



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

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# Cygnets Award Application #2: Academic Promotion

SAGE Athena Swan

2025

## Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

In making this Acknowledgment of Country we commit to respectful and responsible conduct towards all others according to the Traditional lores of this land, particularly at times of formal ceremony.



## SAGE Cygnet Award Application

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## INSTITUTION NAME: SAGE CYGNET #

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

	✓ Current Cygnet	<b>Barrier</b> · List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet · List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier		Sexual Misconduct
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier	✓	Academic Promotion
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

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## Key Barrier

This Cygnet addresses a persistent barrier to gender parity at the University of Melbourne: women’s under-representation in promotions to academic Levels D and E. Analysis of quantitative promotion data from 2016 - 2019 (baseline) and across 2016 - 2024 demonstrates that women’s promotion success rates were high at the outset and have remained strong, sustaining performance from an initially high base.

However, early discussions suggested that the main challenge lay in lower application rates, linked to uncertainty about requirements, inconsistent supervisory support, and low trust in the process. Given women’s lower representation at preceding academic levels, equitable progress requires proportionally higher application and success rates among women.

This Cygnet focuses on Levels D and E, where institutional data indicate the greatest under-representation of women (see Figure 1). The University’s current demographic fields limit intersectional analysis; expanding these to enable intersectional monitoring is a recognised priority (see Further Action 1.1).

Women’s experiences and perceptions of promotion were collected and documented through focus groups in 2017 and via surveys. Three sub-barriers that prevented or delayed promotion were consistently identified (Table 1).

**Table 1: Sub-barriers**

Sub-barriers	
1	Uncertainty about the promotion process and what is required for a successful application.
2	Perceived/real lack of support from supervisors and effective performance development processes.
3	Low levels of trust in promotion process and equitable decision making.

The promotion experience and outcomes for gender diverse academics have been included, where recorded numbers exceed 6. Where lower, the data is reported as ≤6. While activities were inclusive of gender diverse academics, low numbers have limited the extent to which impacts and outcomes for these participants could be meaningfully analysed.

**Table 2: Gender data definitions**

Gender disaggregation	
Data is disaggregated by gender into four categories in alignment with our Bronze application and the SAGE guidelines: <b>M</b> (describes their gender as man or male), <b>F</b> (describes their gender as woman or female), or <b>X</b> (describes their gender as non-binary or describes their gender as a term other than man/male, woman/female or non-binary), and <b>Z</b> where a person prefers not to respond on how they describe their gender.	
The University of Melbourne collects data via five categories which have been mapped as per the table below:	
Woman or female	F
Man or male	M
Non binary	X
[I/they] use a different term	X
Prefer not to say	Z
In the data analysis, the term woman refers to individuals who identified their gender as F (woman or female).	

## Evidence of Barrier (2016 -2019)

Table 3: Data sources for evidence of barrier and sub-barriers

Data sources for evidence of barrier and sub-barriers	
<b>Promotion data and headcount</b>	Headcount data is collected and reported through workforce data management systems. When reported on an annual basis, data is reported as of January 31 <sup>st</sup> that year. Promotion data is collected and reported through the Academic Promotion Dashboard.
<b>Focus groups and interviews</b>	As part of the Bronze Self-Assessment Process, UoM staff were invited in 2017 to participate in their choice of focus groups, individual interviews, or anonymous written online submissions. A total of 112 staff participated (81 academic and 31 professional; 98 women and 14 men), across most organisational units. The majority (70) took part in focus groups, with 30 choosing individual interviews, and the remainder lodging written submissions.
<b>Diversity and Inclusion Survey 2019</b>	The D&I Survey was conducted in May 2019 by a third party, achieving an overall response rate of 45% (4072 out of 9070 staff). This included academic and professional full-time and part-time staff. A section of the survey was focussed on academic career experience. Due to the way survey results were provided there are some limitations in disaggregating the data. This has been noted where it impacts reporting.

### Gender distribution

In 2019, gender distribution by level for all faculties demonstrated that further University efforts were needed to progress the career trajectory of women at Level C. A cross-over point occurred in gender distribution at Level C, with a particularly sharp drop in numbers of women at Level C vs. D (Figure 1). Part-time women were the largest group at Level A (30%), while part-time women were the smallest group at Level E (8%). By comparison, the proportion of men employed part-time increased slightly at higher levels (Figure 2). Women's promotions influence the pattern of gender distribution by level, noting that recruitment and resignations also contribute.

While limited, the data available for gender diverse staff suggests low representation at Levels D and E. Cultural and systemic barriers to disclosing diverse genders in HR systems may play a role in this low representation, together with broader career progression issues.

Figure 1: Gender distribution across levels 2019 (all faculties)

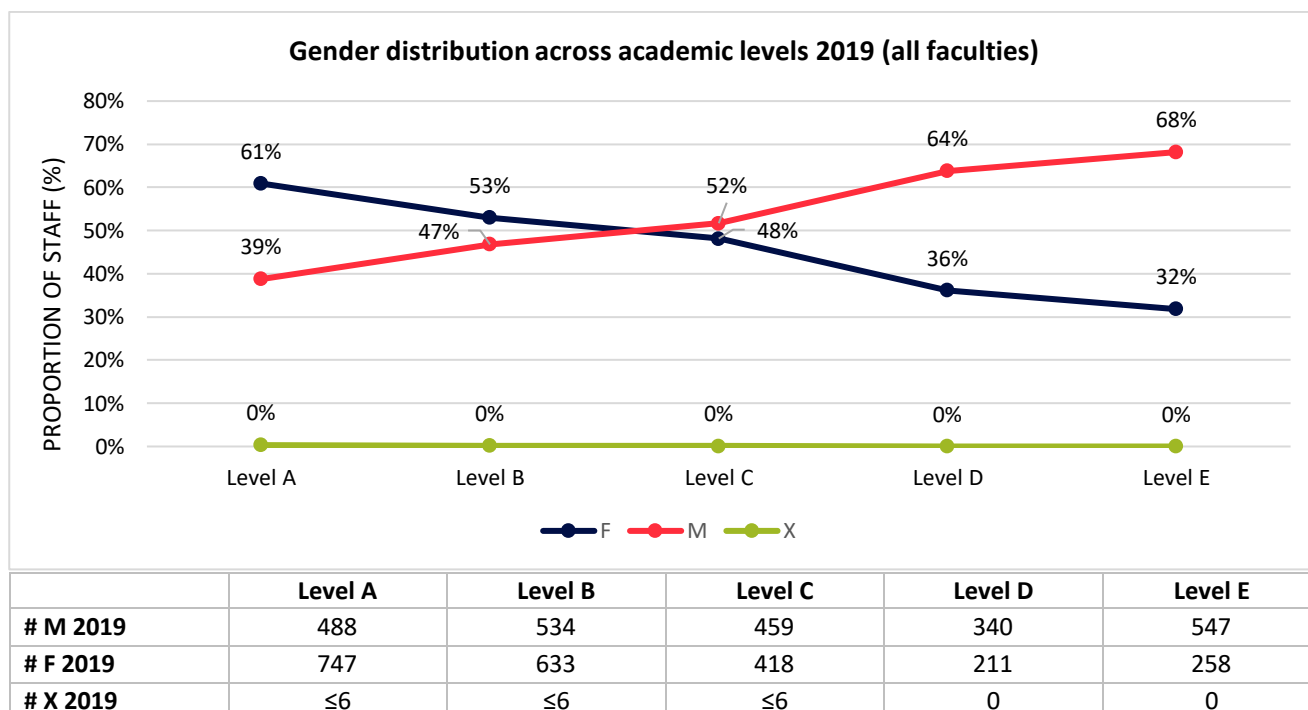
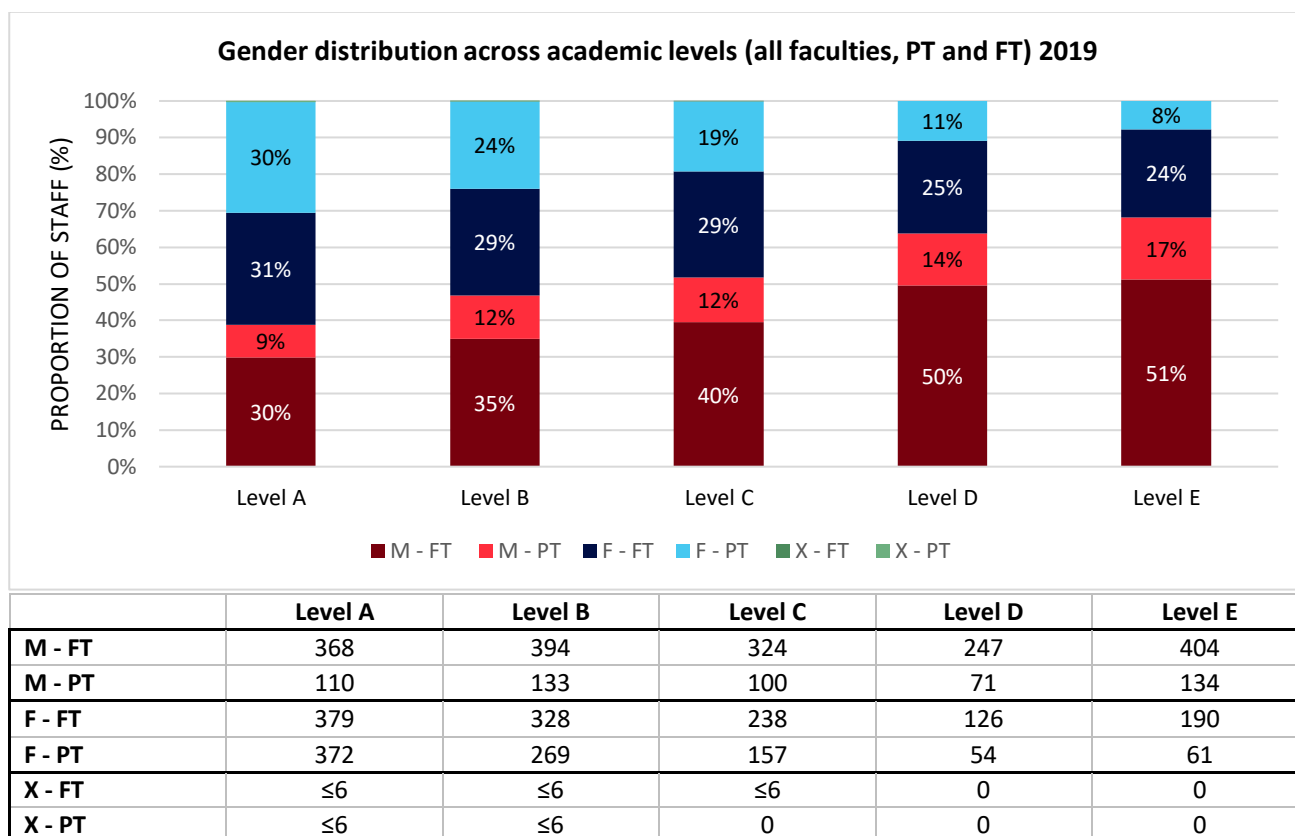


Figure 2: Gender distribution across levels PT\* vs FT comparison 2019 (all faculties)



\*Part time is defined as those with a fractional appointment of 0.8 or less

### Applications (number # and proportion %)

Prior to 2020, women were under-represented among promotion applicants to both Levels D and E. Women's share of applications rose sharply in 2018 (to near parity) and then stabilised, while their success rates remained comparable to or higher than men's. This pattern indicates that the key constraint was application behaviour rather than promotion bias. Because women remain substantially under-represented at Levels D and E (36% and 32% respectively), (Figure 1, 2019), achieving gender balance requires that women apply for and succeed in promotion at rates higher than their current representation at the preceding level.

Table 4: Proportion of promotion applications from Level C to Level D

Proportion of applications Level C to D	2016	2017	2018	2019
Proportion of women at Level C	41%	45%	49%	48%
Women's proportion of promotion applications	32%	38%	53%	49%
Men's proportion of promotion applications	68%	62%	47%	51%
Women's number of promotion applications	23	28	46	48
Men's number of promotion applications	48	44	38	50

Table 5: Proportion of promotion applications from Level D to Level E

Proportion of applications Level D to E	2016	2017	2018	2019
Proportion of women at Level D	39%	37%	35%	36%
Women's proportion of promotion applications	40%	33%	45%	38%
Men's proportion of promotion applications	60%	67%	55%	62%
Women's number of promotion applications	19	16	25	22
Men's number of promotion applications	29	32	30	36

## Success rates

Given men's over-representation at Levels D and E during this period, women's applications and success needed to exceed their representation at Levels C and D to accelerate parity. Academic promotion data 2016 – 2019 (Table 6 and Table 7) shows women had higher average success rates at Level E and similar success rates at Level D compared to men. This pattern also holds for part-time women and women applying with performance relative to opportunity considerations (PRO). These findings suggest that, despite perceptions, assessment of promotion applications was not the main barrier. Fewer men applied with PRO considerations and their success rates were lower on average than women's with PRO at both levels.

**Table 6: Promotion to Level D success rates 2016 - 2019**

Year	Women Level D	Men Level D	Women Level D - PRO	Men Level D - PRO	Women Level D - PT	Men Level D - PT
2016	74% (17/23)	65% (32/48)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2017	61% (17/28)	73% (31/44)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2018	78% (35/46)	74% (29/38)	84% (26/31)	58% (7/12)	73% (11/15)	100% (≤6/≤6)
2019	77% (37/48)	82% (42/50)	83% (29/35)	79% (15/19)	100% (12/12)	73% (8/11)

**Table 7: Promotion to Level E success rates 2016 - 2019**

Year	Women Level E	Men Level E	Women Level E - PRO	Men Level E - PRO	Women Level E - PT	Men Level E - PT
2016	80% (15/19)	73% (22/29)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2017	81% (11/16)	66% (17/32)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2018	83% (22/25)	74% (22/30)	89% (17/19)	67% (≤6/≤6)	83% (≤6/≤6)	50% (≤6/≤6)
2019	78% (18/22)	83% (31/36)	84% (16/19)	77% (10/13)	100% (≤6/≤6)	100% (≤6/≤6)

## Sub-Barriers

### 1. Uncertainty about the promotion process and what is required for a successful application.

Focus group data (2017) and survey responses point to uncertainty about the promotion process and criteria, with women reporting lower understanding than men in the 2019 D&I Survey. Only 27% of the gender diverse respondents agreed that they understood the promotion process and criteria, highlighting a wide disparity in awareness across gender groups.

**Table 8: Percentage agreement from academic survey respondents in understanding the promotion process and criteria (2019 D&I Survey)**

(gendered response rate unknown)	2019			
	Overall (1792 respondents)	F	M	X
I understand the promotions process and criteria	71%	66%	76%	27%

Focus group participants (2017) reported a perceived discrepancy between promotion policy and practice and commented on the lack of transparency around how policies are implemented. "...it's very hard to understand how it works and what exactly they're looking for. I know they give you a little matrix of, like, here are things we're looking for...but what happens behind the scenes?"

## 2. Perceived/real lack of support from supervisors and effective performance development processes.

The focus groups (2017) indicated that supervisor support was instrumental when participants considered applying for promotion. Experiences varied widely: some reported strong supervisory coaching (including on PRO), while others were discouraged from applying and relied on informal mentoring. *“There was a list of people who’d been promoted that came out ... after that, he said you have to apply for a promotion next year.”* Other participants reported being actively discouraged from applying for promotions. *“I would like to start to apply for a promotion and he’s like, oh, you’re not even going to get confirmed...”*. These participants noted difficulty accessing support with promotion applications and the impact this had on the decision to apply.

In the 2019 D&I Survey, levels of agreement with the statement ‘I am proactively encouraged to apply for promotion’ were low for all genders, at 45% (Table 9). Where supervisor support was lacking, women focus group participants tended to seek informal mentoring and peer support to assist with career planning and promotion applications.

**Table 9: Percentage agreement from academic survey respondents in being proactively encouraged to apply for promotion (2019 D&I Survey)**

(gendered response rate unknown)	2019			
	Overall (1792 respondents)	F	M	X
<i>I am proactively encouraged to apply for promotion</i>	45%	43%	48%	40%

## 3. Low levels of trust in promotion process, application of PRO and equitable decision making.

Focus group participants (2017) provided a range of perspectives on how PRO was applied within the promotion process. Many participants were unsure about how PRO statements were assessed and whether the inclusion of relevant details in a promotion application consciously, or unconsciously, influenced panel members’ assessment. For example, one participant said *“I think my concern (about PRO) is that it’s not applied uniformly. So, you are reliant upon the person reading it and their interpretation of that.”* Participants reported feeling sceptical about the effectiveness of PRO policies. One participant felt their circumstances could be ignored despite positive messaging *“The whole system says no, no, no, this is great... you can write that you were pregnant (but) – everybody ignores it,”* indicating an overall lack of trust in the process.

## Progress (Activities and Outputs)

Following the Bronze Self-Assessment, the University delivered a coordinated set of initiatives (2019–2024) that directly map to the sub-barriers: mentoring and peer support, clearer communications and PRO guidance, supervisor capability, bias-aware panel processes, and centralised promotion management.

**Table 10: The relationship between sub-barriers and actions taken to address them**

Sub-barriers (2016-2019)	1. <b>Uncertainty about the promotion process and what is required for a successful application.</b>	2. <b>Perceived/ real lack of support from supervisors and effective performance development processes.</b>	3. <b>Low levels of trust in promotion process and equitable decision making.</b>
Activities (Delivered 2020 – 2024)	1.1 Develop a structured mentoring program to support the process of promotion for women and gender diverse academics.		
	1.2 Improve promotions communication and training for potential applicants, particularly regarding PRO.		
		1.3 Improve the quality of performance development conversations relating to promotions by providing advice to supervisors and staff.	1.4 Provision of training for promotion panels around mitigating bias in the specific context of reviewing and assessing promotion applications.
	1.5 Centralisation of promotion process management.		

### 1.1 Develop a structured mentoring program to support the process for promotion

A mentoring program to support promotion was developed in 2021 in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS). Following this successful approach, a University-wide program was introduced for other faculties in 2022.

#### 1.1.1 Supporting Women in MDHS (SWiM)

The MDHS SWiM mentoring program has been delivered annually since 2021 for Level C and D women and gender diverse academics, including Level B from 2022 onwards. The program combines one-on-one mentoring, peer network sessions and a program of events and workshops. Eligible mentees are sent a direct email invitation. Mentees are matched with senior academics outside of their discipline and local Department/School who provide advice and guidance throughout the promotions process. Four facilitated workshops focused on application preparation, promotion criteria, career context/narrative and leadership are delivered each cycle of the yearly program, as well as monthly 'Inspiring Stories' webinars and a celebration to conclude the program.

**Table 11: Supporting Women in MDHS (SWiM) Participants**

SWiM Mentoring Program Participants	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
<b>Mentees</b> Women and gender diverse academics at Level B, C and D who intend to apply for academic promotion this year are invited to join the program.	37 (Level C 26, Level D 11)	67 (Level B 24, Level C 40, Level D 3)	44 (Level B 21, Level C 14, Level D 9)	56 (Level B 32, Level C 21, Level D 3)	204
<b>Mentors</b> Mentors at Level C, D and E are matched with mentees. Mentors may be of any gender.	37	65	44	56	202

\*Note where there are not identical numbers of mentors and mentees, mentors have taken on two mentees.

**Table 12: Proportion of women and gender diverse staff (Level C) in MDHS are participating SWiM**

SWiM Participation Rates	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mentees	26	40	14	21
Level C Cohort, women and gender diverse academics (MDHS)	205	229	241	269
Proportion of cohort	13%	17%	6%	8%

### 1.1.2 Supporting Talent & Enabling Progression (STEP)

The STEP mentoring program, delivered from 2022, has been designed to support Level C women and non-binary academics in navigating the promotion process and developing cross-faculty networks. STEP extends on SWiM by targeting the Level C crossover point, where the drop-off begins, thereby widening the pipeline to Level D across all faculties. Participation and the cross-disciplinary matching-model built confidence and readiness to apply, directly addressing Sub-barrier 1 (uncertainty) and Sub-barrier 2 (inconsistent support). Following the delivery of STEP for three years, expanding and designing a program providing targeted support for promotion from Level D to E is included as a further action (2.1 & 2.2).

Eligible mentees are sent a direct invitation to participate, this includes all women and gender diverse academics at Level C, not including MDHS staff who are invited to SWiM. Further eligibility includes 'considering applying for promotion in the near future.' Of the Level C cohort, 20% participated in 2022, 13% in 2023, and 11% in 2024 (Table 14). Participation numbers will continue to be monitored.

The program includes:

- Mentee and mentor induction;
- Workshop 1: Preparing your application;
- Workshop 2: Crafting a narrative; and
- Program wrap-up and celebration.

**Table 13: STEP Mentoring Program Participants**

STEP Mentoring Program Participants	2022	2023	2024	Total
<b>Mentees</b> Mentees are Level C academic staff who are women, or gender-diverse and are preparing to apply for promotion to Level D. Trans women, non-binary and gender diverse people are warmly encouraged to apply.	44	31	30	105
<b>Mentors</b> Mentors will be Level D or above and may be of any gender.	44	31	29	104

\*Note where there are not identical numbers of mentors and mentees, mentors have taken on two mentees.

**Table 14: Proportion of women and gender diverse staff (all faculties excl MDHS) participating in STEP**

STEP Participation Rates	2022	2023	2024
Mentees	44	31	30
Level C Cohort, women and gender diverse academics (not including MDHS)	225	232	273
Proportion of cohort	19.6%	13.4%	11.0%

## 1.2 Improve promotions communication and training for potential applicants, particularly regarding performance relative to opportunity

Promotion communications and PRO briefings were scaled University-wide to reduce uncertainty, increase transparency, and ensure consistent understanding across faculties. Improving understanding and building trust in promotion processes requires a whole of institution approach and therefore the women promotion briefing sessions, PRO briefing sessions and PRO guidelines are available to academics at all levels.

### 1.2.1 Women’s promotion briefing sessions

In 2019, the University held three promotion briefing sessions for academic women. These sessions focused on key considerations for women and gender diverse staff applying for promotion, acknowledging existing barriers and inequalities, and providing information on PRO. The women’s promotion briefing sessions continue to run annually (Table 15).

### 1.2.2 Performance relative to opportunity (PRO) briefing sessions

PRO briefing sessions were introduced in 2021. The sessions aim to clarify what PRO is, demonstrate how a PRO case is assessed and reinforce the importance of PRO in a fair and equitable promotion process. The briefing includes how to write an effective PRO case, referencing the UoM PRO guidelines.

Although participation in the sessions has varied, we note a spike in 2021 and 2022 when sessions were held entirely online, and a drop in attendance for in person sessions. We are unable to provide participation data for the Level C/D cohort as data was not disaggregated at the time of collection.

**Table 15: Promotion briefing sessions participation**

Session	Cohort	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Women’s promotion briefing	Women	127 (across three sessions)	75	175 (across two sessions)	226 (online session)	105 (across two sessions)	92 (across two sessions)	800
Performance relative to opportunity briefing	All staff	NA	NA	55	102	105	80	342

### 1.2.3 Assessing Academic Performance Relative to Opportunity: Guidelines

The Assessing Academic Performance Relative to Opportunity guidelines have been regularly reviewed, since their introduction in 2016 with an improved version published in 2022. The guidelines provide an overview of the objectives and principles of PRO, followed by factors for consideration when assessing PRO, and specific examples of its application. The guide is intended to provide consistency in how PRO is applied and transparency about the assessment process.

**Table 16: Changes to Performance Relative to Opportunity Guidelines**

Changes to Assessing Performance Relative to Opportunity Guidelines	
Key change:	Example from guidelines:
Align objectives to University strategy and provide the ‘why’ for PRO.	“In keeping with Advancing Melbourne, the aspiration of the University is to encourage and support staff to fulfil their potential. Academic PRO is a positive acknowledgment that the University is an inclusive workplace that supports fairness and equity in relation to the appointment, confirmation, promotion and career progression of academic staff.”
Objectives to include a broader understanding and more diverse examples of personal circumstances, career interruptions and authorised leave of absences.	“Personal circumstances relevant in assessing PRO include care relationships, disability, medical conditions and part-time and flexible working arrangements. Relevant career interruptions include parental leave and extended sick leave. Relevant leave of absence may include leave authorised to enable an academic to undertake an industry secondment or similar career development activity outside the academy. Other circumstances may include natural disasters (such as the Australian bushfires in 2019-2020), global health issues (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) and emergency situations with significant or longer-term impacts. The COVID-19 pandemic will have both short and long-term effects on academic work and academic achievements, and possibly the balance between teaching and research during the pandemic, and these may differ for individuals.”

Clarifying application of PRO in appointments, confirmation and promotion.	“Factors to take into account when assessing academic performance relative to opportunity in appointments, confirmations and promotion.”
Framing PRO as a positive acknowledgment of what staff have achieved given opportunities available.	<p>“Consideration of Academic PRO facilitates positive acknowledgement of what has been achieved by academic staff given the opportunities available.”</p> <p>“The consideration of Academic PRO does not assume or expect lesser standards of performance, rather it involves assessing the quality and impact of academic achievements relative to the opportunities available. The PRO approach provides for a nuanced and contextual assessment of achievements relative to personal circumstances that may have had an adverse effect.”</p>
Increase the number and diversity of examples of how PRO considerations could be applied.	Additional examples including the impacts of COVID-19.

### 1.3 Improve the quality of performance development conversations relating to promotions by providing advice to supervisors and staff

The Academic Performance Development Framework (PDF) supports the performance and career development of all continuing and fixed-term academic staff of the University. The Academic PDF sets out our approach to annual and triennial PDF reviews.

A step-by-step guide for supervisors was developed and distributed to faculty leaders in 2023. This guide highlights the importance of promotion discussions with staff and the important role supervisors have in encouraging staff to apply for promotion.

As part of efforts to strengthen promotion conversations, faculties were provided with lists identifying women at the top two salary increments at each level to support targeted supervisor discussions about readiness for promotion. While individual follow-up conversations were not centrally tracked, this approach helped prompt more proactive identification of eligible candidates, particularly at Levels C and D where women’s progression has historically slowed. The University will continue to embed these targeted prompts within annual and triennial performance development cycles to ensure all eligible academics receive equitable encouragement and support for promotion.

### 1.4 Provision of training for promotion panels around mitigating bias in the specific context of reviewing and assessing promotion applications

The University’s largest faculty, Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, introduced briefings for promotion panels on PRO and mitigating bias in their assessment of promotion applications from 2021 onwards. These aimed to raise awareness of the potential impacts of bias on the assessment of promotion applications and the review of performance relative to opportunity statements.

The Faculty of Engineering and Information and Technology also introduced a briefing to mitigate bias on promotion panels in 2022, and the Faculty of Arts distributed unconscious bias training material alongside panel briefings.

Building on these faculty-specific activities, a university-wide workshop on mitigating bias and preventing discrimination in promotion panels was held in 2023. Participants included Associate Deans D&I and Deputy Deans, faculty-level human resources staff and the University-wide academic careers team. The workshop included presentations from the University’s Manager, Academic Careers, and a subject matter expert. A panel of faculty representatives shared their own strategies to mitigate bias and prevent discrimination in the context of reviewing and assessing promotion applications.

As outlined in Further Action 4.2, from 2025 there has been consistent training for all faculties, Faculty Appointment and Promotion Committees, prior to promotion rounds. This will include role expectations, changes from previous years, use of Academic Career Benchmarks and Indicators, applying PRO considerations and mitigating bias. This training is coordinated by the Academic Careers team in collaboration with the Faculty Deans and Faculty Appointment and Promotion Committee.

### 1.5 Centralisation of promotion process management

Prior to 2021, the promotion process, including collection and review of applications and communication about them, was managed within faculties.

From the 2022 promotion round onwards, these processes were managed by a newly formed team within the University's central HR services. This resulted in improved consistency and visibility by centralising the promotion application, review and communication processes. A central promotion data dashboard was also established to review promotion trends including gender-disaggregated reports.

## Outcomes and Impacts

The University's promotion data show sustained and measurable progress toward gender parity at senior academic levels. Women's success rates were already strong prior to interventions, averaging around 78% at Level D (Table 6) and 82% at Level E (Table 7) between 2016 and 2019, indicating a fair and consistent promotion assessment process. The most significant shift since 2019 has been in participation: more women are applying for promotion and continuing to succeed, supported by targeted mentoring (SWiM and STEP), clearer guidance on Performance Relative to Opportunity (PRO), and stronger supervisory conversations.

**Table 17: Summary of desired outcomes, indicators and means of verification.**

Key barrier:	Desired outcome	Indicator of success	Means of verification
<b>Insufficient numbers of academic promotions are a barrier to gender parity at Levels D and E</b>	1. Increase women's proportion of applications to Levels D & E.	Women's share of promotion applications equal or higher than men's.  Application rate equal men's.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion data</li> <li>Headcount data</li> </ul>
	2. Increase the number of women promoted to Levels D & E.	Success rates same as or higher than before interventions to increase application rates.  Number of women promoted is equal to or higher than the number of men promoted.  Promotion rate equal to men's.	
	3. Achieve gender parity at senior academic appointments (Levels D & E).	Increased proportion of women in senior academic appointments.	
Sub-barrier	Desired impact	Indicator of success	Means of verification
<b>1. Uncertainty about the promotion process and what is required for a successful application.</b>	1. Improved shared understanding of promotion process, including Performance Relative to Opportunity.	Self-reported understanding of promotion process, including Performance Relative to Opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey (program evaluation, STEP and Promotion Briefing Sessions)</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
<b>2. Perceived/ real lack of support from supervisors and effective performance development processes.</b>	2. Improved perception of support and effectiveness of performance development processes.	Self-reported improved perception of support and effectiveness.	
<b>3. Low levels of trust in promotion process, application of PRO and equitable decision making</b>	3. Improved trust in promotion process.	Self-reported improved trust in promotion process.	

**Table 18: Data sources for outcomes and impact**

Data sources for outcomes and impact	
<b>Promotion and headcount data</b>	Headcount data is collected and reported through workforce data management systems. When reported on an annual basis, the data is collected as of January 31 <sup>st</sup> that year. Promotion data is collected and reported through the Academic Promotion Dashboard.
<b>Focus groups</b>	In August 2024, targeted focus groups were held with previous STEP (Level C, D & E) mentoring participants to evaluate the program’s impacts and understand more broadly the barriers and enablers in academic careers. 11 women participated across three groups.
<b>STEP Mentoring Post Program Survey</b>	STEP Mentoring participants (Level C) are invited to complete an evaluation survey at the end of the program. The survey was reviewed in 2023 to better understand progress against barriers previously identified. The response rate was 10/30 in 2023 and 14/31 in 2024. All participants in both years were Level C women intending to apply to Level D. SWiM mentoring participants are also surveyed during and after the program each year, to continually improve the program
<b>Women’s Promotion Briefing Evaluation</b>	Following the Women’s promotion and PRO briefing sessions a short survey is sent to attendees. Number of responses vary: 25 (2020), 38 (2021), 19 (2022), <6 (2023), and <6 (2024).
<b>Staff Survey 2023</b>	The Staff Survey was administered by a third party in 2023. This includes academic and professional full-time and part-time staff. The overall response rate was 49%, with 3,014 responses from academic staff. The gender disaggregation was 1498 women, 1096 men, 31 non-binary and 29 prefer not to say.

## Outcomes

### Desired outcome 1: Increase women’s application rate and proportion of applications to Level D & E

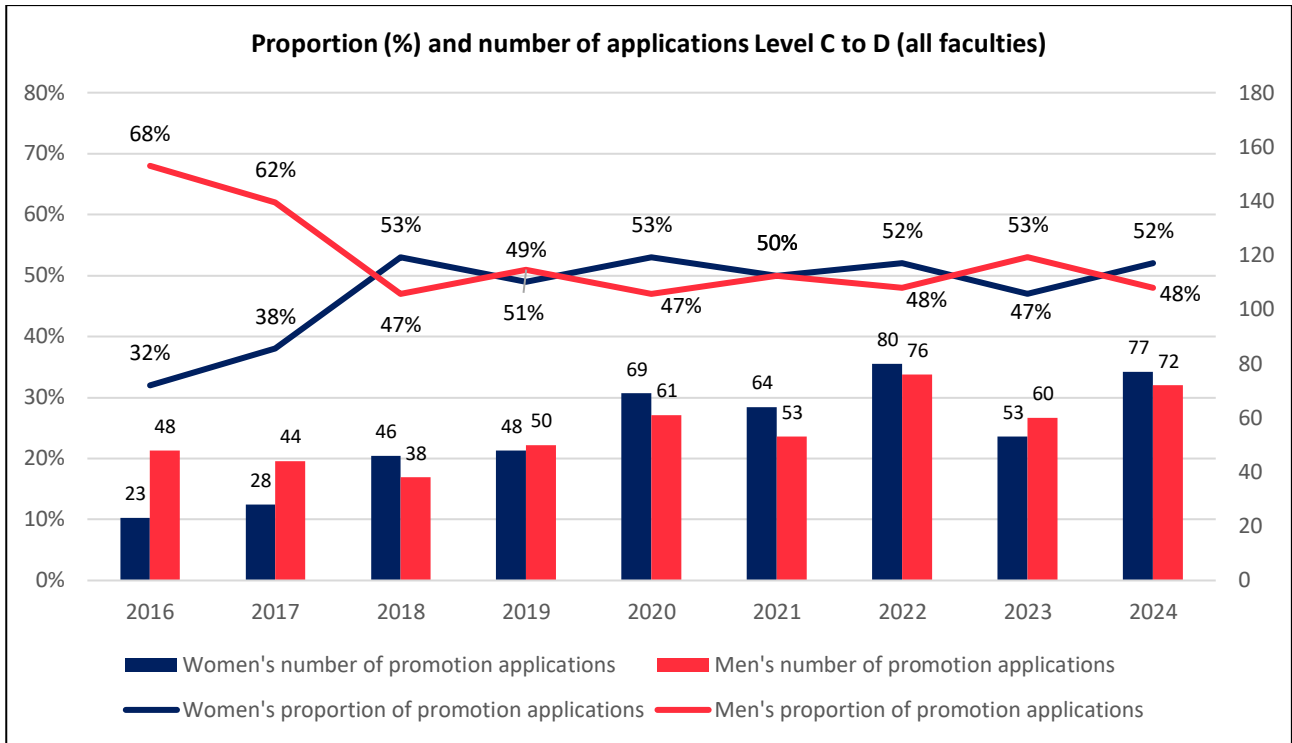
Two measures are used to interpret progress: 1) The proportion of applications shows women’s visibility among all applicants, while the 2) application rate (applications as a percentage of the eligible cohort) shows how often eligible women apply. The rate provides the clearest picture of behavioural change because it accounts for cohort growth and variation in readiness.

Women’s share of total promotion applications to senior academic levels has remained relatively stable, while the absolute number of women applying has continued to rise. In 2024, women accounted for 52% of all Level D applications (Figure 4) and 44% of Level E applications (Figure 5).

Across Levels D and E, total applications increased for both genders, with a greater rise among women. Because women remain under-represented at senior levels (36% at Level D and 32% at Level E 2019) (Figure 1), sustained progress will require women’s application rates to exceed current representation. The evidence shows that women are applying more often within their cohorts, especially at promotion-ready increments and among part-time staff. Continued monitoring, including applications from gender-diverse academics, will inform targeted strategies to maintain equitable progression.

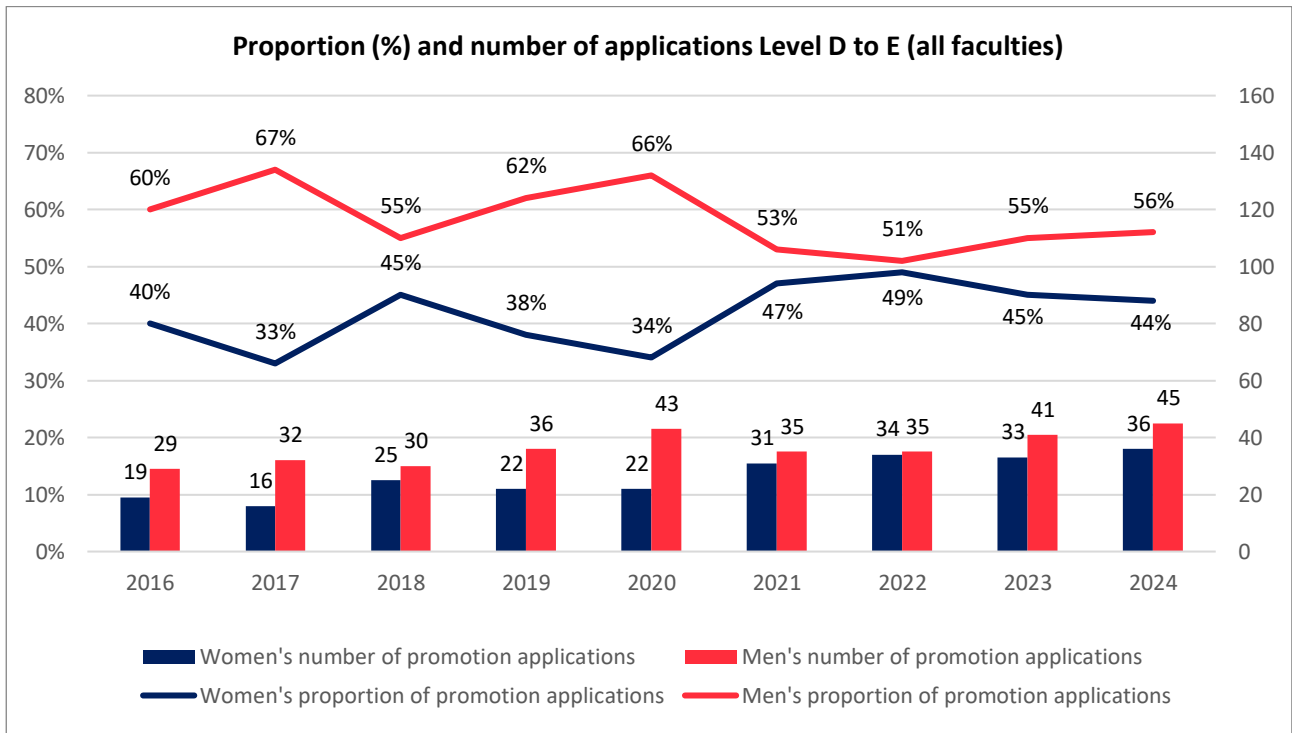
### Proportion of applications

Figure 3: Proportion of promotion applications from Level C to D (all faculties)



Women’s share of Level D promotion applications increased from 49% in 2019 to 52% in 2024, showing a clear upward trend in women’s visibility among applicants and greater engagement from a growing eligible cohort.

Figure 4: Proportion of promotion applications Level D to E (all faculties)



Women’s share of Level E promotion applications increased from 38% in 2019 to 44% in 2024 and has since been maintained, despite pandemic-related disruptions that might have reduced applications.

## Application rates

At the University of Melbourne, each academic level includes several increments (six for Level C and four for Level D). The eligible cohort for promotion is defined as staff in the higher increments of the preceding level (C.5–C.6 for promotion to Level D, D.3–D.4 for promotion to Level E). Because most applications arise from these increments, application rate offers the clearest indicator of progress over time.

**Table 19: Application rate to Level D (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level D	Cohort (Level C)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	418	459	48	50	11.5%	10.9%
2024	542	470	77	72	14.2%	15.3%

Women's Level D application rate rose from 11.5% to 14.2%, while men's increased from 10.9% to 15.3%. Although women submitted slightly more applications (77 vs 72 in 2024), their rate is slightly lower due to a 30% growth in their eligible Level C cohort (418 to 542) compared with a stable men's cohort (459 to 470).

**Table 20: Application rate to Level D part-time (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level D PT <0.8 FTE	Cohort (Level C, PT)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	157	100	12	11	7.6%	11.0%
2024	219	134	21	13	9.6%	9.7%

Part-time application rates are now effectively equal (9.6% for women, 9.7% for men in 2024, up from 7.6% and 11.0% in 2019). This may reflect positive impacts of Performance Relative to Opportunity (PRO) and flexible work policies.

Eligible cohort for Level D is C.5–C.6; rates reflect promotion-ready staff.

**Table 21: Application rate to Level D (Level C.5, C.6) (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level D	Cohort (Level C.5, C.6)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	148	222	26	37	17.6%	16.7%
2024	159	196	33	40	20.8%	18.0%

Among staff at C.5–C.6, women's application rate rose from 17.6% to 20.8% (2019–2024), compared with men's 16.7% to 18.0%. This indicates that women at higher increments are applying at comparable or higher rates.

**Table 22: Application rate to Level E (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level E	Cohort (Level D)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	211	340	22	36	10.4%	10.6%
2024	316	362	36	45	11.4%	12.4%

Women's Level E application rate increased from 10.4% to 11.4%, while men's rose from 10.6% to 12.4%. Women submitted 36 applications compared with 45 for men in 2024. The slightly smaller increase for women reflects a 50% expansion of their eligible Level D cohort (211 to 316) relative to men's modest growth (340 to 362).

**Table 23: Application rate to Level E part-time (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level E	Cohort (Level D)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
PT <0.8 FTE						
2019	54	71	<6	<6	NA	NA
2024	111	86	<6	<6	NA	NA

Numbers remain small and, to protect privacy, are not made available; trend monitoring will continue as data maturity improves. Application rate unable to be calculated due to privacy.

**Table 24: Application rate to Level E (Level D.3, D.4) (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level E	Cohort (Level D.3,D.4)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	112	228	17	36	15.2%	15.8%
2024	187	234	35	41	18.7%	17.5%

At D.3–D.4, women’s application rate rose from 15.2% to 18.7%, exceeding men’s 15.8% to 17.5%. This indicates growing readiness and confidence among eligible women. Eligible cohort for Level E is D.3–D.4; rates reflect promotion-ready staff.

## Desired outcome 2: Maintain success rates/Increase the number of women promoted to Level D & E

### Success rate

The University sought to increase women’s promotion applications while maintaining fair and consistent outcomes. At Level D, women’s success rate increased from 77% (2019) to 82% (2024), while men’s fell from 82% to 75% (Table 25). At Level E, women’s success has remained high (84 - 90% most years; 81% in 2024) while men’s fell to 58% (Table 25). These results demonstrate that, growth in women’s participation has been achieved, without compromising on the standard of their applications.

**Table 25: Comparison of promotion success by gender (Level D, all faculties)**

Year	Women Level D	Men Level D	Women Level D - PRO	Men Level D - PRO	Women Level D - PT	Men Level D - PT
2016	74% (17/23)	65% (32/48)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2017	61% (17/28)	73% (31/44)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2018	78% (35/46)	74% (29/38)	84% (26/31)	58% (7/12)	73% (11/15)	100% (≤6/≤6)
2019	77% (37/48)	82% (42/50)	83% (29/35)	79% (15/19)	100% (12/12)	73% (8/11)
2020	78% (54/69)	72% (44/61)	80% (43/54)	67% (12/18)	80% (16/20)	71% (≤6/7)
2021	81% (52/64)	79% (42/53)	78% (39/50)	74% (20/27)	82% (18/22)	71% (≤6/7)
2022	83% (66/80)	81% (61/76)	81% (56/69)	83% (39/47)	75% (18/24)	88% (7/8)
2023	85% (45/53)	68% (41/60)	83% (34/41)	53% (17/32)	85% (11/13)	40% (≤6/≤6)
2024	82% (63/77)	75% (54/72)	85% (50/59)	68% (28/41)	86% (18/21)	69% (9/13)

Women’s success improved from 77% to 82% (2019–2024), while men’s declined from 82% to 75%. Among staff citing Performance Relative to Opportunity (PRO), women achieved 85% (2024) compared with men’s 68%. Part-time women maintained high success (86% in 2024 vs 69% for men).

**Table 26: Comparison of promotion success by gender (Level E, all faculties)**

Year	Women Level E	Men Level E	Women Level E - PRO	Men Level E - PRO	Women Level E - PT	Men Level E - PT
2016	80% (15/19)	73% (22/29)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2017	81% (11/16)	66% (17/32)	NA	NA	NA	NA
2018	83% (22/25)	74% (22/30)	89% (17/19)	67% (≤6/≤6)	83% (≤6/≤6)	50% (≤6/≤6)
2019	78% (18/22)	83% (31/36)	84% (16/19)	77% (10/13)	100% (≤6/≤6)	100% (≤6/≤6)
2020	84% (17/22)	80% (35/43)	86% (12/14)	70% (7/10)	100% (≤6/≤6)	100% (8/8)
2021	90% (28/31)	82% (24/35)	88% (21/24)	73% (11/15)	83% (≤6/≤6)	60% (≤6/≤6)
2022	86% (31/34)	82% (27/35)	93% (26/28)	67% (8/12)	100% (≤6/≤6)	100% (≤6/≤6)
2023	84% (27/33)	75% (32/41)	83% (19/23)	69% (9/13)	82% (9/11)	70% (≤6/10)
2024	81% (29/36)	58% (26/45)	89% (25/28)	41% (7/17)	100% (≤6/≤6)	57% (≤6/7)

Women’s success remained consistently strong (84 - 90% most years; 81% in 2024) while men’s declined to 58%. Women with PRO achieved 89% in 2024, men 41%. The part-time data set is small, so the trends are best viewed as approximate.

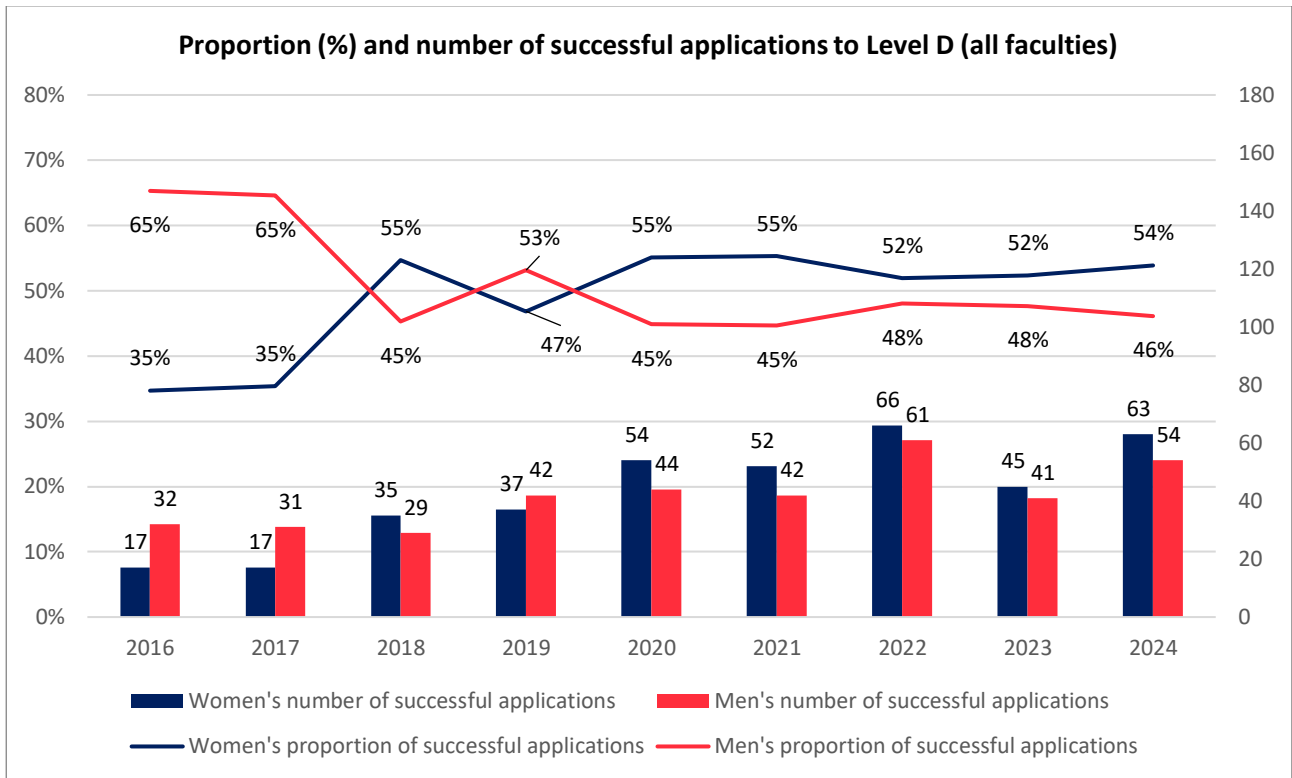
### Number (#) and proportion (%) of successful applications

For promotion to Level D, women have had a higher number of successful applications than men since 2020. In 2023, when men had a greater number of applications (Figure 4), more women were promoted due to their high success rates (Figure 7).

For promotion to Level E, the number of women’s successful applications increased after 2020. Both the number of applications and successful applications were unusually high for men in 2020, with the highest number of successful applications in the 9-year period. We do not have qualitative data to explain this change, but it is possible that the Covid-19 pandemic influenced promotion application rates that year. Women have a higher number of successful applications in 2021, 2022 and 2024, despite lower numbers of applications (Figure 8). This is a positive measure of how women have been supported to be well prepared for promotion.

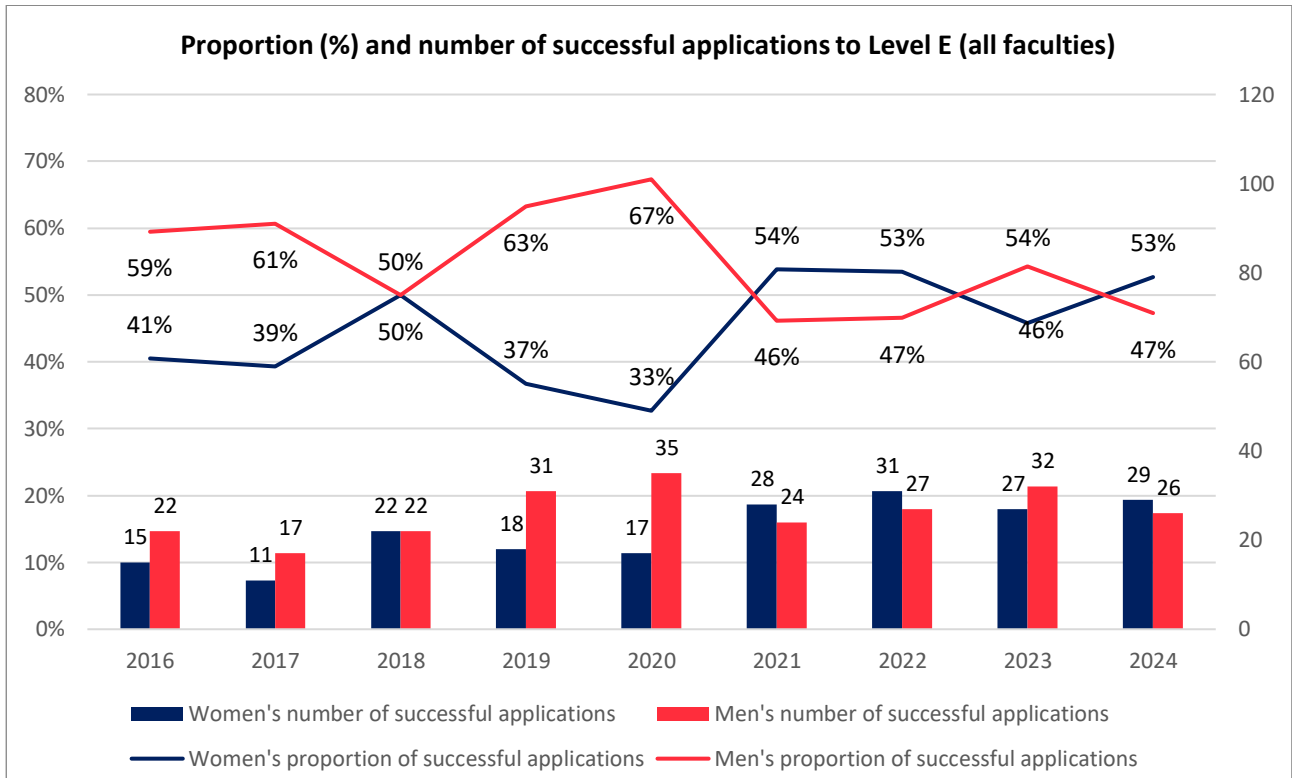
Due to lower numbers of gender diverse academics, trends relating to number of applications and successful applications are difficult to determine, but they continue to be monitored.

**Figure 5: Comparison of promotion success by gender to Level D**



Women have achieved more promotions to Level D than men each year from 2020 to 2024. This reflects both increased participation and continued high success.

**Figure 6: Comparison of promotion success by gender to Level E**



Women recorded more promotions than men in 2021, 2022 and 2024. The spike in 2020 for men appears to be an outlier when viewed against the multi-year trend.

## Promotion rates

Promotion rate combines both application rate and success rate relative to the eligible cohort. It shows the proportion of the eligible population that achieved promotion, making it a clear indicator of who progressed within the cohort.

Women's success and promotion rates have remained strong even with an expanding pipeline of applicants. At Level D, women's success increased and the overall promotion rate matched men's, demonstrating sustained fairness as participation rose (Table 27). At Level E, women's promotion rate now exceeds men's (9.2% vs 7.2%) (Table 30), reflecting a balanced and effective promotions process. These outcomes confirm that the University's focus on equity, preparation, and PRO guidance has translated into gradual changes in culture and practice.

For promotion to Level E, women's application rate was similarly one percentage point less than men's in 2024, yet the promotion rate was two percentage points higher than men's, 9.2% for women and 7.2% for men. This result is due to a decrease in men's promotion rate, rather than an increase in women's promotion rate. Although it is positive to see the women's promotion rate increase, men's success rates should continue to be monitored.

**Table 27: Promotion rate to Level D (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level D	Cohort (Level C)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications / cohorts		# Successful applications		Success rate		Promotion rate = number of promotions / cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
<b>2019</b>	418	459	48	50	11.5%	10.9%	37	42	77%	84%	8.9%	9.2%
<b>2024</b>	542	470	77	72	14.2%	15.3%	63	54	82%	75%	11.6%	11.5%
<b>Change</b>	124	11	29	22	2.7%	4.4%	26	12	5%	-9%	2.8%	2.3%

Women's promotion rate increased from 8.9% to 11.6%, while men's moved from 9.2% to 11.5%. Despite women's slightly lower application rate in 2024 (14.2% vs 15.3%), their higher success (82% vs 75%) resulted in parity overall. To have a similar promotion rate despite the significant increase in the women's Level C cohort is a positive result, demonstrating the continually shifting pipeline for women to senior academic levels.

**Table 28: Promotion rate to Level D part-time (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level D	Cohort (Level C, PT)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications / cohorts		# Successful applications		Success rate		Promotion rate = number of promotions / cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
<b>PT &lt;0.8 FTE</b>												
<b>2019</b>	157	100	12	11	7.6%	11.0%	12	8	100%	73%	7.6%	8.0%
<b>2024</b>	219	134	21	13	9.6%	9.7%	18	9	86%	69%	8.2%	6.7%
<b>Change</b>	62	34	9	2	1.9%	-1.3%	6	1	-14%	-3%	0.6%	-1.3%

Part-time promotion rates are now nearly equal: women 7.6% to 8.2%, men 8.0% to 6.7%. This reflects women's stronger success (86% vs 69%) and equivalent application rates (9.6% vs 9.7% in 2024). Women's parity in part-time promotion rates demonstrates that the University's Performance Relative to Opportunity (PRO) guidance is working as intended, enabling flexible and part-time staff to achieve equitable outcomes. Men have experienced a modest decline over time. This is something to monitor.

**Table 29: Promotion rate to Level D (Level C.5, C.6) (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level D	Cohort (Level C.5,C.6)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts		# Successful applications		Success rate		Promotion rate = number of promotions / cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	148	222	26	37	17.6%	16.7%	22	31	85%	84%	14.9%	14.0%
2024	159	196	33	40	20.8%	18.0%	27	29	82%	73%	17.0%	13.1%
<b>Change</b>	11	-26	7	3	3%	1%	5	-2	-3%	-11%	2.1%	-0.9%

Among staff at the highest increments (C.5-C.6), women’s application rate increased from 17.6% to 20.8%, compared with men’s 16.7% to 18.0%. Women maintained a higher success rate (82% vs 73% in 2024), resulting in a larger rise in promotion rate (14.9% to 17.0%) than men (14.0% to 13.1%). This confirms that women at the upper increments are not only applying at comparable rates but also converting those applications into promotion more effectively.

**Table 30: Promotion rate to Level E (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level E	Cohort (Level D)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts		# Successful applications		Success rate		Promotion rate = number of promotions / cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	211	340	22	36	10.4%	10.6%	18	31	82%	86%	8.5%	9.1%
2024	316	362	36	45	11.4%	12.4%	29	26	81%	58%	9.2%	7.2%
<b>Change</b>	105	22	14	9	1.0%	1.8%	11	-5	-1%	-28%	0.6%	-1.9%

Women’s promotion rate improved from 8.5% to 9.2%, while men’s declined from 9.1% to 7.2%. In 2024 women had a slightly lower application rate (11.4% vs 12.4%) but maintained a much higher success rate (81% vs 58%), resulting in the higher promotion rate.

**Table 31: Promotion rate to Level E (Level D.3, D.4) (2019 vs 2024)**

Promotion to Level E	Cohort (Level D.3,D.4)		#Applications		Application rate = number of applications/cohorts		# Successful applications		Success rate		Promotion rate = number of promotions / cohorts	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
2019	112	228	17	36	15.2%	15.8%	17	31	100%	86%	15.2%	13.6%
2024	187	234	35	41	18.7%	17.5%	28	25	80%	61%	15.0%	10.7%
<b>Change</b>	75	6	18	5	3.5%	1.7%	11	-6	-20%	-25%	-0.2%	-2.9%

At the highest two increments (D.3 - D.4), women’s success rate in 2024 was 80% compared with 61% for men. For this cohort the promotion rate remains relatively unchanged, which women’s higher than men’s in 2019 (15.2% vs 13.6%). However, when viewed across the full Level E cohort, women’s overall promotion rate remained higher (9.2% vs 7.2%) (Table 30), confirming that the increased pool of women applicants has translated into successful progression.

**Promotion rate to Level E – part time**

Numbers remain small and, to protect privacy, are not made available; trend monitoring will continue as data maturity improves.

### Desired outcome 3: Increase the proportion of women in senior academic appointments (Levels D & E)

Since 2019, women’s representation in senior academic roles has increased steadily, supported by rising applications and sustained success rates described in Outcomes 1 and 2. Women now make up 47% of Level D staff (up from 36% in 2019, an additional 105 women) and 39 % of Level E staff (up from 32% in 2019, an additional 99 women). These gains demonstrate that interventions to improve clarity of promotion information, mentoring and supervisor engagement are translating into measurable structural change.

**Figure 7: Gender distribution across academic levels 2019 vs 2024 (all faculties)**

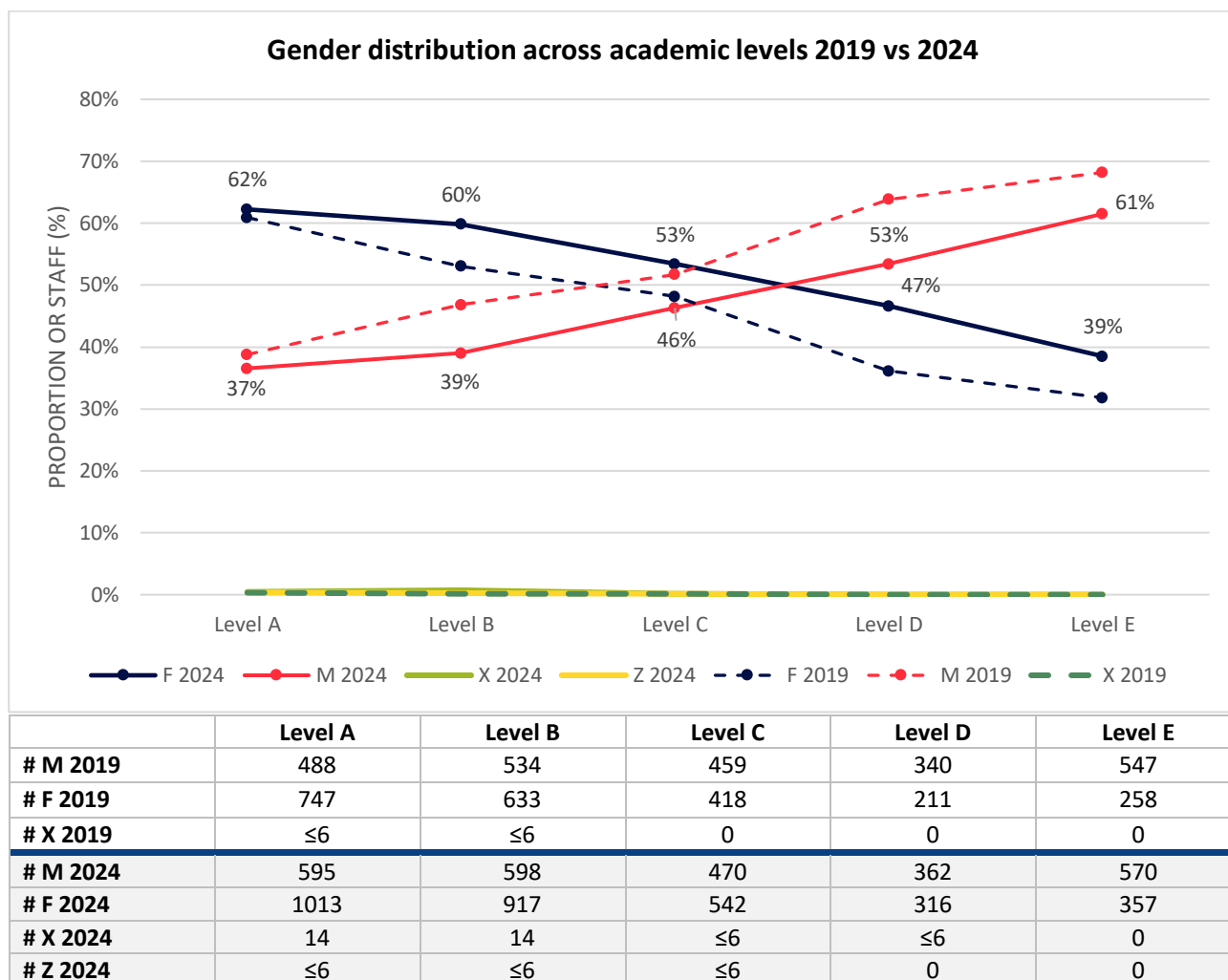


Figure 9 shows that women’s share of senior appointments continues to grow. The proportion at Level D rose 11 percentage points (36 % to 47 %) and at Level E by 7 points (32% to 39%). Headcounts increased by 105 and 99 respectively, showing that growth reflects genuine expansion of women’s representation rather than reduction of men’s numbers.

These increases indicate that actions under the mentoring programs (SWiM and STEP), PRO training, and enhanced communication have helped maintain momentum while the overall cohort has grown. Sustaining this trajectory will require women’s application and success rates to continue exceeding representation at preceding levels, particularly for Level E progression.

**Figure 8: Gender distribution across levels PT\* vs FT comparison 2024 (all faculties)**

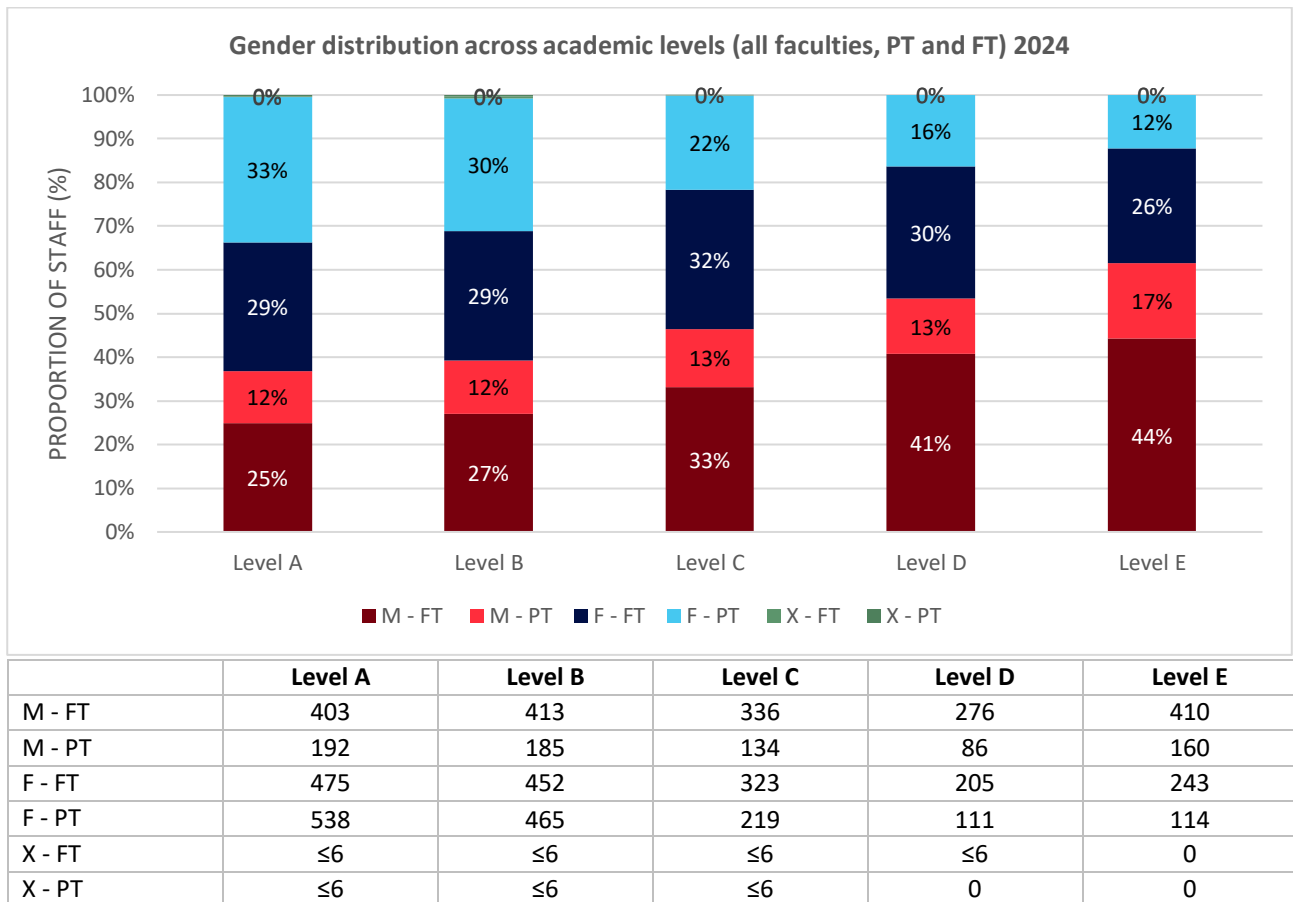


Figure 10 shows work-pattern distribution. At Level D, part-time women increased from 11% to 16%, and at Level E from 8% to 12%, compared with a smaller rise among full-time women (24% to 26%). This reflects greater flexibility and equitable consideration of part-time and PRO applicants in senior promotions.

The proportion and number of gender-diverse academics has increased across all levels, likely due to improved self-reporting mechanisms, but remains less than 1% at senior levels. Building on this, the University will continue targeted actions to encourage self-identification and visibility in promotions data collection, ensuring inclusive monitoring and support for gender-diverse academics across all levels.

## Impacts

### Desired impact 1: Improved shared understanding of promotion process, including Performance Relative to Opportunity and what is required for a successful application

Women at Level C and D who attended promotion and PRO briefing sessions consistently reported feeling better equipped and more confident about applying for promotion. Many said the sessions clarified what constitutes a strong case, particularly how to frame Performance Relative to Opportunity (PRO). While we do not have data to confirm whether these women subsequently applied, it is reasonable to infer that increasing the number of women actively considering promotion is likely to contribute to a rise in applications over time. Feedback from participants in these activities also reflects a better shared understanding of the promotion process, particularly on ways to construct an effective PRO case.

“I think the Women’s briefing, PRO session and mentoring make a big difference. They demonstrated to me the university acknowledging a problem. These activities validated my experience and concerns navigating the promotion process. The visibility of these programs matter. When they occur, they open conversations about the variety of experiences, and the gendered experiences of promotion”. *Case Study: Woman, Level D, Science*

Across 2019–2024, 800 women participated in Women’s Promotion Briefing Sessions, with 100% of respondents in 2023 and 2024 rating them helpful. This consistency demonstrates their sustained impact on women preparing to move from Level C to D.

**Table 32: Feedback from Women’s Promotion Briefings**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
How helpful did you find the session in understanding the promotion process? (very helpful or somewhat helpful)	NA	89% (n25)	92% (n38)	100% (n19)	100% (n<6)	100% (n<6)

Respondents strongly felt that the women’s promotion briefing sessions should continue as they provide an opportunity to discuss challenges or concerns women face, in addition to general information. This comment from a Level C participant highlights the program’s dual value: foundational information and direct access to senior academic insights. *“Good to have the time to go through the basic information but also to ask specific questions of someone with a great deal of experience in the process of both applying for promotion and being on the panel” (written feedback, Attendee, women’s promotion briefing session).*

STEP and SWiM mentoring program participants also felt that the opportunity to ask questions of previous promotion panel members improved their understanding of, and confidence in the promotion process, including the assessment of applications. The STEP post program survey reflects the sentiment that the program increased their understanding of the promotion process and requirements.

**Table 33: Percentage agreement from STEP Mentoring Program Participants in the end of program survey**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. As a result of participating in the STEP Program...	2022	2023 (number of respondents 10/31)	2024 (number of respondents 14/30)
I have an increased understanding of the promotion processes	NA	90%	83%
I have an increased understanding of promotion requirements	NA	90%	91%

The qualitative data also suggests a continued need to dispel misinformation on promotion requirements. An attendee of the women’s promotion briefing session described it as *“...affirmative, informative, removing a lot of wrong preconceptions.”* There is an ongoing commitment to delivering women’s briefing and PRO sessions to provide consistent information and a forum for people to ask questions.

“I would say having the suite of initiatives that I am hearing the same message from is powerful for getting me to put my application in and encouraging others to do the same, as it feels like a real effort from the university in this area. The PRO and women’s briefing sessions were helpful for building awareness of the process.

The STEP mentoring program was especially impactful for workshopping specifics of my case. Other mentees provided me their cases for inspiration on framing my case, as well as hearing their experiences in other faculties. I wouldn’t have access to those networks without this program.” *Case Study: Woman, Level D, Previous STEP Mentee*

## Desired impact 2: Improved perception of support and effectiveness of performance development processes

Qualitative data from focus groups and mentoring program evaluations suggests effective feedback and support from supervisors remains a strong influence as to when or if women apply for promotion. Despite some progress, experiences remain inconsistent between potential applicants. Focus-group participants- predominantly Level C and D women- described how the quality of supervisory conversations directly influenced their confidence to apply for promotion: *“(My) supervisor didn’t even know (I was applying for promotion), because he told me I wasn’t ready, but I was successful.”*

Women who did not feel supported by their supervisors, sought support amongst peers or through programs like STEP or SWiM. *“Locally people were supportive, but I would not say the same for people higher up the supervisory tree.”* Participants explained that programs like STEP and SWiM provided the peer encouragement missing from formal supervisory channels:

- *“I think STEP is exciting and you can feel the support”*
- *“SWiM created a community where I felt seen and supported.”*

“The mentoring connection was the most useful aspect for me as it was a mentor from another faculty and they could provide some specific feedback on different aspects of my application but also give me that broader perspective.” *Case Study: Woman, Level D, Previous STEP Mentee*

These reflections from Level C women underline how mentoring opportunities supplement inconsistent line-manager support and are key enablers of readiness for Level D and E promotion.

Given the recent timing of initiatives aimed at improving performance conversations, a significant change in overall experience is not yet expected across the academic cohort. However targeted initiatives, like mentoring, that provide alternative or additional support have been impactful and will be expanded to Level E in further actions. Further Action 2.3 will encourage promotion conversations between supervisors and women and gender diverse academics at the highest increments of Level C and Level D. Further Actions 2.1 and 2.2 will focus on providing additional support networks for women applying to Level E.

### Desired impact 3: Improved trust in promotion process, PRO application and equitable decision making

Enhancing transparency around the application of PRO, along with consistent training and processes for faculty promotion committees, is expected to build greater trust in promotion processes. However, it is acknowledged that shifting entrenched negative perceptions will take time and effort. One Level D academic who had progressed through STEP reflected: *“The institution has changed a lot; it used to be tap on the shoulder it’s your turn. All the changes have made it much fairer, and fairness of process has been greatly improved. But it’s still a big and difficult task.”* (Previous STEP mentee, current STEP mentor). Such reflections show that women now perceive tangible improvements in transparency but also recognise the need for sustained reinforcement of fairness messaging and faculty-level consistency.

“As a mentor in the (STEP) program I have learnt a lot. I have learnt more about diversity of academic careers and promotion within different faculties. Not how it works but how its perceived by different people, I really care about it. I loved understanding more what her (my mentee's) promotion case looked like. It makes me an advocate for diversity of different careers.

Since I applied for promotion, I can see the process has changed massively. My experience of promotion and mentoring encouraged me later to be on a Faculty Appointment and Promotion committee. I joined to ensure there was greater diversity of academic careers on the panel, but when I came in I had a sense people ‘get it’. The Academic Career Benchmark Indicators now take into consideration different types of careers. Promotion panels have robust conversations. I want the message to get out better of how promotion panels function, it would have reduced a lot of anxiety if I knew my career would have been considered in this way.” *Case Study: STEP Mentor, Woman, Level D*

Survey data for the University-wide population indicates that trust in promotion processes and equitable decision making remains low for all genders. Female respondents to the 2023 staff survey had lower rates of agreement with relevant statements than male respondents, 40% and 48% respectively. Gender diverse respondents and respondents that preferred not to disclose their gender had a low response rate and very low rates of agreement that promotion decisions are fair and equitable (Table 18). Addressing the negative promotion experiences of gender diverse respondents remains a key focus for the University in its efforts to foster a more inclusive culture for LGBTQIA+ staff.

**Table 34: Percentage agreement ‘The University makes fair and equitable promotion decisions,’ from academic survey respondents (2023)**

	2023				
	Overall	F (1498)	M (1096)	X (31)	Z (29)
The University makes fair and equitable promotion decisions.	41%	40%	48%	19%	21%

The lived experiences of Level C and D women show that targeted mentoring, supervisor engagement, and transparent promotion processes have measurably improved confidence, understanding, and fairness. Their reflections shared in focus groups confirm that institutional reforms are translating into personal impact, greater readiness to apply, stronger peer networks, and a clearer sense that promotion decisions are equitable. While briefing sessions and mentoring, particularly insights from promotion panel members, helped to build confidence in the assessment process for participants, feedback from staff University-wide reinforced the University’s responsibility to continue clarifying and demystifying promotion pathways more broadly.

## Further Actions

	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Accountable	Desired Outcomes
<b>1. Data &amp; evaluation</b>					
1.1	Lack of data to support intersectional analysis of promotion outcomes.	The change to a new ERP (Workday) to support the collection of broader demographic data and a campaign to support self-identifying through the new system.	2026	CPO	Application numbers and success rates can be reported on for other University priority equity groups. Data can be analysed to better understand barriers for groups other than gender.
1.2	Data transparency.	Improve monitoring of promotions data by sharing number and proportion of applications, success rates and gender distribution across levels, by faculty with Deans, Associate Deans Diversity and Inclusion, and HR Business Partners.	2026	COO Business Services DVC People and Community	Monitoring of promotion data by those in faculties in key decision-making positions.
1.3	Inconsistency of data collected on promotion experience.	Evaluate effectiveness of academic promotion interventions through focus groups, interviews and surveys. Include academic promotion questions from the 2019 survey in future staff surveys.	2025	CPO	A continued longitudinal understanding of promotion experience.
<b>2. Targeted interventions</b>					
2.1	Although the proportion of women at Level D & E has increased, women remain underrepresented at Level E.	Review specific barriers for women at Level D through focus groups and faculty consultation.	2026	DVC People and Community CPO	Women and gender diverse academics feel supported in their promotion experience to Level E.
2.2		Co-design and implement a group mentoring and coaching program to support Level D women applying for promotion to Level E, building upon the STEP Mentoring Program.			
2.3	Support, from supervisors and Heads of Schools/Departments, in considering and preparing a promotion application remains inconsistent.	Support supervisors to have a career conversation with all women at the highest increment of Level C and D. Names to be shared with Faculty Deans and HR Business Partners to encourage and report on career conversations.	2027	DVC People and Community	Women and gender diverse academics feel supported in their promotion experience to Level D & E.  Increase women's proportion of applications to Levels D & E, while maintaining success rates.
2.4	Faculty based initiatives to improve participation of women in traditionally male dominated areas.	Faculty-specific approaches to build pathways to parity at each level. Targets to increase application numbers while maintaining success rates.	2027	Faculty Deans	Faculties develop and delivery activities to increase the proportion of women in senior academic appointments.

	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe	Accountable	Desired Outcomes
<b>3. Culture</b>					
3.1	Entrenched narrative that success in academia is achievable only through a conventional, uninterrupted career path.	Publicly report on PRO usage and success rates, and part-time work and success rates, by level. Include these in promotion briefing sessions, and online promotion resources (Staff Hub).	2026	COO Business Services  DVC People and Community	Performance Relative to Opportunity considerations are recognised as a positive acknowledgement of a fair and equitable promotion process.
3.2		Continue to strengthen existing work on celebrating diverse academic appointments and careers, including website and events.	2025		Diverse academic career pathways, experiences and roles are equally valued and recognised.
<b>4. Systems and structures</b>					
4.1	Lack of transparency and inconsistencies in promotion process, impacting trust in promotion process.	Implementation of a preliminary assessment system for Faculty Appointments and Promotions Committees (FAPC) and the University Appointments and Promotions Committee.	2025	COO Business Services  DVC People and Community  Faculty Deans	Reported improved trust in promotion process and equitable decision making.
4.2		Consistent training for all faculties, Faculty Appointment and Promotion Committees prior to promotion rounds. This will include role expectations, changes from previous years, use of Academic Career Benchmark Indicators (ACBI), applying PRO considerations and mitigating bias.	2025		
4.3		Faculty Appointments and Promotions Committees to implement a clear strategy to ensure quality feedback to applicants on promotion outcomes.	2026		
4.4	Despite number of people applying with PRO considerations and their success rate, there are low levels of trust of in PRO process.	Include description of how PRO application content is considered and stored.	2026	COO Business Services	Reported improved trust in PRO processes, including how content is considered and stored.