in addressing gender bias in citations.</p>
2.3	Address gender disparities with targeted initiatives to increase women's participation in fellowship and grant opportunities.	<p>a) Co-design an initiative to improve the number and proportion of women applying for NHMRC Leadership Level 3 Fellowships.</p> <p>b) Develop a peer-mentoring, networking scheme for women researchers, in partnership with the STEMM Women Academic Network, to foster a thriving environment that empowers and supports women applying for grants.</p> <p>c) cHost a series of grant development sessions to share tips and strategies for success, and increase confidence.</p>	<p>Jan - Dec 2026</p> <p>Feb - Nov 2026</p> <p>From July 2025; annually</p>	<p>Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</p> <p>Monash Research Committee in partnership with the Athena Swan Steering Group</p>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	<p>Increased number and proportion of women applying for senior/leadership fellowships.</p> <p>Improved gender composition of CIA applicants for Category 1 grants.</p> <p>High attendance and positive feedback from participants of the grant development sessions, demonstrating its effectiveness, as evidenced by staff feedback.</p>
2.4	To protect research time and provide researchers with the time and space to hyperfocus.	Encourage faculties, schools and departments to champion a meeting-free day each week.	Ongoing	<p>Chairs, Faculty EDI Committees</p> <p>Athena Swan Steering Group</p>	Faculty Deans	The increased adoption rate of meeting-free days across faculties, schools and departments; reported by Chairs of Faculty EDI Committees.
2.5	Despite the effectiveness of the Advancing Women's Success Grant, the annual application cycle was restrictive if travel opportunities arose later in the year.	<p>a) Revise the administration cycle of the Advancing Women's Success Grant by piloting two application rounds per year.</p> <p>b) Assess effectiveness by inviting feedback before making further revisions.</p>	<p>March - Dec 2025</p> <p>Feb 2026; Ongoing</p>	Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Senior Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)	<p>Positive impact evidenced by feedback from grant awardees.</p> <p>Increased retention of early to mid-career academic women.</p>
2.6	Women-only schemes designed to remove barriers for researchers with caregiving commitments are not recognising the role of men and non-binary and gender diverse staff in accessing the same level of support.	Undertake consultation with senior stakeholders to expand the eligibility of the Advancing Women's Success Grant program to include academic caregivers of all genders and rename the program accordingly.	Nov 2025 - Feb 2026	<p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Senior Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p> <p>Provost and Senior Vice-President</p>	<p>Uptake of the grant program by staff of all genders.</p> <p>Positive feedback from awardees of all genders, demonstrating effectiveness.</p>
2.7	There is currently no internal travel support scheme for researchers with disability to cover the costs of their disability accommodations.	<p>a) Consult with senior stakeholders and researchers with living experiences on a bespoke travel support scheme for academics with disability.</p> <p>b) Co-design and launch a new travel support scheme for academics with disability, informed by consultation activities.</p>	<p>Nov. 2025 to April 2026</p> <p>July 2026 to January 2027</p>	Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Senior Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)	<p>Development and launch of a bespoke travel support scheme for academics with disability, with allocated funding.</p> <p>Positive feedback from grant recipients regarding improved access to travel accommodations.</p>

## KEY BARRIER 3: Career success of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

### 3.1 Barrier statement

Culturally and linguistically diverse employees in Australia face significant barriers to career progression, despite their strong workforce representation. Systemic challenges, including unconscious bias, discrimination, limited access to culturally diverse networks and few senior leaders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds often impede advancement. These barriers reduce career growth, employee engagement, further exacerbating workplace marginalisation. The underrepresentation of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in senior roles limits access to mentors, influential networks and diverse perspectives in decision-making.

**Disclaimer:** There is currently no method for staff to self-identify their cultural background in HR systems. Recognising that staff may define their identity differently from their country of birth, we have used insights from our Employee Experience survey and qualitative data as alternative data sources, where staff self-identified their background. Cited quotes in this section reflect this self-identified information.

### 3.2 Monash context

Monash takes pride in our diverse workforce and deeply values the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and personal backgrounds that each individual contributes to our community. During our Bronze self-assessment, we encountered challenges analysing employment data by cultural and linguistic diversity due to significant data limitations. However, recent progress driven by Monash HR in collecting country of birth data has provided valuable insights into the representation and outcomes for staff categorised as EAL and EPL.

Including relevant indicators in surveys, interviews, and focus groups has provided deeper insights into the experiences of culturally diverse and EAL staff (**Table 37**). While a positive step, this is just the beginning of our ongoing effort to deepen intersectional understanding in our equity, diversity and inclusion work.

Table 36 - Staff diversity profile based on Country of Birth (HR data)

#### Staff diversity profile based on County of Birth (HR data)

- Monash staff come from 122 different countries
- 44.9% of staff (n=4175) were born outside of Australia, with 35% being born in countries where English is not the primary language (**Table 37**)
- 66% of all EAL staff (n=2143) were born in just ten of the 115 EAL countries (**Figure 3.1**)
- Of staff born outside Australia, 55% (2277/4175) are from Asia (**Table 37**)
- The proportion of staff who speak EAL is slightly higher among academic than professional staff, with both groups showing an increasing trend over the years (**Table 38**)
- EAL men (40.4% of men staff) are more highly represented than EAL women (31.2% of women staff).

Table 37 - Staff Distribution by major geographical region and staff type (2024)

Region	Professional staff		Academic staff		All staff	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Americas	110	2.2%	244	5.7%	354	3.8%
North Africa and the Middle East	85	1.7%	158	3.7%	243	2.6%
North-East Asia	352	7.0%	454	10.6%	806	8.7%
North-West Europe	253	5.0%	431	10.1%	684	7.4%
Oceania and Antarctica	2628	52.4%	1804	42.1%	4432	47.6%
South-East Asia	404	8.1%	269	6.3%	673	7.2%
Southern and Central Asia	472	9.4%	326	7.6%	798	8.6%
Southern and Eastern Europe	101	2.0%	147	3.4%	248	2.7%
Sub-Saharan Africa	82	1.6%	59	1.4%	141	1.5%
Unknown (No data)	529	10.5%	395	9.2%	924	9.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5016</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4287</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9303</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Born outside Australia	1972	39.3%	2203	51.4%	4175	44.9%
English as Additional Language countries	1588	31.7%	1667	38.9%	3255	35.0%

Figure 3.1 - Top ten countries of birth for Monash EAL staff by gender

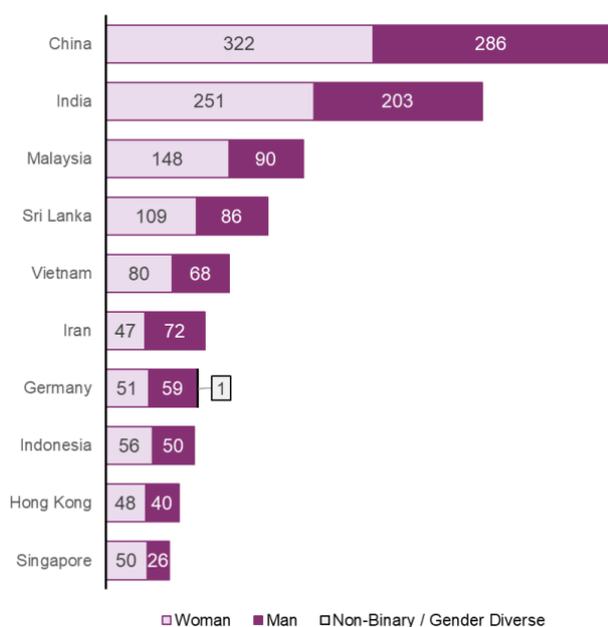


Table 38 - Representation of English as Additional Language (EAL) speakers by staff type and year (2022-2024)

Year	Staff type	Staff HC	EAL HC	EAL %
	2022	Professional staff	4686	1436
Academic staff		3789	1408	37.2%
Grand Total		8475	2844	33.6%
2023	Professional staff	4975	1523	30.6%
	Academic staff	4037	1521	37.7%
	Grand Total	9012	3044	33.8%
2024	Professional staff	5016	1588	31.7%
	Academic staff	4287	1667	38.9%
	Grand Total	9303	3255	35.0%

### 3.3 Evidence

Although EAL staff account for a significant proportion of our workforce (35%), there is an underrepresentation of EAL staff in senior positions highlighting the presence of barriers to career advancement.

Of all EAL professional staff, only 5% hold senior positions (HEW 10 and above), compared to 10% of EPL staff. Of all EAL academic staff, only 11% hold Level E positions, compared to 21% of EPL staff (Figures 3.2, 3.3, Tables 39, 40).

Figure 3.2 - Distribution of professional classification levels by EAL and EPL indicator (2024)

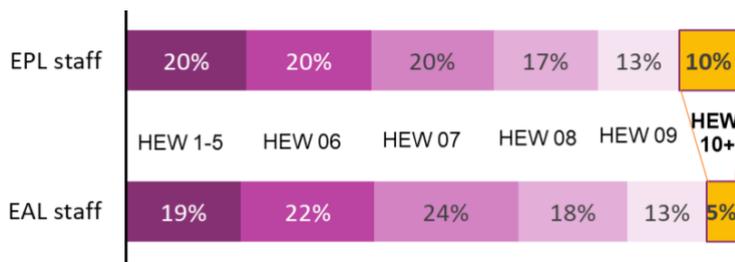


Table 39 - The headcount and distribution of staff across professional classification levels (2024)

Professional levels	Headcount		Distribution	
	EAL staff	EPL staff	EAL staff	EPL staff
HEW 1-5	298	569	19%	20%
HEW 06	346	594	22%	20%
HEW 07	374	580	24%	20%
HEW 08	284	494	18%	17%
HEW 09	206	385	13%	13%
HEW 10 and above	80	277	5%	10%
<b>Professional Total</b>	<b>1588</b>	<b>2899</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 3.3 - Distribution of academic classification levels by EAL and EPL indicator (2024)



Table 40 - The headcount and distribution of staff across academic classification levels (2024)

Academic levels	Headcount		Distribution	
	EAL staff	EPL staff	EAL staff	EPL staff
LEVEL A	600	366	36%	16%
LEVEL B	390	626	23%	28%
LEVEL C	290	454	17%	20%
LEVEL D	194	318	12%	14%
LEVEL E	191	456	11%	21%
<b>Academic Total</b>	<b>1665</b>	<b>2220</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

EAL women’s representation closely mirrors their overall workforce share of 29.5%, except in senior HEW 10+ roles, where it drops to 17.5% (Figure 3.4). A similar pattern was found for EAL men in professional roles (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.4 - Representation of EAL and EPL women across professional employment classifications (2024)

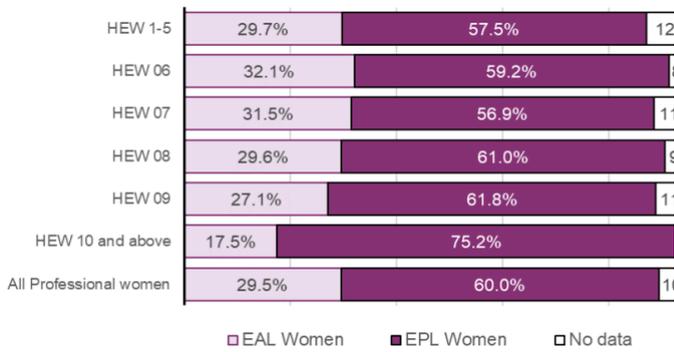


Figure 3.5 – Number of non-binary and gender-diverse staff by EAL and EPL status (2024)

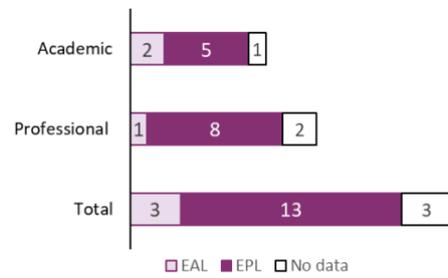
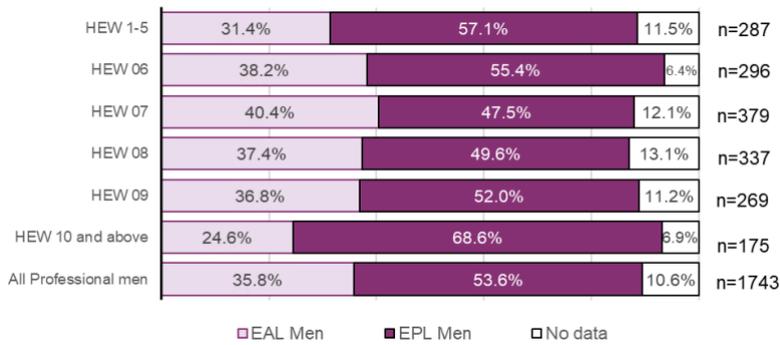


Figure 3.6 - Representation of EAL and EPL men across professional employment classifications (2024)



For academic staff, EAL women and men are well-represented at Level A (77%), which includes PhD Teaching Fellows. However, EAL women's representation at senior levels (D and E) drops significantly, unlike men. EAL men at Level D (43.5%) closely match their overall academic representation, while EAL women's Level E participation drops sharply from 31.2% to 16.5% (Figures 3.7, 3.8).

Figure 3.7 - Representation of EAL and EPL men across academic levels (2024)

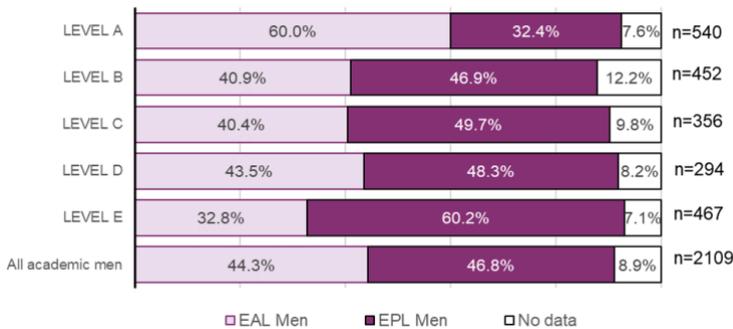
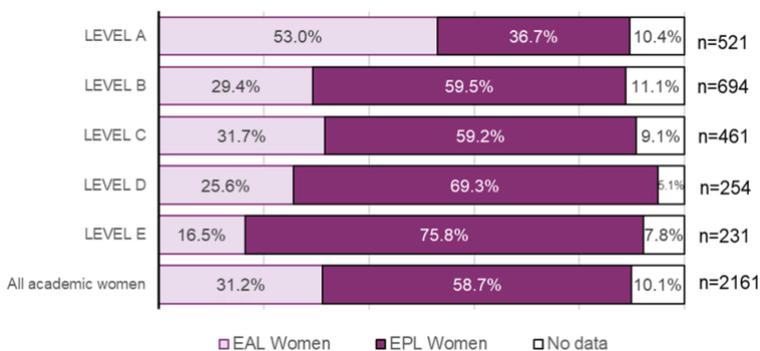


Figure 3.8 - Representation of EAL and EPL women across academic levels (2024)



EAL staff have shorter tenures, suggesting retention barriers (Figures 3.9, 3.10). Among professional staff, EAL men have the shortest careers, while EAL women have the shortest tenures among academic staff.

Figure 3.9 – Average tenure at Monash (Years) of EAL and EPL professional staff (2024)\*

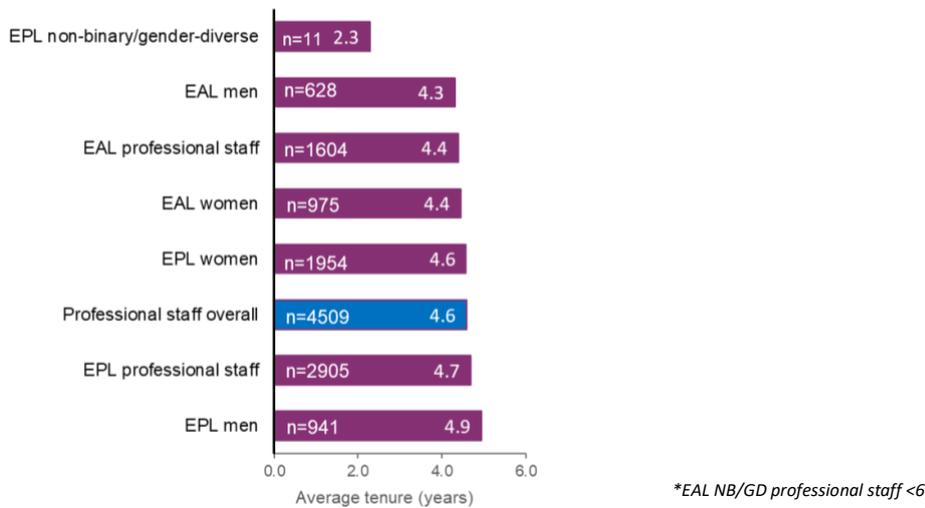
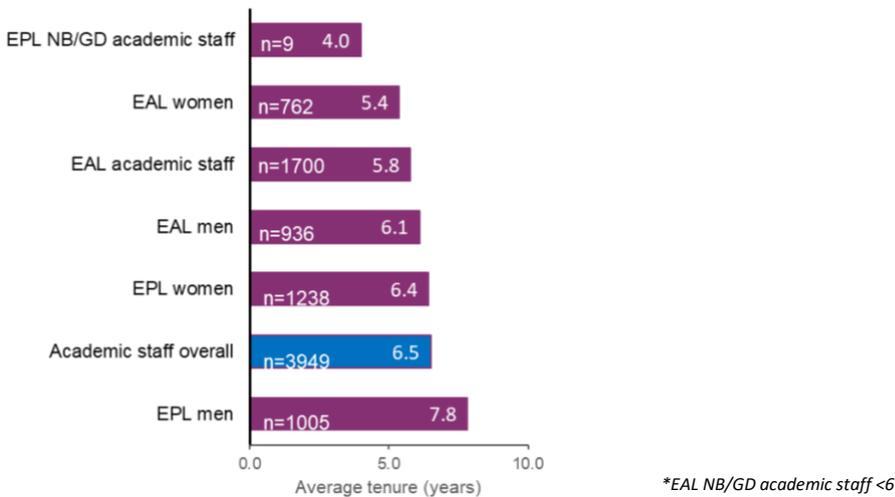


Figure 3.10 – Average tenure at Monash (Years) of EAL and EPL academic staff (2024)



### 3.4 Underlying barriers and contributing factors

The key themes that emerged as significantly impacting career success of culturally diverse staff were limited representation of senior leaders from culturally diverse backgrounds, limited analytical insights to highlight underrepresentation as well as barriers to career advancement and workplace culture.

#### Limited representation of senior leaders from culturally diverse backgrounds

Staff across several forums highlighted the importance of ‘visible role models’ who can inspire others and champion pathways to career advancement (Table 41). When asked about possible solutions, focus group participants spoke about pivoting existing initiatives to achieve “*more cultural diversity in senior leadership roles at Monash*” (Action 3.1) and intentionally featuring more speakers from diverse backgrounds (Action 3.2).

Table 41 - Examples of quotes on the representation of senior leaders from culturally diverse backgrounds

Selection of quotes from focus group participants and staff interviews commenting on the limited representation of culturally diverse staff in leadership positions
<p><i>“To me, the lack of cultural diversity among staff in senior roles means fewer opportunities for networking, mentorship and professional connections.”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent 23_academic_woman_region of birth Asia</p>
<p><i>“You can’t be what you can’t see... we don’t have senior role models who represent us.”</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent20_professional_woman_region of birth Asia</p>
<p><i>“What is needed? More cultural diversity in leadership, both faculty and university level.”</i></p> <p>EES Respondent 1325_academic_woman_carer_region of birth Middle East</p>
<p><i>“Showcase more examples of cultural diversity in the workplace. Invite people from diverse backgrounds to speak in leadership and professional development sessions.”</i></p> <p>EES Respondent39_academic_woman_carer_region of birth South America</p>
<p><i>“Needing a big culture shift in some departments with very low diversity. Because also if the representation isn't there already, why would a woman or minority group member want to join.”</i></p> <p>GEFG Respondent38_academic_non-binary/gender diverse_STEMM</p>
<p><i>“I think the question about whether this [my workplace] is safe pops up when I 'm speaking up to power. So when I 'm thinking about what is my trajectory going to look like here? Am I going to face barriers progressing a career ? That's the question for me ? And that goes back to the point about senior leadership. Can I see someone in that place where I want to be ?”</i></p> <p>FG LGBTIQ+Respondent14</p>
<p><i>“my perception of senior leadership is very heteronormative, white males and power.”</i></p> <p>FG LGBTIQ+Respondent10</p>

Staff from culturally diverse backgrounds collectively expressed that while Monash had delivered ‘incredible initiatives’ aimed at improving gender equity in senior roles, there are now opportunities to centre Monash’s efforts on the inclusion of culturally diverse staff (Table 42).

*“While Monash’s initiatives have helped women in amazing ways, they haven’t helped all women. Women of colour have been left behind.”* Interview Respondent5\_academic\_woman\_STEMM\_region of birth Middle East

*“It feels like some women have made it but not all...it feels like the door was opened briefly to let some people in and it has now closed on us.”* Interview Respondent9\_academic\_woman\_region of birth South East Asia

Table 42 - Actions to improve the representation and visibility of culturally diverse staff in leadership

Ref.	Action
3.1	Revise and expand the Senior Women’s Shadowing Scheme to prioritise participation of culturally diverse staff (all genders). Introduce and promote a new training on Intersectionality and encourage participation from senior staff.
3.2	Proactively feature senior staff and guest speakers in Monash University from diverse cultural backgrounds, highlighting their experiences and achievements at events and all-staff communication.

### Limited analytical insights on cultural diversity of Monash staff

At Monash, our analytical insights into the cultural diversity of staff are currently limited. This is the first time we have aligned progression data with employees’ country of birth, a process that has revealed opportunities to enhance data analytics for future reporting (**Action 3.3**).

While we collect the country of birth as an optional field, staff do not have the option to record information about their cultural background. As outlined in the Context section, understanding cultural diversity and lived experience requires a more nuanced approach (**Action 3.4**). Although we were able to obtain alternative data through gender equity focus groups and surveys where staff could self-identify, enhancing our data analytics is crucial for better analysis of employment data from new hires to retention and advancement (**Table 43**).

Table 43 - Actions to improve analytical insights

Ref.	Action
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop a self-identification process within the employee system that enables staff to provide additional demographic information, such as living with disability or having a diverse cultural background - informed by leading practice and codesigned with staff.</li> <li>b) Enhance data analytics capabilities to incorporate EAL in institutional reporting by gender and employment details.</li> <li>c) Enhance data analytics capabilities to enable reporting employment outcomes by geographical regions of birth.</li> </ul>
3.4	Conduct a series of focus groups for staff who self-identify as culturally diverse and/or culturally and racially marginalised, to better understand their experiences and ensure their perspectives are effectively represented and addressed.

### Barriers to career advancement

Analysis of the 2023 Employee Experience Survey revealed that EAL respondents (n=652) identified cultural background as a primary barrier to career success (**Figure 3.11**).

Figure 3.11 - Top five barriers to success identified by EAL and EPL survey respondents (2023)

English as Additional Language EAL	English as Primary Language EPL
1. Cultural background	1. Age
2. Caring responsibilities	2. Caring responsibilities
3. Flexible working	3. Flexible working
4. Mental health	4. Mental health
5. Sex*	5. Sex*

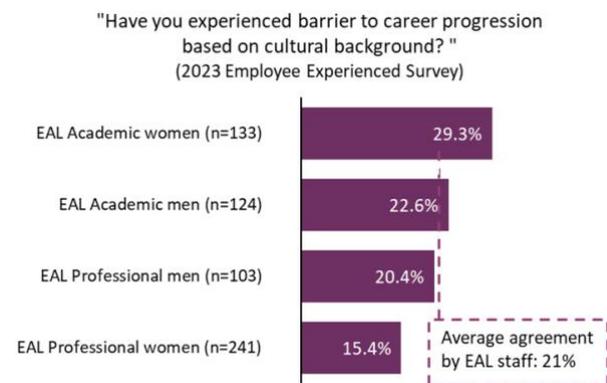
Note: In the Employee Experience Survey, sex was listed as a potential barrier separately from gender identity.

In addition to the survey, we used staff data to analyse career progression using intersectional indicators where possible, and turned to focus groups for richer insights.

A higher proportion of EAL academic women (29.3%) experienced barriers due to cultural background compared to EAL academic men (22.6%) and professional staff (Figure 3.12).

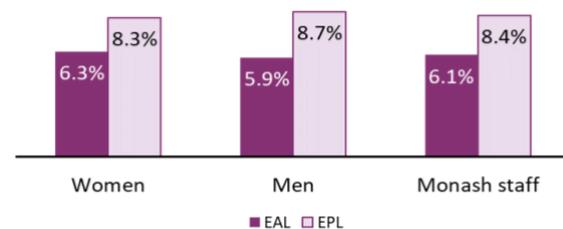
*Academic staff:* Monash data on career progression<sup>4</sup> showed that EAL academics experience slower progression than EPL staff with 6.1% EAL academics progressing to a higher employment level in 2024 compared to 8.4% EPL staff. The gap is slightly wider between EAL and EPL men (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.12 - Proportion of EAL respondents who experienced barrier to success due to cultural background \*



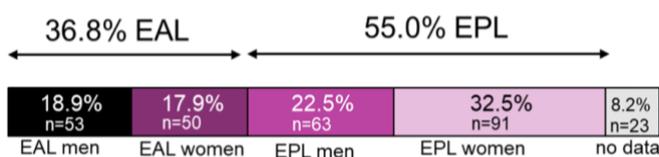
\*EAL NB/GD survey respondents <6

Figure 3.13 - Progression rate of academic staff by gender (2024)



Similarly, analysis of annual academic promotions shows underrepresentation of EAL staff, with only 36.8% of promotions involving EAL staff, compared to their 43% share of the workforce (Figures 3.14, 3.15).

Figure 3.14 - Composition of academic promotions (2024)



<sup>4</sup> Career progression is measured as an upward movement in employment classification that is permanent.

Figure 3.15 - Composition of academic promotions compared to staff composition (2024)

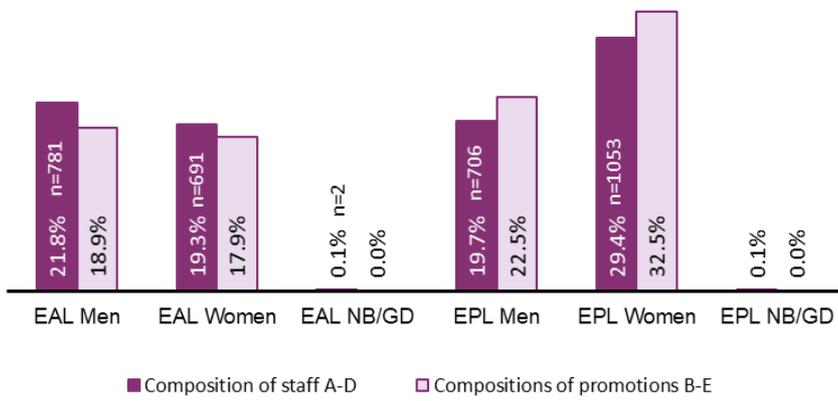
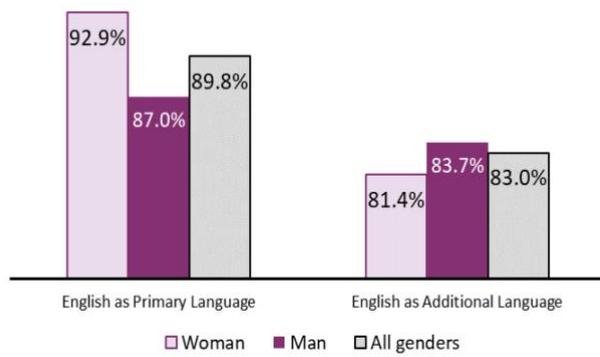


Figure 3.16 - Academic promotion success rate to senior levels D and E (2021-2023 combined)



Analysis of the past three promotion rounds (combined due to small sample size) revealed a success gap for academic promotions to senior Levels D and E. The average promotion rate at Monash over three years was 86.4%, but EAL staff had a 6.8% lower success rate than EPL staff (83% vs 89.8%) (Figure 3.16). Gender and country of birth analysis showed an 11.5% success gap for women and 3.3% for men, in favour of EPL staff.

While Monash has taken steps to enhance gender equity in career advancement, focus group participants emphasised the need to also consider cultural factors and the intersectionality between gender and culture in career advancement.

*“Improve promotion of culturally diverse individuals.”* EES Respondent979\_academic\_region of birth South East Asia

*“We need to have equity in career progression success and promotion for staff of colour.”*

GEFG Respondent67\_academic\_woman\_region of birth Asia

Expanding on our targeted efforts to support women’s academic career advancement, we will co-design initiatives to improve the success rate and career advancement of culturally and linguistically diverse / EAL academic staff and report on outcomes (Action 3.5), including enhancements to Achievement Relative to Opportunity material to ensure the impacts of intersectionality on career outcomes is understood (Action 3.6).

For professional staff, 32.2% of upward career moves between 2022-2024 were made by EAL staff (below their 37.2% representation), with a larger gap in senior positions (Figure 3.17). Of 169 upward moves to senior positions, only 24.3% were filled by EAL staff, below their 37% representation in HEW 9 roles (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.17 - Distribution of upward career moves in professional roles up to HEW 9 (2022-2024 combined)

Note: Data includes 3 non-binary EPL staff members (0.15%)

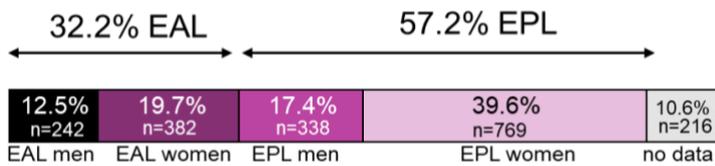
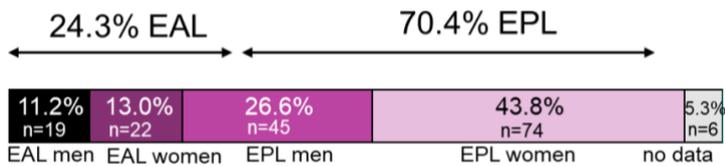


Figure 3.18 - Distribution of upward career moves to HEW 10 and above (2022-2024 combined)

Note: Data includes 1 non-binary EAL staff member (0.59%)



### Perception of equal opportunity to progress and bias

A common theme among participants from culturally diverse backgrounds was the need to adjust their communication style to be more aligned with the dominant culture norms in order to progress in their careers despite feeling that this takes a toll.

*“Emotionally it is harder for women of colour and culturally can be harder to present yourself in certain ways. Culturally it may not sit right to present yourself in a certain way and it can be a struggle with the tone of presentation.”* Interview Respondent53\_academic\_woman\_region of birth East Asia

*“In some cultures we feel uncomfortable or even ashamed of promoting our own achievements.”* Anonymous feedback (Advancing Women’s Success in Promotion workshop) Respondent42\_academic\_woman\_carer\_region of birth East Asia

‘Code-switching’ was mentioned in the context of having to adopt self-promotion tactics that may not come naturally to staff from certain cultural backgrounds. Participants discussed the differences in language and cultural interpretations of leadership, feeling pressured to ‘code-switch’ in order to advance their careers, often suppressing their authentic selves to succeed.

Supervisor training and resources focused on cultural differences in communication and leadership styles, along with strategies for mitigating bias, were suggested as ways to reduce barriers (**Table 44**).

Table 44 - Selection of quotes regarding actions to overcome bias

Selection of quotes regarding bias a barrier to career progression by staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
<p><i>“Middle managers need training on how to mitigate biases that can affect decision-making and interactions.”</i> EES Respondent511_professional_man_region of birth Middle East</p>
<p><i>“Training managers to understand their unconscious biases.”</i> EES Respondent1484_professional_woman_region of birth Pacific Islands</p>
<p><i>“The single most crucial thing for our organisation is recognising each individual's contributions with unbiased hiring and promotion processes.”</i> EES Respondent2317_professional_woman_region of birth East Asia</p>
<p><i>“We need strategies to overcome unconscious bias in terms of roles, promotion ...ensuring that equity is not just lip services but a deeper understanding of bias.”</i> GEFG Respondent2_professional_woman_carer</p>
<p><i>“We do have career progression or career development initiatives for women, but I don't see that for other groups such the queer community and those from culturally diverse communities.”</i> FG LGBTQIA+ Respondent14</p>

### Caregiving

Focus group participants shared that career advancement of culturally diverse staff was affected by challenges in balancing additional caregiving responsibilities.

Staff who relocated to Australia with young families said they lacked extended family support, while others had to also shoulder added responsibilities for family members overseas.

This aligns with the 2023 Employee Experience Survey, where caregiving was identified as the second most significant barrier for EAL staff (**Figure 3.11**).

Analysis of the Employee Experience Survey showed that academic women with caregiving responsibilities, born outside Australia, had the lowest perception of equal promotion chances (**Figure 3.19**).

We will implement training on intersectionality for decision-makers to better understand how overlapping identities affect career outcomes (**Action 3.8**).

*“Being a woman with children and working part-time, this means it is difficult to be promoted.”*

Interview Respondent61\_academic\_woman\_carer

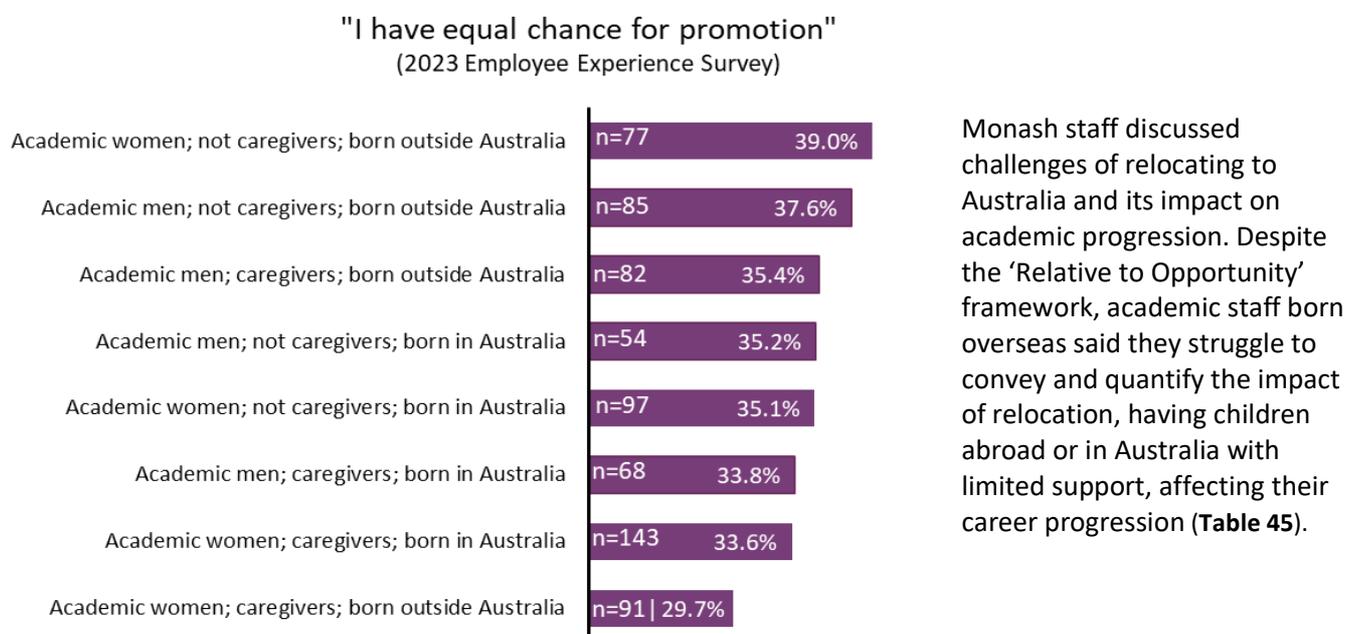
*“We then carry the responsibilities for family overseas and our aging parents, which adds additional burdens.”*

Interview Respondent20  
\_academic\_woman\_carer\_region of birth South Asia

*“In supporting caregiving, my organisation needs to walk its talk on a daily basis across the whole institution, not just some areas or for particular weeks of the year.”*

EES Respondent1034\_professional\_woman\_carer\_  
region of birth Africa

Figure 3.19 - Agreement rate with "I have equal chance for promotion"  
(2023 Employee Experience Survey)\*



\*Academic NB/GD survey respondents <6

Table 45 - Selection of quotes regarding barriers to career progression

Selection of quotes regarding barriers to career progression by staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
<p><i>"Moving countries can impact relative to opportunity, which can be confusing in performance assessments. If you have had your children in another country with minimal parental leave it impacts on career but can't be easily described in relative to opportunity."</i> Interview Respondent44_academic_woman, carer_region of birth East Asia</p>
<p><i>"It's hard to know the Australian system if you have moved from overseas."</i> Interview Respondent47_academic_man_carer_region of birth North America</p>
<p><i>"Particularly hard if you are from another culture and someone who's not been through the Australian education system."</i> Interview Respondent51_academic_woman_region of birth Eastern Europe</p>
<p><i>"It is essential our workplace prioritises and champions diversity in all its forms. The workplace needs to actively promote and create avenues for minority groups in the workplace, supporting their career progression."</i> Interview Respondent63_professional_woman</p>
<p><i>"It is hard for those from other cultures as it is often behind closed doors, meetings, and advice on your promotion narrative, and it's really hard to figure out what that means."</i> Interview Respondent24_academic_woman_region of birth East Asia</p>
<p><i>"Leaders at Monash are not diverse, largely homogeneous and often lack lived experience of inequity, even though they are technically capable leaders."</i> GEFG Respondent6_professional_woman_carer_EAL</p>

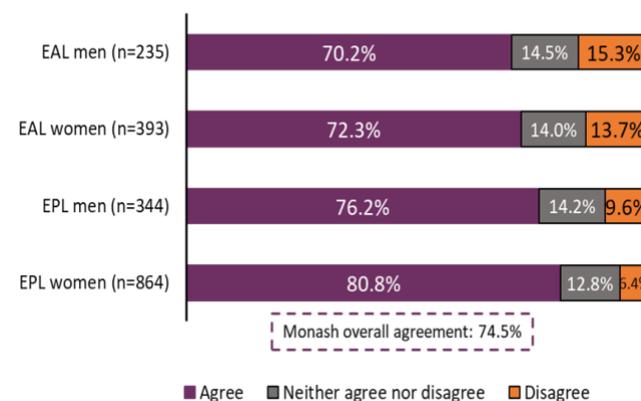
Table 46 - Actions designed to improve career progression of culturally diverse staff

Ref.	Action
3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Measure and report academic promotion outcomes by cultural diversity / EAL indicators based on staff members' country of birth.</li> <li>b) Measure and report promotion outcomes based on additional demographic data such as disability and cultural background (<i>interdependence on item 3.3</i>).</li> </ul>
3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Enhance existing Achievement Relative to Opportunity material for decision-makers to raise awareness of the impact of intersectionality on career outcomes, with a particular focus on the intersection of gender and culture.</li> <li>b) Enhance existing resources for members of academic promotion panels to raise awareness of cultural differences in communication and self-promotion styles.</li> </ul>
3.7	Provide unconscious bias training for decision-makers to raise awareness of biases in decision-making processes and improve leadership practices around cultural diversity and inclusion.
3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Introduce and promote a new training on Intersectionality.</li> <li>b) Encourage participation in the Intersectionality training by senior staff and report on uptake to Athena Swan Steering Group.</li> </ul>

### Workplace culture

A workplace culture prioritising cultural safety and inclusivity is crucial for culturally diverse staff, helping to combat marginalisation. Cultural safety is an important measure of how we are supporting staff, reflecting how respected, valued and safe they feel. The Employee Experience Survey revealed lower agreement with “I feel culturally safe” among EAL staff, particularly among those with disabilities and in the LGBTIQ+ community (**Figures 3.20, 3.21**). This highlights the importance of considering an intersectionality framework in shaping cultural safety experiences.

Figure 3.20 - Agreement rate for the statement “I feel culturally safe” by gender and linguistic diversity (2023 Employee Experience Survey)\*



\*EAL NB/GD survey respondents <6

\*EPL NB/GD survey respondents <6

*“Women of colour, or people who are across intersections, that actually makes things worse...It's all those extra impostor syndromes it raises, you know. It's hard. You feel, oh, you don't belong, or it was a fluke, or why are you here? Or all of those issues that you know messes with your brain on top of the gender issue being from another culture that makes it even more complex. So, just like I wanted to kind of say that out, not just for myself, but for any other women of colour and across culturally diverse minorities more broadly.”* Interview Respondent10\_academic\_woman\_region of birth South East Asia

Qualitative feedback revealed challenges, such as microaggressions and feeling undervalued, with many calling for more intentional inclusion and the creation of a dedicated Cultural Inclusion Network (**Table 47**) (**Action 3.9**).

Table 47 - Selection of quotes regarding workplace culture

Selection of quotes regarding workplace culture, experienced by staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and People of Colour, and their suggestions
<p><i>"I feel like the workplace could take some interest in understanding other cultures and their significances. For example, some employees might need leave during Diwali and might want to dress in traditional cultural attire. However, these conversations don't happen proactively and it feels awkward to bring it up, especially when you are a minority."</i></p> <p>EES Respondent2214_professional_woman_carer_region of birth South Asia</p>
<p><i>"Highlight the importance of being respectful to all religions in the workplace. Consider integrating awareness into mandatory compliance modules that blaspheming in the workplace is considered rude, inappropriate and disrespectful."</i> EES Respondent1638_professional_woman_part-time_Catholic</p>
<p><i>"Promote equal opportunities for growth and development regardless of gender or ethnicity."</i></p> <p>GEFG Respondent15_professional_woman_carer</p>
<p><i>"The inclusion of People of Colour, particularly Women of Colour, is very poor."</i></p> <p>Interview Respondent41_academic_woman_region of birth Middle East</p>
<p><i>"I've encountered microaggressions and felt it was overlooked, coming from a country that perhaps Australians find weak, poor, or insignificant..."</i></p> <p>EES Respondent1401_academic_man_sessional_carer_region of birth South East Asia</p>
<p><i>"Be more intentionally and explicitly inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse people and seek to understand their experiences."</i></p> <p>EES Respondent2036_academic_woman_carer_region of birth South East Asia</p>
<p><i>"...maybe have some more culturally diverse celebrations and educate the staff about the different cultures."</i> EES Respondent1424_professional_woman_carer_region of birth South East Asia</p>
<p><i>"We used to have multicultural celebrations such as Lunar New Year and Eid/Ramadan, where staff bring a plate of food associated with the event to share and staff really enjoyed being a part of, but that has stopped since Covid. It would be great to bring these events back as part of cultural inclusion and respect."</i> EES Respondent2066_professional_woman_region of birth South East Asia</p>
<p><i>"Continue to promote and listen to differing cultural perspectives."</i></p> <p>EES Respondent1618_professional_man_carer</p>
<p><i>"Monash should be saying, Hey, people who are unable to access the services for all sorts of cultural reasons, please be aware of the fact that these are the provisions that we have for this and for that. We're very, very aware of the fact that you're out there as a cohort and existing. I think that that's critical."</i></p>
<p><i>"I'd like to see senior managers in departments and faculties taking on a leading role recognising the importance of creating a safe and inclusive place for people marginalised due to their culture, race, disability, gender and sexual orientation."</i> Interview Respondent30_academic_woman_region of birth Central Asia</p>
<p><i>"Creating a culturally safe workplace. More than just the 'food, flags and festivals.'"</i></p> <p>EES Respondent2167_professional_woman_part-time</p>
<p><i>"Don't mix our names up with other staff from the same cultural background."</i></p> <p>EES Respondent1893_professional_man_region of birth South Asia</p>
<p><i>"I would say that flexible work - both hours and location - make the single biggest difference to...cultural &amp; religious inclusion (i.e. working different hours during Ramadan, or part-time workers being able to swap their workday on cultural celebration days rather than having to take leave)".</i></p> <p>ESS Respondent111_academic_woman_part-time</p>

Figure 3.21 - Agreement rate for the statement "I feel culturally safe" - intersectional analysis (2023 Employee Experience Survey)

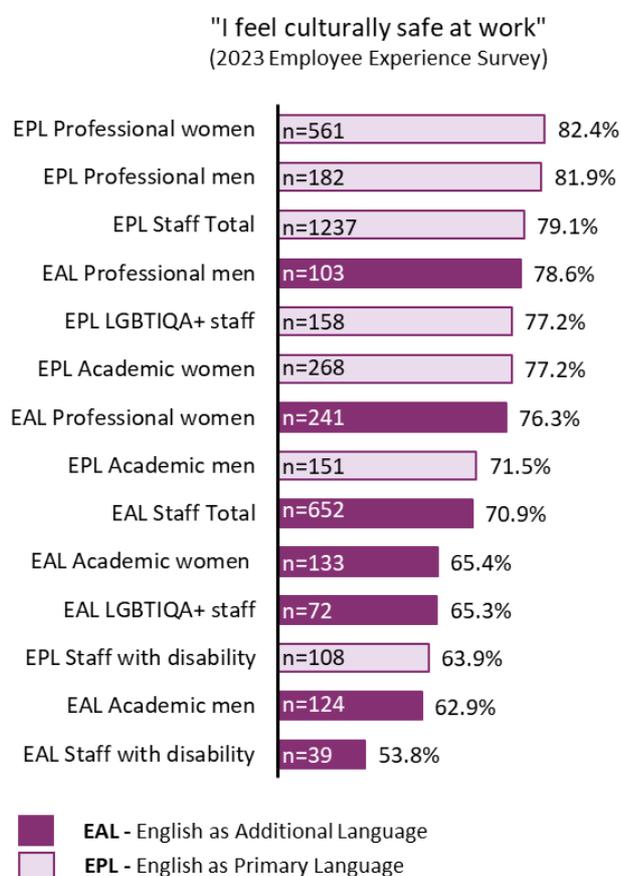


Table 48 - Actions designed to improve workplace culture for staff from culturally and linguistically diverse staff

Ref.	Action
<b>3.8</b>	a) Introduce and promote a new training on Intersectionality. b) Encourage participation in the Intersectionality training by senior staff and report on uptake to Athena Swan Steering Group.
<b>3.9</b>	a) Co-design a Culturally Inclusive staff network with staff who have living and lived experiences. b) Promote cultural awareness and anti-racism training and report uptake. c) Encourage and support faculties and portfolios to host multicultural celebrations.

### Key Barrier 3 : Career success of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Ref.	Rationale / Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Person / Group responsible	Senior Leader accountable	Desired Outcome and Impact
3.1	Enhance the representation of culturally diverse staff in leadership through targeted initiatives, with senior leaders acting as sponsors to provide mentorship and career development opportunities.	<p>a) Revise and expand the Senior Women's Shadowing Scheme to prioritise participation of culturally diverse staff (all genders).</p> <p>b) Introduce and promote a new training on Intersectionality and encourage participation from senior staff.</p>	<p>Oct 2025- Feb 2026</p> <p>Feb 2026</p>	<p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Talent, Engagement, Development</p>	Chief People Officer	<p>The launch of the revised program with increased participation of staff from culturally diverse staff.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback from participants on the program's impact and value. Improved representation of culturally diverse staff in senior leadership positions.</p>
3.2	Showcasing achievements and contributions of senior staff and individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds contributes to dismantling systemic barriers and demonstrating commitment to diverse leadership.	Proactively feature senior Monash staff and guest speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds, highlighting their experiences and achievements at events and all-staff communication.	Ongoing	<p>Chairs of Faculty EDI Committees</p> <p>External Engagement and Events</p> <p>UMAC</p> <p>EDI (DVCE)</p> <p>Staff EDI</p>	Director Marketing and Comms	<p>Positive cultural shifts observed by staff and reported through feedback forms and focus groups.</p> <p>Evidence of examples of showcasing leaders from culturally diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Positive interaction with showcased content through internal channels.</p>
3.3	Address limitations in HR systems to enable more informed decision-making and inclusion through collecting and analysing cultural identity, EAL, and geographical data to address disparities and enhance equity.	<p>a) Develop a self-identification process within the employee system that enables staff to provide additional demographic information, such as living with disability or having a diverse ethnic background - informed by leading practice and codesigned with staff.</p> <p>b) Enhance data analytics capabilities to incorporate EAL in institutional reporting by gender and employment details.</p> <p>c) Enhance data analytics capabilities to enable reporting employment outcomes by geographical regions of birth.</p>	<p>April 2026 to Nov. 2026</p> <p>Nov. 2025 - January 2026</p> <p>Nov. 2026 to April 2027</p>	Workforce Analytics and Business Improvement, Monash HR	Chief People Officer	<p>Self-identification system is launched and communicated.</p> <p>20% of staff opt-in to provide the additional demographic data in the first year post-implementation. 50% of new starters opt-in to self-identify on commencement.</p> <p>EAL data are incorporated into HR dashboards and used in reporting.</p>
3.4	In response to identified limitations, gather insights into systemic barriers by consulting with staff with lived and living experience.	Conduct a series of focus groups for staff who self-identify as culturally diverse and/or culturally and racially marginalised, to better understand their experiences and ensure their perspectives are effectively represented and addressed.	July - Oct 2025	<p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Athena Swan Steering Group</p>	Chief People Officer	<p>4 staff focus groups are filled to capacity.</p> <p>Participants report high levels of psychological safety, in sharing their experiences during the focus groups.</p> <p>The focus group report provides clear actionable steps based on staff feedback.</p>
3.5	Measuring and reporting promotion outcomes by cultural diversity helps identify disparities and drive equitable and inclusive practices.	<p>a) Measure and report academic promotion outcomes by cultural diversity / EAL indicators based on staff members' country of birth</p> <p>b) Measure and report promotion outcomes based on additional demographic data such as disability and cultural background (<i>interdependence on item 3.3</i>).</p>	Sept. 2025; Annually 2027-2030	Academic Performance, Monash HR	Senior Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)	<p>Promotion outcomes are published, increasing visibility and transparency; A report on promotion outcomes by CALD/EAL indicators is provided to senior leaders.</p>
3.6	Promote more equitable career outcomes and academic advancement by equipping decision-makers with tools to recognise and understand intersectionality and cultural differences in communication.	<p>a) Enhance existing Achievement Relative to Opportunity material for decision-makers to raise awareness of the impact of intersectionality on career outcomes, with a particular focus on the intersection of gender and culture.</p> <p>b) Enhance existing resources for members of promotion panels to raise awareness of cultural differences in communication and self-promotion styles.</p>	Sept. 2025; Annually	Academic Performance, Monash HR	Senior Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)	<p>Elimination of a success gap in academic promotion between EAL and EPL staff. Perception of equality in career progression improves for staff from culturally diverse backgrounds, evidenced by the Employee Experience Survey.</p>
3.7	Promote a more inclusive, bias-free decision-making.	Provide unconscious bias training for decision-makers to raise awareness of biases in decision-making processes and improve leadership practices around cultural diversity and inclusion.	Sept 2025 Ongoing	Staff EDI Talent Engagement Development	Chief People Officer	<p>Perception of equality in career progression improves, evidenced by Employee Experience Survey (2025; 2027; 2029) and focus groups.</p>
3.8	Promote equitable career outcomes by training decision-makers to recognise and understand intersectionality and cultural differences in communication.	<p>a) Introduce and promote a new training on Intersectionality.</p> <p>b) Encourage participation in the Intersectionality training by senior staff and report on uptake to Athena Swan Steering Group.</p>	Sept. 2025; Annually	<p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Talent, Eng. Development</p>	Chief People Officer	<p>Equal progression rates by EAL and EPL staff.</p> <p>Intersectionality training sessions are at capacity with positive feedback on increased awareness of intersectional factors.</p>
3.9	To foster greater cultural awareness, incorporating educational opportunities that promote understanding.	<p>a) Co-design a Culturally Inclusive staff network, with staff who have living and lived experiences.</p> <p>b) Promote cultural awareness and anti-racism training, report uptake.</p> <p>c) Encourage and support faculties and portfolios to host multicultural celebrations.</p>	Feb to July 2026	Athena Swan Steering Group Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion EDI (DVCE)	Chief People Officer	<p>Successful Network launch evidenced by staff membership and feedback.</p> <p>Anti-racism training sessions are at capacity with positive feedback from attendees.</p> <p>Evidence of local events and multicultural celebrations.</p>

## KEY BARRIER 4: Parents and Carers

### 4.1 Barrier statement

Caregiving responsibilities remain a barrier to career success at Monash, despite supportive policies and resources in place. Challenges stem from gendered caregiving expectations affecting leave uptake, inconsistent flexible work policy implementation and limited support for staff returning from extended leave.

**Disclaimer:** The section addresses key barriers affecting professional and academic staff of all genders. As caregiving status is not captured in HR records, data analysis relies on surveys and focus groups where staff self-identify anonymously.

### 4.2 Monash context

Monash is dedicated to supporting staff with caregiving responsibilities and offering workplace flexibility, as outlined in the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025. Over the past decade, we've expanded parenting facilities across our campuses, and since 2021, have widely rolled out hybrid working options and a Working from Home procedure.

Approximately 55% of Monash staff identify as carers, which represents a significant proportion of our workforce (**Table 49**).

Table 49 - Composition of staff with care-giving responsibilities at Monash University (2024)\*

Demographic group	Number of respondents	Percentage of each demographic group
Carers - all	1080	55.0%
Carers - women	741	58.1%
Carers - men	314	52.2%
Carers - GD/NB	3	20.0%
Carers - disability	77	51.0%
Carers - LGBTIQA+	95	41.3%
Carers - born outside Australia	441	52.3%
Carers - born in Australia	639	57.0%
Carers - work part-time	285	63.3%
Carers - work full-time	795	53.0%
Carers - academic staff	397	53.9%
Carers - academic women	234	57.4%
Carers - academic men	150	51.9%
Carers - professional staff	640	55.9%
Carers - professional women	477	58.7%
Carers - professional men	151	52.1%

\*Carer - NB/GD survey respondents <6

Since receiving our Athena Swan Bronze award, we have progressed actions designed to support parents and carers at Monash, including:

- Developing a new website "Supporting Parents" to aid clarity of support available to Monash staff
- Promoting on-campus childcare centres and parenting facilities
- Introducing the Mobile Breastfeeding Support Kit
- Hosting sessions for parents returning from parental leave
- Establishing "Parents of Monash" network on Workplace
- Administering the Advancing Women's Success Grant for women with caregiving responsibilities
- Developing a "Flex at Monash" website as a hub for staff on flexible work options
- Creating a Working from Home Procedure and Working Safely from Home training module.

### 4.3 Evidence

The 2023 Employee Experience Survey revealed that caring responsibilities ranked as the number one barrier to success at work, closely followed by flexible work (Table 50).

Table 50 - Caring responsibilities and flexible work ranking as key barriers to success (2023 Employee Experience Survey)

Barriers to success	Caring responsibilities	Flexible work	Number of responses
All staff	1st	3rd	1965
Women	1st	2nd	1276
Men	5th	4th	601
Non-binary or gender diverse	5th	6th	12
Carers - all genders	1st	2nd	1080
Carers - women	1st	2nd	741
Carers - men	1st	5th	314
Carers - academic staff	1st	3rd	397
Carers - professional staff	1st	2nd	640
Carers - academic women	1st	3rd	234
Carers - academic men	1st	6th	150
Carers - professional women	1st	2nd	477
Carers - professional men	2nd	1st	151

### Carer's leave

Monash staff can use accrued sick leave to provide care to a family member<sup>5</sup>. Approximately one-third of Monash staff access paid carer's leave annually, with professional staff using it 2.7 times more often than academic staff (47% vs 16.9%). Women are more likely to take carer's leave than men across both groups (Figures 4.1, 4.2).

Analysis shows lower uptake among men: 28.8% men in professional roles and 12.3% of men academics used carer's leave in 2024, despite 52.5% and 51.9% identifying as parents and carers, respectively (Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2). This underrepresentation suggests that cultural or societal norms may discourage men from taking caregiving leave.

Figure 4.1 - Proportion of professional staff accessing carer's leave by gender (2022-2024)

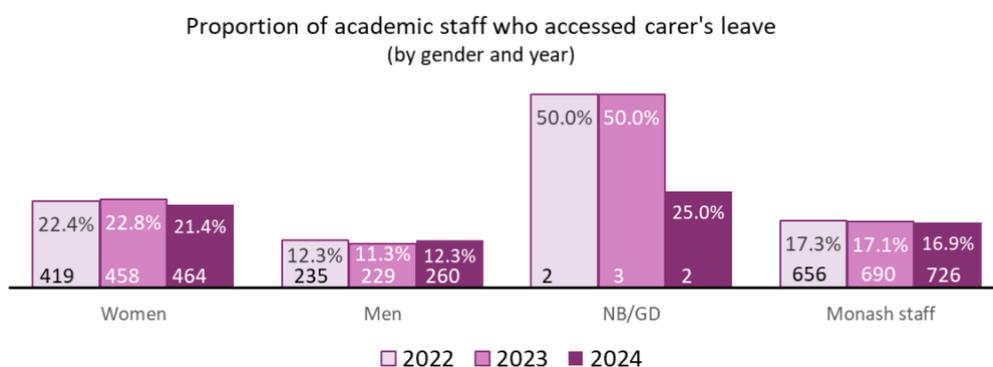


A Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) report highlights that men's participation in caregiving can reduce the stigma women face for taking time off for caregiving, improving their career opportunities and advancing gender equality.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For continuing appointments, staff receive 30 days of sick leave on commencement and an additional 15 days per year after 24 months of service. Fixed-term appointments of 24 months or more have the same sick leave entitlements. Unused sick leave accumulates each year and can be used as carer's leave.

<sup>6</sup> WGEA - 2024 Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard

Figure 4.2 - Proportion of academic staff accessing carer's leave by gender (2022-2024)



The 2023/2024 WGEA Industry Benchmark Report revealed that the uptake of paid parental leave by men at Monash is lower than the 14% industry average, comprising just 9% of all parental leave takers (Table 51). Encouraging all staff to utilise paid parental leave is essential for challenging traditional gender norms and promoting a more equitable leave distribution (Action 4.1).

Table 51 - Uptake of parental leave by gender compared to the average of HE institutions with 5000+ staff

1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024	Monash University			Comparison Group (HE sector; 5000+ employees)		
	Women	Men	NB/GD	Women	Men	NB/GD
Paid parental leave	91%	9%	0%	86%	14%	No data

Table 52 - Actions designed to improve the uptake of parental leave and carer leave by staff of all genders

Ref.	Action
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop a communication plan designed to encourage uptake of paid parental leave by staff of all genders, including all-staff articles and targeted channels.</li> <li>b) Set targets to improve men's uptake of carer's leave.</li> </ul>

### Uptake of part-time work

At Monash, 23.2% of fixed-term and continuing staff work part-time. While 28% of women work part-time, the number and proportion of men accessing part-time work is increasing, which is encouraging (Table 53). Part-time employment is more common among academic staff (27.9%) than professional staff (19.2%) (Figure 4.3), a trend led by STEMM disciplines where 70% of part-time staff are in medicine, nursing and health sciences. This is consistent with the prevalence of split appointments, where academic staff commonly also hold clinical or research roles at other institutions. Therefore, these figures may not fully reflect staff who work part-time hours during the week as we do not collect data on the specific reasons for part-time employment.

The gender distribution of part-time staff at Monash differs slightly from the higher education sector and the Australian average, suggesting that men are somewhat more likely to pursue part-time work (Table 54). Nevertheless, women still comprise the vast majority (71%) of Monash's part-time staff.

Table 53 - Proportion of Monash staff working part-time (2022-2024)

Year	Proportion working part-time				Part-time staff headcount			
	Women	Men	NB/GD	Total	Women	Men	NB/GD	Total
2022	28.8%	13.7%	16.7%	22.5%	1423	484	2	1909
2023	27.4%	14.2%	7.1%	21.9%	1439	531	1	1971
2024	28.1%	16.3%	21.1%	23.2%	1527	627	4	2158

Figure 4.3 - Proportion of Monash staff working part-time by gender and staff type (2024)

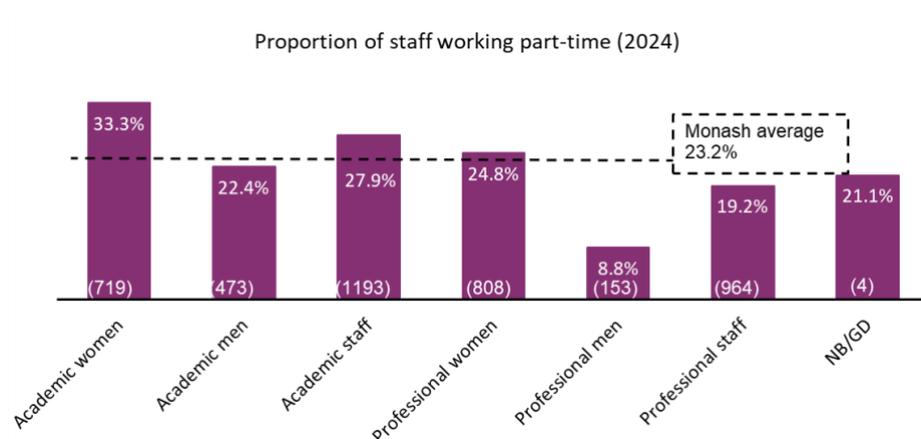


Table 54 - Gender distribution of part-time staff (2023/2024)

WGEA Explorer: 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024			
Employer	Women	Men	NB/GD
Monash University	70.8%	29.0%	0.20%
HE sector	73%	27%	no sector data
All industries	73%	27%	

### Age and part-time work

A gender by age analysis revealed part-time work is most prevalent among staff aged over 64, aligning with the pre-retirement career stage (Table 55; Table 56). However, this cohort accounts for only 4% of Monash staff (n=362) and is not significantly contributing to overall uptake of part-time work at Monash.

The average parental age for women has increased in recent years (Mean = 31.2 years in 2022), with 37% of birthing parents aged 30-34 and 22% aged 35-39, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. These age groups show strong representation of women working part-time at Monash (Tables 55; Table 56), but not men, suggesting potential gender stereotypes, as part-time work is often linked to caregiving. Instead of targeting part-time work, we aim to support flexible work arrangements that meet staff needs without reducing work hours (Actions 4.3, 4.4).

Table 55 - Proportion of professional staff working part-time by age group and gender (2024\*)

Professional staff Age Group	Proportion working part-time			Part-time staff headcount		
	Women	Men	Grand Total	Women	Men	Grand Total
Under 35	20.7%	12.4%	17.6%	166	61	228
35 - 44	29.0%	6.5%	21.0%	288	36	326
45 - 54	21.4%	5.3%	16.3%	191	22	213
55 - 64	26.6%	9.3%	21.1%	128	21	149
Over 64	37.2%	22.4%	31.6%	35	13	48
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>964</b>

\* NB/GD professional staff < 6

Table 56 - Proportion of academic staff working part-time by age group and gender (2024)\*

Academic staff Age Group	Proportion working part-time			Part-time staff headcount		
	Women	Men	Grand Total	Women	Men	Grand Total
Under 35	34.8%	25.9%	30.5%	164	116	280
35 - 44	34.3%	20.2%	27.7%	264	134	398
45 - 54	30.6%	20.1%	25.2%	152	108	261
55 - 64	28.8%	18.3%	23.2%	94	65	159
Over 64	44.1%	47.2%	45.7%	45	51	96
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>33.2%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>1194</b>

\* NB/GD academic staff < 6

### Employment classification and part-time work

Part-time work appears less common with increasing seniority, with only 4.4% of senior professional staff (HEW 10+) working part-time (Table 57). A similar trend is observed among academic staff, though more men Professors work part-time than women (Table 58). Factors like pre-retirement contracts and split appointments in medicine and health sciences may contribute. The underrepresentation of women Professors working part-time (29.1%) despite making up 33.1% of Level E staff is unclear but can encompass a wide range of factors such as gender expectations in senior roles, lack of support for part-time work or impact on superannuation contributions.

Table 57 - Proportion of professional staff working part-time by classification and gender (2024)

Professional staff Classification	Proportion working part-time				Part-time staff headcount			
	Women	Men	NB/GD	Grand Total	Women	Men	NB/GD	Grand Total
HEW 1-5	35.9%	20.6%	50.0%	31.5%	252	59	1	312
HEW 06	25.3%	12.5%	no data	21.6%	184	37	0	221
HEW 07	26.7%	4.5%	50.0%	18.9%	187	17	1	205
HEW 08	21.8%	6.2%	50.0%	15.8%	116	21	1	138
HEW 09	13.7%	6.3%	0.0%	10.7%	54	17	0	71
HEW 10 and above	7.3%	1.1%	0.0%	4.4%	15	2	0	17
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>964</b>

Table 58 - Proportion of academic staff working part-time by employment classification and gender (2024)

Academic staff Classification	Proportion working part-time				Part-time staff headcount			
	Women	Men	NB/GD	Grand Total	Women	Men	NB/GD	Grand Total
Level A	39.2%	30.2%	0.0%	34.6%	204	163	0	367
Level B	39.6%	21.7%	0.0%	32.5%	275	98	0	373
Level C	30.2%	21.6%	25.0%	26.4%	139	77	1	217
Level D	25.2%	15.3%	0.0%	19.9%	64	45	0	109
Level E	16.0%	19.3%	0.0%	18.2%	37	90	0	127
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1193</b>

## 4.4 Underlying barriers and contributing factors

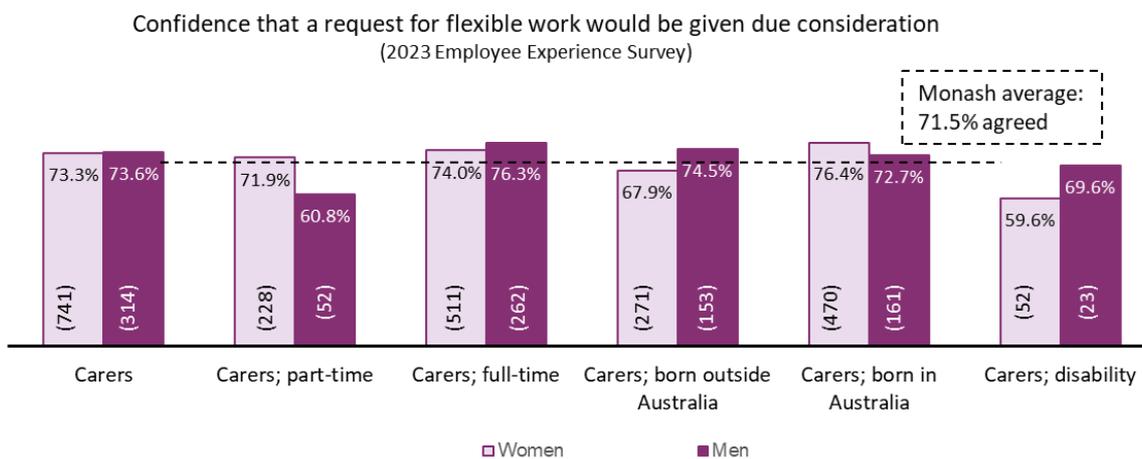
### Accessing workplace flexibility

To better understand how effectively our workplace flexibility initiatives are meeting the needs of Monash staff, we analysed the experiences of staff who self-identified as carers, using 2023 Employee Experience Survey data.

As shown in **Figure 4.4**, 71.5% survey respondents expressed confidence that a request for flexible work would be given due consideration, with carers reporting slightly higher confidence (73.3% of women; 73.6% of men). However, this still suggests that approximately one quarter of staff lack confidence and intersectional factors, such as part-time work, disability or being born outside Australia, influence this confidence.

Women’s higher utilisation of flexible work (**Figure 4.5**) reflects societal trends, where women often bear a greater proportion of caregiving responsibilities. To help normalise caregiving as a shared responsibility and challenge traditional gender roles, our goal is to encourage staff of all genders to access flexible work options (**Actions 4.2, 4.3**).

Figure 4.4 - Proportion of staff with care-giving responsibilities self-reported confidence that a request for flexible work would be given due consideration\*



\*Carer - NB/GD survey respondents <6

Additionally, professional men with caregiving responsibilities reported a higher uptake of flexible work compared to academic men, despite academic staff having the inherent flexibility to work from home, as outlined in the Working from Home Procedure, which states that 'academic staff have the flexibility to work on- and off-site.' Since the procedure only outlines the process for requesting and accessing remote work options for professional staff, it is therefore reasonable to assume that working from home has become so standardised for academic staff that it was not viewed as a 'flexible work option' by academic survey respondents.

Figure 4.5 - Proportion of survey respondents who utilise flexible working, by staff type and gender (2023 Employee Experience Survey)

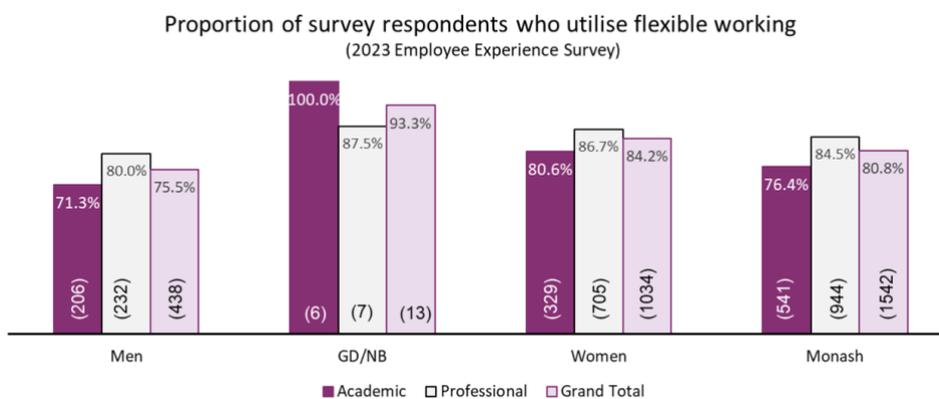


Figure 4.6 - Proportion of academic staff who said they utilise flexible working, by carer status and gender (2023 Employee Experience Survey)

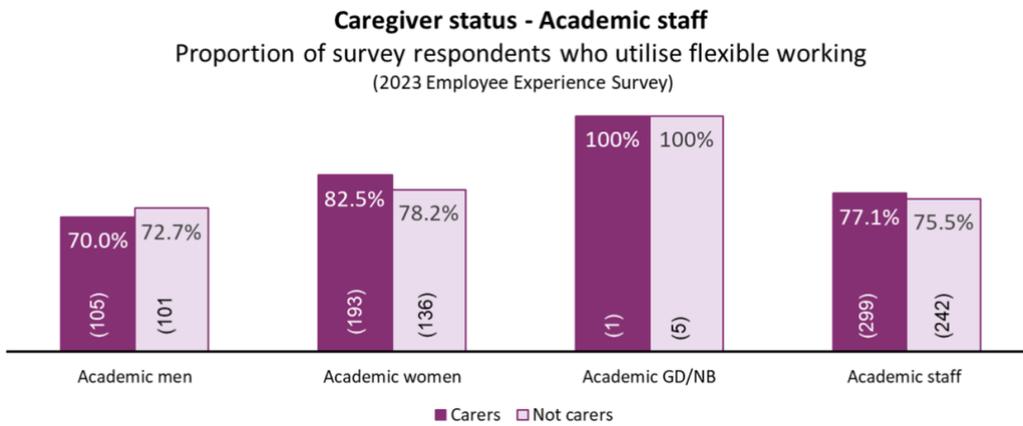
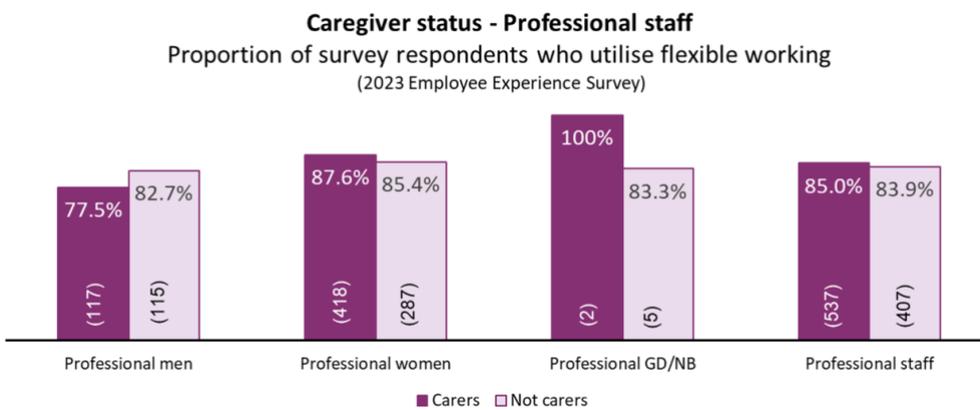


Figure 4.7 - Proportion of professional staff who said they utilise flexible working, by carer status and gender (2023 Employee Experience Survey)



### Inconsistent implementation of flexible work at a local level

Despite evidence that staff acknowledge and value considerable progress in workplace flexibility, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of flexible work as a key enabler of gender equity has been raised repeatedly by focus group participants (**Table 59**). Numerous instances of staff feedback indicated that central flexible work policies have not been uniformly implemented across all work areas, primarily working from home requests, and that supervisor discretion was the primary source of this discrepancy. In addition to a holistic review of our Flexible Work Procedure (**Action 4.2**), we will seek to better upskill supervisors on the value of flexible working (**Action 4.3**).

Table 59 - Selection of quotes on the importance of workplace flexibility

Selection of quotes from Monash staff highlighting the role of workplace flexibility	
	<i>"The level of support and awareness is completely based on luck - your supervisor and local area. It is not university-wide."</i> GEFG Respondent38 – no demographic identifiers available
	<i>"My observation is that the level of knowledge and care varies wildly and your experience very much depends on who you get."</i> FG LGBTIQ+ Respondent3
	<i>"There needs to be consistent application of flexible work practices; and accountability when [it is not] applied consistently, in roles where suitable."</i> GEFG Respondent40 – no demographic identifiers available
	<i>"Some staff get to work from home while others who are struggling with families are ignored...Everything is determined by your supervisor so if he is good you have a great work life balance but if he is like my boss then your life is pretty miserable."</i> EES Respondent1824_professional_woman_carer_region of birth Pacific Islands
	<i>"We need a consistent approach to WFH flexibility for parents and feeling more supported in the workplace after having a child."</i> Anonymous feedback (Supporting Parents at Work Training) Respondent5_academic_woman
	<i>"Unconscious bias and prejudices are always an ongoing challenge. We should be removing stigmas, like men taking on a primary car taking role"</i> GEFG Respondent26 _professional_man_carer_neurodivergent
	<i>"Monash University as a whole has been very supportive and ensures staff well being. I am grateful for the ongoing support not only from Monash but my Org Unit as well."</i> EES Respondent1690_professional_woman_carer_region of birth South Asia

Table 60 - Actions to improve consistency in implementing flexible work

Ref.	Action
4.2	Undertake a review of Flexible Work Procedure to ensure it is people-centric and based on leading practice.
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Educate supervisors on the availability and benefits of flexible and part-time options as part of the University's commitment to gender equity by embedding this content in a supervisor training.</li> <li>b) Actively promote flexible work options emphasising flexible working as a standard option available to staff of all genders.</li> </ul>

### Evolving parental leave for partners

Historically, parental leave in Australia supported women, reflecting traditional gender roles that positioned women as the primary caregivers for children. However, a shift towards inclusive policies has been occurring across the sector to promote shared caregiving responsibilities.

In August 2024, Monash introduced a new 12-week paid partner parental leave policy, enabling staff to access it flexibly and concurrently with the birthing or adoptive parent. This improved provision was recognised as a positive step to supporting staff of all genders to participate in caregiving, and in helping to normalise men's role in caregiving: *"Finally, younger men are going part-time to take on caregiver roles!"*

We started actively promoting paid partner leave and collected initial testimonials:

*“To know that I had a really healthy amount of time away from work was a huge weight lifted off the shoulders of our entire family. There are so many benefits to taking the leave, it certainly wasn’t a holiday but it was one of the best experiences of my life. The memories I made and more importantly how well I was able to get to know my son, is something that will last a lifetime. I loved every moment of those days, and can’t be more encouraging of anyone with the opportunity to take the leave to do so.”*

Interview Respondent28\_professional\_man\_carer

We recognise that challenging gender stereotypes is a long-term endeavour (**Action 4.1**), as succinctly summarised by a focus group participant:

*“There is a way to go until men are being afforded and expected to take equal caring time and not congratulating a male who comes to work a few hours after their child is born.”*

GEFG Respondent46\_academic\_woman\_STEMM\_living with a disability

### Limited knowledge of relevant policies

Another barrier identified was that staff often struggled to find relevant policies and interpret the entitlements outlined in individual procedures. This feedback was also highlighted during our Athena Swan Bronze self-assessment, indicating that while progress has been made, there are still opportunities to enhance clarity:

*“Information is often overly complex, too detailed, or not easily understandable. We need to know the key points and how to find them quickly.”*

GEFG Respondent76\_no demographic identifiers available

Our *Guide for Expectant and New Parents* simplifies policies and support options for Monash staff. However, its distribution through targeted channels, such as staff applying for parental leave, does not effectively reach the broader staff population (**Action 4.4**).

### Supporting staff on their return from parental leave

Monash offers 21 parenting rooms across seven workplace locations, but an informal review of a select number of these rooms identified inconsistencies in furnishings and equipment, including change tables, nappy bins, microwaves or privacy divisions.

Some facilities require swipe card access or are lockable, while others are shared spaces, lacking sufficient privacy. Feedback from users highlights challenges with this approach:

*“Yes, our building has parenting facilities, these are nice but 2 of the 3 times I used them, I walk in on a guy asleep in one of the breastfeeding chairs...very awkward.”*

Interview Respondent12\_academic\_woman\_carer\_STEMM

*“I tried to use the [new expressing] room and two guys knocked on the door and proceeded to walk in and mess around with the aircon for ages. When you only get about a 20-minute break, time is precious.”*

Interview Respondent14\_academic\_woman\_carer\_STEMM

A comprehensive audit of parenting facilities is needed (**Action 4.5**).

Supporting staff returning from parental leave is key to addressing shifting roles, priorities, and values. Initially introduced in the Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan, parenting sessions lost momentum during COVID-19, but are being reintroduced to better support returnees (**Action 4.6**).

Ref.	Action
4.4	a) Distribute the Guide for Expectant and New Parents to all people managers and heads of units. b) Regularly update information on Parents' website and promote it through relevant internal communication channels.
4.5	a) Conduct an audit of parenting facilities and identify opportunities for improvement. b) Implement the identified improvements across parenting facilities and expressing rooms.
4.6	Host six-monthly sessions for new parents, promoted to staff returning from parental (including partner) leave and informing their supervisors.

## Key Barrier 4 : Parents and carers

Ref.	Rationale / Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Person / Group responsible	Senior Leader accountable	Desired Outcome and Impact
4.1	To challenge traditional gender norms and promote a more equitable distribution of parental, partner and carer leave.	<p>a) Develop a communication plan designed to encourage uptake of paid parental leave by staff of all genders, including all-staff articles and targeted channels.</p> <p>b) Set targets to improve men's uptake of carer's leave.</p>	<p>Oct 2025 Ongoing</p> <p>Sept 2026</p>	<p>UMAC</p> <p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p>	Chief People Officer	<p>Increased uptake of parental leave and carer's leave by staff of all genders.</p> <p>Positive qualitative feedback on Monash's communications regarding this topic, collected through surveys or focus groups.</p>
4.2	Policies centered on people enhance productivity, wellbeing and positive workplace culture.	Undertake a review of Flexible Work Procedure to ensure it is people-centric and based on leading practice.	<p>July - Nov. 2025</p> <p>July - Nov 2028</p>	<p>Workforce Policy, Monash HR</p> <p>Office of Quality and Group Policy</p>	Chief People Officer	<p>Improved satisfaction regarding flexible work options and workplace adjustments, evidenced by the Employee Experience Survey (2025, 2027, 2029).</p> <p>Improved policy usage by staff, especially in underrepresented and marginalised groups.</p>
4.3	Encourage staff of all genders to access flexible work options to help normalise caregiving as a shared responsibility.	<p>a) Educate supervisors on the availability and benefits of flexible and part-time options as part of the University's commitment to gender equity by embedding this content in a supervisor training.</p> <p>b) Actively promote flexible work options emphasising flexible work as a standard option available to staff of all genders.</p>	<p>Oct 2025 to March 2026; then ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Talent, Engagement, Development Staff Equity, diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Supervisors</p>	Chief People Officer	<p>Improvements in staff feedback regarding their experiences with supervisors supporting flexible and part-time work options; gathered through surveys and focus groups.</p> <p>Increased uptake of flexible work options by staff of all genders (work from home; part-time work etc).</p>
4.4	Improve access to information by providing a user-friendly summary of policies and support options for parents.	<p>a) Distribute the Guide for Expectant and New Parents to all people managers and heads of units.</p> <p>b) Regularly update information on Parents' website and promote it through relevant internal communication channels.</p>	Oct 2025 - Ongoing	Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Chief People Officer	<p>Positive feedback from people managers on the guide's clarity and usefulness.</p> <p>Improved support for parents evidenced by surveys and focus groups.</p>
4.5	An informal review of parenting rooms identified inconsistencies in furnishings and equipment, including change tables, nappy bins, microwaves or privacy divisions.	<p>a) Conduct an audit of parenting facilities and identify opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>b) Implement the identified improvements across parenting facilities and expressing rooms.</p>	<p>Jan. 2026 - July 2026</p> <p>Sept. 2026 - Sept. 2027</p>	<p>Planning and Development, Buildings and Property</p> <p>Athena Swan Steering Group</p>	Executive Director, Buildings and Property	<p>Completion of the parenting facilities audit including a list of actionable recommendations.</p> <p>Successful implementations of improvements.</p> <p>Employee satisfaction evidenced by feedback from staff who utilise parenting facilities.</p>
4.6	Recognising the challenges of balancing dual roles and providing opportunities for connection, support, and shared experiences.	Host six-monthly sessions for new parents, promoted to staff returning from parental (including partner) leave and informing their supervisors.	<p>September 2025</p> <p>Six-monthly</p>	<p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Talent, Engagement Development</p>	Chief People Officer	<p>Sessions are consistently attended at full capacity.</p> <p>Feedback from participants demonstrates positive value indicating these sessions met their objectives.</p>

## KEY BARRIER 5: Gender Pay Gap

### 5.1 Barrier statement

The gender pay gap in favour of men exists in all industries and occupations in Australia, and has proven incredibly challenging for employers to successfully address, highlighting systemic inequalities that require targeted efforts to promote pay equity, equal opportunity and strengthen accountability for outcomes. The gender pay gap is considered a barrier to gender equity because it reflects systemic inequalities that disadvantage individuals based on their gender. The existence of pay gap in all Australian industries reinforces stereotypes about gender roles and undervalues the contributions of women in the workforce, affecting their representation in leadership positions.

### 5.2 Monash context

At Monash, we are committed to closing the University's average gender pay gap by 2030, as announced by the Vice-Chancellor and President on Equal Pay Day in 2024. Our Gender Equality Action Plan details our comprehensive approach and outlines objectives aimed at understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality.

### 5.3 Evidence

Between 2020 and 2023, Monash University's average gender pay gap remained virtually unchanged, followed by more observable progress in the 2023-2024 reporting period (**Table 61**). Our historically slower progress towards closing the gender pay gap was reinforced by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's findings that the gap closes by a mere half a percentage point at best each year, with only two in five employers narrowing their pay gap between 2020 and 2022.

Table 61 - Monash University Average Gender Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gap measure	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Average base salary	11.5%	11.7%	11.4%	9.4%
Average total remuneration	11.3%	11.7%	11.3%	9.9%

Since receiving our Athena Swan Bronze award, we progressed actions designed to raise the awareness of gender pay gap across the University, including:

- We have incorporated our strategic commitment to gender pay equity in the Monash University's Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 and in the Monash University Environmental, Social and Governance Statement 2021-2025.
- The results of our annual gender pay gap analysis are shared with the Vice-Chancellor's Group and Monash University's governing body on an annual basis.
- We promoted our institutional commitment to pay equity and to gender equality on Equal Pay Day through all-staff communications.
- We developed an externally facing web page outlining our actions to address the gender pay gap.

In 2024, our progress in reducing the average gender pay gap was encouraging (**Table 61**); however, we recognise that more needs to be done. We identified opportunities to develop a more focused approach to proactively address the gender pay gap and help accelerate positive change.

## 5.4 Underlying barriers and contributing factors

### Limitations in data analytics

Despite Monash University's strong focus on metrics and commitment to pay equity, our limited access to strategic insights has previously hindered our ability to proactively reduce the gender pay gap. While we have traditionally conducted an annual gender pay gap analysis for WGEA compliance as part of our remuneration data preparation, the complexities of WGEA's annualisation methodology, especially for casual, part-time, and part-year employees, made this process too labour-intensive and time-consuming to conduct more frequently.

In early 2023, the University's senior leadership requested a more comprehensive investigation into gender pay gap data to better understand the underlying causes of both the average and median gender pay gaps across all business units. This request provided a strong impetus for moving beyond mere legislative compliance and led to the development of bespoke gender pay gap (GPG) dashboards in 2024. These dashboards allow for more frequent analytical insights and monitoring of the gender pay gap. Designed to facilitate data-driven discussions, the dashboards also support the cultural shifts needed to address broader equity challenges. Additionally, faculty and portfolio summaries were created to provide six-monthly updates for senior leaders (**Action 5.1**).

### Intersectionality

Research literature highlights that the gender pay gap is further exacerbated by other intersectional factors, such as cultural background and disability, creating compounded barriers for marginalised groups. This was echoed by focus group participants, who noted:

*"The gender pay gap disproportionately affects women of colour, women with disability"*

GEFG Respondent43\_academic\_woman

Unfortunately, we have been unable to conduct an intersectional gender pay gap analysis by cultural background and similar due to the lack of data collection in this area and have designed actions to bridge this gap (**Actions 5.2, 5.3**).

Table 62 - Actions designed to improve access to meaningful data analytics

Ref.	Action
5.1	Implement a regular dissemination process for gender pay gap (GPG) data across faculties and portfolios to provide senior leaders with analytical insights.
5.2	Incorporate "English as an Additional Language" (EAL) into the gender pay gap dashboards, using Country of Birth as a proxy measure.
5.3	a) Develop a self-identification process within the employee system that enables staff to provide additional demographic information, such as living with disability or identifying as being from a culturally diverse background. b) Develop a communication plan to build trust, explaining the purpose and benefits of collecting diversity-related data and how staff information will be protected and used.

### Occupational segregation

Research conducted by WGEA, Diversity Council Australia and KPMG identified that occupational segregation or a 'type of job' is one of the key drivers of the average gender pay gap. This factor pertains to the unequal gender distribution across different occupations. While the Education and Training industry is traditionally largely represented by women, their proportion in the top remuneration quartile at Monash is lower than their overall workforce participation (49.4% vs 57.9%) (**Figure 5.1**). This cohort represents the top 25% of income earners and includes many managerial positions and senior academic roles, which highlights the underrepresentation of women in higher-paying, leadership, and decision-making roles.

In STEMM, this gap widens further, particularly when considering positions classified by WGEA as ‘Manager roles’, where women represent only 39.2% of the top remuneration quartile (Figure 5.2). This includes both professional and academic roles, further highlighting the gender disparity in leadership positions within STEMM fields.

Figure 5.1 - Gender composition across remuneration quartiles (2023/2024)

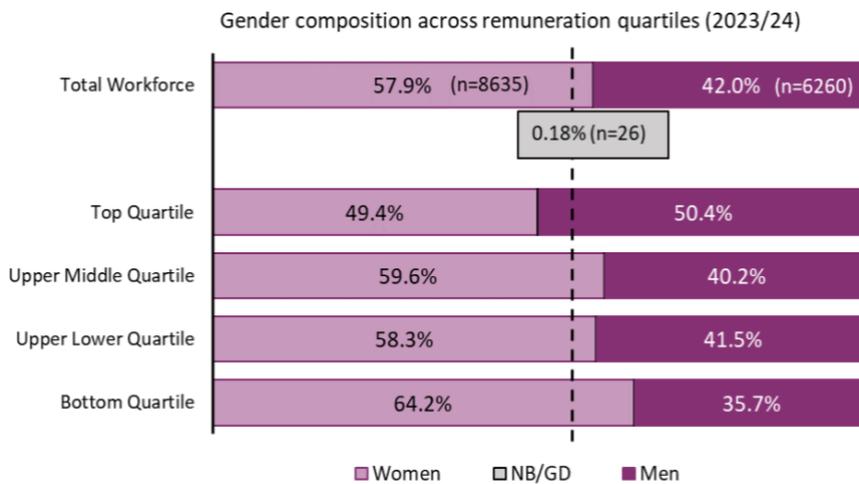
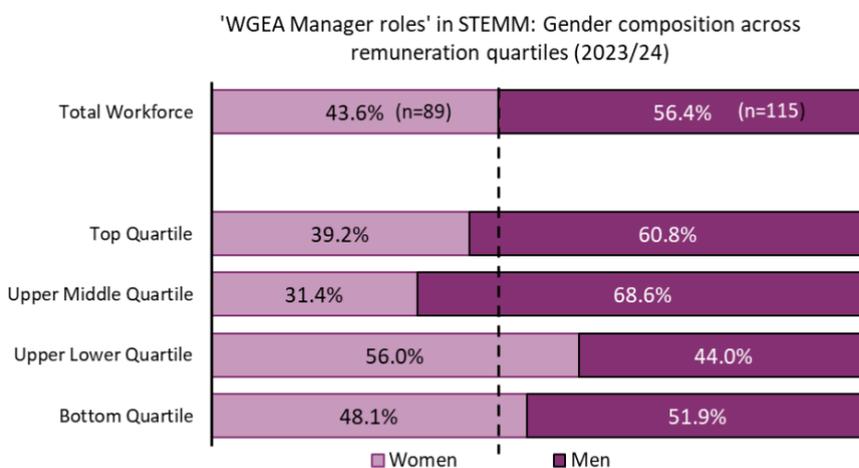


Figure 5.2 - WGEA Manager roles in STEMM faculties (combined) - Gender composition across remuneration quartiles (2023/2024)



### Underrepresentation of women on performance-based contracts (senior roles)

A major factor contributing to the gender pay gap, as outlined above, is the underrepresentation of women in senior positions. This issue is one of the objectives addressed in Monash's Gender Equity Action Plan, with a university-wide KPI focused on increasing women in senior roles.

Our level-by-level gender pay gap analysis of professional and academic staff, we found that employment classifications within the industrially-regulated salary bands under the Enterprise Agreement had a minimal gender pay gap, falling within the GPG neutral +/-5% category, as deemed by WGEA. However, the analysis identified exceptions in senior roles above HEW 10 classification (Table 63) and Level E (Table 64) where the gender pay gap was more pronounced.

Further analysis of the gender composition of staff on Performance-Based Contracts (PBCs) confirmed that this group notably influences the organisation-wide gender pay gap. The PBC cohort consists of 621 positions (62% professional; 38% academic), representing just 4% of Monash employees. Despite its small size, this group has a significant impact on the University-wide gender pay gap results. As shown in Table 65, the average gender pay gap in base salaries and total remuneration for PBC staff is approximately 2.5 times higher than non-PBC staff.

Table 63 - Average Gender Pay Gap, Level by Level, Professional staff (September 2024)

Professional	Average (Mean) GPG		Headcount			Representation		
	Base Salary	Total Rem.	W	M	GD/NB	W	M	GD/NB
HEW 01-03	1.6%	-0.4%	449	315	1	58.7%	41.2%	0.13%
HEW 04	1.2%	1.7%	540	345	1	60.9%	38.9%	0.11%
HEW 05	3.2%	2.5%	904	442	7	66.8%	32.7%	0.52%
HEW 06	1.6%	2.2%	832	336	0	71.2%	28.8%	0.00%
HEW 07	1.7%	1.9%	757	395	3	65.5%	34.2%	0.26%
HEW 08	1.8%	3.2%	538	358	2	59.9%	39.9%	0.22%
HEW 09	1.7%	2.6%	419	284	1	59.5%	40.3%	0.14%
HEW 10	2.6%	4.0%	168	134	3	55.1%	43.9%	0.98%
Above HEW 10	7.1%	4.3%	38	43	1	46.3%	52.4%	1.22%

Table 64 - Average Gender Pay Gap, Level by Level, Academic staff (September 2024)

Academic Level	Average (Mean) GPG		Headcount			Representation		
	Base Salary	Total Rem.	W	M	GD/NB	W	M	GD/NB
LEVEL A	-0.3%	-0.2%	525	540	1	49.2%	50.7%	0.09%
LEVEL B	0.4%	0.6%	681	453	2	59.9%	39.9%	0.18%
LEVEL C	2.2%	2.6%	457	343	4	56.8%	42.7%	0.50%
LEVEL D	0.6%	1.2%	256	296	1	46.3%	53.5%	0.18%
LEVEL E	5.4%	3.4%	224	460	0	32.7%	67.3%	0.00%

Table 65 - Average Gender Pay Gap by Performance-Based Contracts (Sept. 2024)

September 2024	Average (Mean) GPG		Headcount			Representation		
	Base Salary	Total Rem.	W	M	GD/NB	W	M	GD/NB
Non-PBC	5.8%	6.3%	8647	6098	26	58.5%	41.3%	0.2%
PBC	15.9%	14.5%	279	338	4	44.9%	54.4%	0.6%
All staff	8.9%	9.3%	8926	6436	30	58.0%	41.8%	0.2%

We observed that the proportion of women on performance-based contracts (PBCs) is 13 percentage points lower than their overall representation in the workforce, with women making up 44.9% of PBC staff compared to 58% of the total workforce at Monash (Table 66).

Additional analysis of PBC roles by staff type revealed a notable underrepresentation of academic women. Only 31.2% of academic staff on performance-based contracts are women, which is 1.5 percentage points lower than their participation at Level E (Professor), where women make up 32.7% (Table 66). Professors on performance-based contracts hold leadership roles, including Deans, Deputy Deans, Associate Deans (Research and Education), Academic Directors, and similar roles. Addressing the underrepresentation of women in these leadership positions through targeted initiatives, such as gender-conscious succession planning (Action 5.4) and unconscious bias training for senior leaders (Action 5.5) will help reduce the identified gaps.

To ensure that improvements in the gender composition of leadership positions reflect the diversity of the Monash community, we will also seek to measure diversity adopting an intersectional framework, considering factors such as age and EAL (Action 5.2).

Relevant existing gender equity initiatives will be refocused to better address the identified gaps. For example, the Senior Women's Shadowing initiative will be revised to specifically address these disparities, with a stronger emphasis on prioritising cultural diversity, as highlighted in Key Barrier 3.

Table 66 - Average Gender Pay Gap of staff on Performance-Based Contracts by staff type (Sept.2024)

September 2024	Average (Mean) GPG		Headcount			Representation		
	Base Salary	Total Rem.	W	M	GD/NB	W	M	GD/NB
Academic	9.1%	5.2%	73	161	0	31.2%	68.8%	0.0%
Professional	6.9%	6.8%	206	177	4	53.2%	45.7%	1.0%
<b>All PBC</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>54.4%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

Table 67 - Actions designed to improve gender composition in the top remuneration quartile

Ref.	Action
5.4	Actively consider gender in succession planning: implement gender-conscious criteria in the succession planning process to ensure a diverse pool of candidates for leadership roles, with a focus on increasing the representation of women in senior positions.
5.5	Provide unconscious bias training to all senior leaders to raise awareness of biases in decision-making processes and improve leadership practices around diversity and inclusion.
5.6	Integrate a gender equity focus into key HR processes, including talent identification, senior recruitment, promotions, leadership development, and reward/recognition, to ensure fair opportunities for all genders.

### Leaders' accountability for outcomes

A contributing factor to the stagnation of progress in addressing the gender pay gap was the limited accountability mechanisms at faculty / portfolio levels. Historically, the gender pay gap has been framed as a broader university-wide issue, with annual reports to WGEA focusing on Monash-wide metrics. This approach was closely tied to the limited data analytics, as WGEA reporting did not by default provide a breakdown by business units or employment classifications, making progress at a more granular level virtually invisible.

This issue was supported by findings from qualitative data, where participants noted.

*“Some very senior leaders certainly show a strong understanding of what causes the reported gender pay gap... but closing the gap requires action from many leaders and managers for whom this is yet to become a priority.”* Interview Respondent7\_senior professional\_woman\_EAL

*“There is no built accountability for leaders.”* GEFG\_Respondent43\_academic\_woman

*“Ensure that the most senior staff of the university are accountable for creating a more inclusive and respectful workplace not just in their words but in other actions which will set the tone for others to follow.”* EES Respondent1062\_professional\_man\_carer\_region of birth Central Asia

*“Diversity and inclusion is done quite well, at least in terms of metrics and messaging. What could use work is narrowing the gap between the top management and the majority of staff who deliver on the great education and research that makes it an amazing university - it's a growing gap in terms of respect, attitude, remuneration, security and power.”* EES Respondent1054\_professional\_man\_LGBTIQ+

We recognise that accountability for gender equity outcomes must be tied to clear, measurable indicators to ensure meaningful progress. The development and implementation of a comprehensive gender pay gap strategy, along with the establishment of gender pay gap KPIs for senior executive leaders are essential steps in driving this change.

These commitments are now formally outlined in our Impact 2030 (Strategic Plan) 2025 Implementation Plan. Senior executive leaders will be expected to develop specific objectives to improve the University’s gender pay gap and report on progress (**Action 5.7**). Monash HR will support this process by conducting a six-monthly analysis to assess gender pay disparities and gender composition at both local and Monash-wide levels to track progress and identify opportunities (**Action 5.8**) and the development of resources (**Action 5.9**).

To promote transparency of progress, results of our gender pay gap analyses will be shared through all-staff channels such as on Equal Pay Day, highlighting strategies and actions aimed at reducing the gap (**Action 5.10**).

Table 68 - Actions designed to strengthen accountability for outcomes

Ref.	Action
5.7	Senior executive leaders develop objectives to improve the average and median gender pay gap in their faculties and portfolios, as part of their annual workplan.
5.8	Provide six-monthly reports on the gender composition in senior leadership roles, as well as key staff movements (appointments, promotions, exits) by gender and intersectional attributes.
5.9	Create resources on understanding the gender pay gap with examples of strategies that can be implemented at a local level to help eliminate the organisation-wide gender pay gap.
5.10	Use all-staff communication channels to provide updates on progress; including Equal Pay Day article and Monash University Annual Report.

## Key Barrier 5: Gender Pay Gap

Ref.	Rationale / Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Person / Group responsible	Senior Leader accountable	Desired Outcome and Impact
5.1	Regular dissemination of gender pay gap data provides senior leaders with the insights needed to identify and proactively approach the gender pay gap.	Implement a regular dissemination process for gender pay gap (GPG) data across faculties and portfolios to provide senior leaders with analytical insights.	April 2025 Ongoing	Remuneration and Global Mobility, Monash HR	Chief People Officer	Improved awareness of factors affecting the gender pay gap at the faculty/portfolio level. Reductions in the gender pay gap over time.
5.2	Intersectional analysis of the gender pay gap will enable identification of deeper systemic barriers and more effectively promote equity, inclusivity and track progress.	Incorporate "English as an Additional Language" (EAL) into the gender pay gap dashboards, using Country of Birth as a proxy measure.	Dec 2025	Workforce Analytics and Business Improvement, Monash HR	Chief People Officer	Identification of pay gaps or disparities related to cultural background and gender. Feedback from stakeholders on the usefulness of EAL data.
5.3	Staff identity data will provide a clearer understanding of disparities faced by specific staff groups, enabling targeted interventions.	<p>a) Develop a self-identification process within the employee system that enables staff to provide additional demographic information, such as living with disability or having a diverse ethnic background.</p> <p>b) Develop a communication plan to build trust, explaining the purpose and benefits of collecting diversity-related data and how staff information will be protected and used.</p>	April 2026 to Nov. 2026  Jan-Feb 2027	<p>Workforce Analytics and Business Improvement, Monash HR</p> <p>University Marketing and Communications</p> <p>Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p> <p>Director Marketing and Comms</p>	<p>Self-identification option is launched and communicated.</p> <p>20% of staff opt-in to provide the additional demographic data in the first year post-implementation.</p> <p>50% of new starters opt-in to self-identify on commencement.</p>
5.4	Implementation of gender-conscious approaches helps address gender imbalances, promotes fairness and supports gender equity goals.	Actively consider gender in succession planning: implement gender-conscious criteria in the succession planning process to ensure a diverse pool of candidates for leadership roles.	Ongoing	HR Business Partners	Deans Portfolio Heads	Improved gender composition in senior positions. Reductions in the average and median gender pay gap.
5.5	Raise awareness of the impact of unconscious bias in decision-making to help leaders make more equitable decisions.	Provide unconscious bias training to all senior leaders to raise awareness of biases in decision-making processes and improve leadership practices around diversity and inclusion.	Sept 2025 Ongoing	Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Talent Engagement development	Chief People Officer	Positive feedback on the value of the training. Improved gender composition in senior positions. Reductions in the average and median gender pay gap.
5.6	Actively consider opportunities to increase gender diversity in leadership and identify opportunities to address gender disparities.	Integrate a gender equity focus into key HR processes, including talent identification, senior recruitment, promotions, leadership development, and reward/recognition, to ensure fair opportunities for all genders.	March 2026 - ongoing	Senior Recruitment HR Business Partners Talent Engagement Development	Chief People Officer	Improved gender composition in senior positions. Reductions in the average and median gender pay gap.
5.7	Enhanced accountability for gender pay gap outcomes at faculty/portfolio level.	Senior executive leaders develop objectives to improve the average and median gender pay gap in their faculties and portfolios, within their annual workplan.	Q2 2025; Annually	Senior Executive Leaders Monash HR	Chief People Officer	Executive leaders develop strategies to reduce their portfolio gender pay gaps. Reductions in the average and median gender pay gap.
5.8	Monitoring progress and reporting on gender equity performance are crucial steps in supporting transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making.	Provide six-monthly reports on the gender composition in senior leadership roles, as well as key staff movements (appointments, promotions, exits) by gender and intersectional attributes (linked to 5.2).	May and Nov. annually from 2025	Workforce Analytics, Monash HR Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Chief People Officer	Introductions of initiatives and strategic measures aimed at improving gender and intersectional equity in leadership roles. Reductions in the average and median gender pay gap.
5.9	Empower leaders to better understand the gender pay gap and its underlying causes.	Create resources on understanding the gender pay gap with examples of strategies that can be implemented at a local level to help eliminate the organisation-wide gender pay gap.	May-Dec. 2025	Monash HR	Chief People Officer	Development of local-level interventions with measurable improvements in gender equity and gender pay gap within those units.
5.10	Foster transparency to keep staff informed about the progress and opportunities for improvement.	Use all-staff communication channels to provide updates on progress; including Equal Pay Day article and Monash University Annual Report.	Ongoing	Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion University Marketing and Communications	Chief People Officer	Positive qualitative feedback from staff, gathered through surveys or focus groups, regarding the University's commitment to and transparency in addressing the gender pay gap.