

PREPARING RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES FOR PROMOTION

In support of the University's Equal Opportunity Policy and our commitment to gender equity, inclusion and diversity the University academic promotion procedures, the University provides an opportunity for staff to include details of their relevant personal, professional or other circumstances for consideration.

To facilitate a fair and equitable assessment of an application relative to the stage of career, we encourage staff to specify any career impacting circumstances to enable an assessment of achievement relative to opportunity.

In response to COVID19 the education, research and engagement contributions of many academic staff have been affected. The University is committed to appropriately recognising the extra contributions to teaching in 2020 and 2021 because of COVID19 and Faculties will work to ensure this is achieved through considering the effects of COVID-19 relative to opportunity. In addition, the research contributions of some staff have been profoundly affected by COVID19. The University will ensure COVID19 related impacts, relative to opportunity, will be understood and recognised for the purposes of academic advancement, probation and performance.

WHAT IS "ACHIEVEMENT RELATIVE TO OPPORTUNITY"?

Achievement(s) relative to opportunity is the framework that supports a fair and equitable assessment of career progression and achievements over a period of time given the opportunities available to staff.

This framework assists to ensure that the overall quality and impact of achievements is given more weight than the quantity, rate or breadth of particular achievements relative to their personal, professional and other circumstances. More specifically, this provides for the appropriate evaluation of achievements in relation to:

- the quantum or rate of productivity,
- the opportunity to participate in certain types of activities, and
- the consistency of activities or output over the period of consideration.

Achievement relative to opportunity is a positive acknowledgement of what a staff member can and has achieved given the opportunities available to them and results in a more calibrated assessment of their performance. It is not about providing "special consideration" or expecting lesser standards of performance.

IDENTIFYING RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAVE IMPACTED ON OPPORTUNITIES

Relevant circumstances may include (but are not limited to):

Personal Circumstances

A career disruption caused by personal circumstances that involves a prolonged interruption or poses a significant impact to a staff member's capacity to work.

This includes, but not limited to; disruptions caused by parental leave, major illness/injury, carer responsibilities, disability, and personal trauma.

Professional Circumstances

A staff member's track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including consideration as to whether productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to them.

This includes, but not limited to; periods of part-time work, country relocation, late or non-linear entry in academia, cultural expectations, varied workload or relocation of a research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact upon productivity.

Other

Other may include elements outside the control of a staff member. Provide a brief summary of the circumstances.

Staff are not required to describe specific details about sensitive issues such as a medical illness. Where it is important to share sensitive details of the relevant circumstances to be accurately understood, staff may share this information in their written case or have a private discussion with the Chair or Chair's Nominee (for applications to Levels C-E) or the Approver (for Level B applications). Contact your [relevant promotion coordinator](#) for more information.

This includes, but not limited to

- *natural disasters such as flooding, bushfires, storms and earthquakes;*
- *global health issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic; and*
- *other emergency situations*

Monash recognises that some elements are outside our control (described above) and may impact the delivery of the education, research and engagement activities of our staff. Monash understands the need to recognise these impacts and we will consider a staff members' achievements relative to opportunity.

COMPLETING A CASE FOR PROMOTION FORM

Staff who have experienced personal, professional or other circumstances that have had an impact on their opportunities to pursue academic achievements can feel at a disadvantage in applying for academic promotion. When preparing a case for promotion, staff should be careful not to overstate their situation; only claim genuine circumstances that can be supported by detailing the impact on research and research achievements, education and/or engagement and associated productivity. Refer to section 6 of the [Academic Promotion Application Instructions](#) for further information.

Staff should provide the following in their case for promotion:

- **A brief explanation of the type of personal, professional or other circumstance**

Provide a brief summary of the circumstances. Staff are not required to describe specific details (such as the tasks undertaken as a primary carer).

Staff are not required to describe specific details about sensitive issues such as a medical illness where the staff members feels uncomfortable to do so. Where it is important to share sensitive details for the relevant circumstances to be accurately understood, the staff member can have a private discussion with the Chair or Chair's Nominee. For Level B applications, this discussion would be with the approver(s).

- **Nominate the period(s) of the disruption/circumstance (approximate dates);**

For some staff, it may be useful to include a visual representation (such as a table) to assist the explanation. An example where this can be particularly effective is for a reduced (part time) fraction which has changed over the relevant assessment period (since appointment to current level). Staff can then easily link this to their answer in (c and/or d).

Example of reduced fraction

Period	Appointment Fraction	Working Months
January 2020 - August 2020	1.0 (full time)	1.0 x 8 = 8
September 2020 - December 2022	0.6 Fractional Appointment	0.6 x 28 = 16.8
January 2023 - October 2023	0.8 Fractional Appointment	0.8 x 10 = 8
		TOTAL 32.8

This shows that over a period of 3 years and 10 months (46 months), this staff member worked an equivalent of 32.8 months (approximately 2.7 years). The expectations of their performance can then be considered accordingly.

- **Outline the impact this has had on research and research achievements, education and/or engagement and associated productivity relative to stage of career**

Staff should focus this answer for the period of time being considered in the application (i.e., since their last promotion or appointment). If desired, briefly comment on the overall career history and trajectory in light of the opportunities available.

- **Provide a positive acknowledgement of what has been achieved given the opportunities available**

In addition to above, staff may wish to compare their own career achievements to benchmark data if this is available, on a pro-rata basis. Staff may find a visual representation helpful. In the example below, a staff member employed on a reduced fraction over the relevant period of time can provide information on the number of publications produced during the same time frame. This enables decision-makers to assess achievement relative to opportunity by comparing the relevant faculty or discipline-specific research performance standards and outputs on a pro-rata basis. The decision makers recognise that this is a simplistic representation, since it is not just about quantity but also about quality, but it is a helpful start to adjusting expectations of 'metrics'.

Visual example of performance (for reduced fraction included above)

Year	Books	Journals	International refereed conference publications	National refereed conference publications	Total publications
2020		2		1	3
2021	1	2	1	2	6
2022			3	3	6
2023		3	2	2	7

Staff may link the table to the research performance metrics if this would help the explanation for how they are meeting expectations on a pro-rata basis.

CAN STAFF REFERENCE THEIR OVERALL CAREER?

Unlike some other areas of the case for promotion form, staff may refer to their overall career history and trajectory to clearly demonstrate their achievements over time, beyond just the period since their last promotion/appointment to current level. However, it is important to focus on the case for promotion period.

HOW INFORMATION IS USED

The Committee or Approver (or nominee) will be in a better position to make fair and valid judgements and assess achievements relative to opportunity if it is aware of the particular circumstances relevant to an applicant's career achievements and progression. The Committee or Approver will evaluate the achievements of the applicant in light of the opportunities available whilst ensuring that the indicators of quality and impact of achievements have been demonstrated.

Further information regarding [assessment of achievement relative to opportunity](#) is available on Monash HR website.

The information is collected for the primary purpose of assessing your application for academic promotion. Information contained within applications to Level C, D and Professor will also be disclosed to University-nominated external assessors for assessment purposes (see [Academic Promotion Procedure](#)).

If you wish to inquire about the handling of your personal information, please contact the University Privacy Officer at privacyofficer@monash.edu.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Where a staff member feels they would benefit from support, please contact the University's [Employee Assistance Program](#), which offers free and confidential counselling and support services.

EXAMPLES

The following are some examples to assist staff in submitting their achievements relative to opportunity. Please note that these are examples only and that staff should tailor their content to their own particular experiences and opportunities.

Example 1: Primary Carer

If staff have been employed for ten years but had a career break of two years to be the primary caregiver of a child or children, the promotion committee should consider the staff member's achievements over an eight-year period. Demonstrate the achievements relative to opportunity available during this time.

Staff might like to add any opportunities or invitations to speak at key note conferences they have not been able to take up because of carer responsibilities. This provides tangible evidence particularly if staff provide details of the conference.

Example 2: Part Time Work

If staff have had periods of leave or worked part-time in the period under consideration for promotion, provide a calculation of the effective full-time equivalence. For example, if between August 2015 and December 2020 a staff member worked at 0.6 FTE, then for this period (5.25 years) their FTE was 3.2 years.

Staff could then compare their opportunity for achievement against that of a full-time staff member (100% opportunity) and accordingly demonstrate their achievement on a pro-rata basis. For example, if the staff member worked at .5 FTE and produced 1 paper, this would be equivalent to a full-time worker producing 2 papers during the same period.

It would be advantageous to then include the difference in the relevant academic performance standards in that academic area (e.g. quantitative research targets) to show what would be expected at their average service fraction, over the years under assessment for promotion.

Example 3: Reduced Opportunity

If a staff member worked full-time but their opportunity to achieve has been affected by factors that prevented them from engaging in afterhours activities (for example, attending international conferences), the staff member may wish to demonstrate that rather than attending international conferences, they supervised a greater number of postgraduates or increased collaboration with colleagues, or took on additional roles such as editorial responsibilities. Provide details of the career progression.

Example 4: Varied Workload Allocation

If the staff member had varied their workload allocation during the period under consideration for promotion, they may describe their workload allocation over this period. For example, in the current year the staff member was a teaching and research academic with 40% research, 40% education and 20% engagement. This was not reflective of their workload allocation and their efforts over the period under assessment. Over the relevant period since appointment/promotion to their current level, they received a research grant (e.g. NHMRC, ARC Fellowship) and were employed on a research-only contract of employment with a workload of 80% research and 20% engagement for the previous 4 years. The staff member may wish to describe that although their current workload includes 40% in education, their overall education case is different, given reduced opportunity in education and focus on their grant. Explain how this has changed the expectations and impact of their education case over the relevant promotion period.

Example 5: Varied Workload Allocation (Leadership Role)

If a staff member had varied their workload allocation during the period under consideration for promotion, they may describe their workload allocation over this period. For example, in the current year they were a teaching and research academic with 40% research, 40% education and 20% engagement. Over the relevant period since appointment/promotion to their current level, they were a Head of Unit with 10% research 10% education and 80% in engagement for the previous 5 years (during the period under assessment). The staff member may wish to describe that although their current workload included 40% in research and 40% in education, their overall education case is different, given reduced opportunity in education. Explain how this current workload allocation does not give an indication of the focus of the role over the assessment period. The expectations for the research and education case over the relevant promotion period are entwined with the role as Head. The staff member's case is made on the basis of significant emphasis on the impact that leadership has had on the University, community/discipline rather than the expectations of a more standard 40/40/20 workload allocation.

Example 6: Covid-19

If a staff member has been adversely affected by COVID-19, they may wish to discuss the influence this has had on their achievements. For example, they are a teaching and research academic at the time of COVID-19. Due to the travel and distancing restrictions, they had been unable to continue their laboratory-based research and present at international conferences which has significantly reduced their research and engagement output. Given this, they have had to turn their attention to education by developing high quality, online learning for their students. As part of this, they produced resources which encouraged student engagement, participation and collaboration in a virtual environment which was later implemented by other members of their department. This approach helped to promote their performance against the Education Performance Standards and was reflected in SETUs, student results and student feedback.

Example 7: Traumatic event

If a staff member has experienced or witnessed a significant traumatic event such as a car accident, house fire, or natural disaster (e.g., earthquake, flood, or bushfire), even if they are physically unharmed, the psychological impact can be profound. Potential Impacts from the event could include: post-traumatic stress symptoms, such as flashbacks, hypervigilance, or sleep disturbances, which can impair focus and productivity; displacement or loss of personal property, which can disrupt access to teaching materials, research data, or a stable work environment; increased caregiving responsibilities, if family members are also affected or injured; or reduced capacity to engage with students or colleagues, due to emotional exhaustion or the need for time off to recover.