FACULTY OF SCIENCE

GUIDELINES ON THE USAGE OF THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE RESEARCH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The purpose of this document is to explain how the Faculty, within the University’s current policy environment, will apply the research performance targets to (i) promotion and (ii) the assessment of minimum performance.

Promotion

The Faculty Research Performance Standards contain both minimum and aspirational targets. Aspirational targets are set to be consistent with the vision of the Faculty of Science to be established as a top 50 Faculty; they are targets that we should be aspiring to as part of our drive to fulfil the ambitions of the Faculty and the University. It is anticipated that the majority of staff will not meet all of the Faculty's aspirational standards.

The role of aspirational standards is to provide staff with a strong indication of the expected level of achievement required for promotion in each of the three independent areas of research performance: research outputs, research income, and HDR supervision. It is important for staff to understand that meeting all dimensions of the aspirational standards is neither necessary nor sufficient for promotion. It is recognised that each staff member's career and achievements may be focused in certain areas of research performance more than others. Aspirational standards should, therefore, be used to build a narrative on the reasons why promotion is warranted. Staff members should be encouraged to use both quantitative and qualitative indicators of research performance to construct their case.

As part of the research component of their application, staff should spell out what has been the strategy underpinning their research performance, where their efforts have been focused, and what their achievements have been. The aspirational standards provide staff with guidelines as to what a high level of performance in each particular area of research activity might look like. While there may be cases where demonstrably exceptional performance in just one area may justify promotion, in the majority of cases, applications will typically draw upon the staff member’s achievements across a range of research activities. There will obviously be considerable scope for variation in the composition of research portfolios between high performing staff members. The onus is on the staff member to put together a case that convinces their Head or Director, their supervisor, the Associate Dean Research, and ultimately the promotion panel that their combination of research achievements is sufficient to warrant promotion. All aspirational performance criteria should be evaluated relative to opportunity.

Minimum Research Performance

The purpose of minimum targets is to provide clear guidance to staff on the level of performance considered satisfactory at any level of employment. Minimum standards indicate the expected level of achievement in each of the three areas of research performance. As with the aspirational targets, they should be viewed in the context of all aspects of performance, including those not quantified in the research performance standards. Cases in which performance falls consistently below minimum standards will be responded to in accordance with the Managing Unsatisfactory Performance: Academic Staff Procedure, beginning with discussions that will usually focus on how and by when the required performance standard may be met, and what resources may be available to assist staff to meet the required performance standard.

Consistent with the approach taken to promotion outlined in the previous section, where there are multiple components to the minimum standards (i.e. publications, research income and HDR supervision), it is not necessarily expected that all dimensions of the minimum standards be met in order for performance to be deemed satisfactory. The Faculty acknowledges that each staff member’s career and achievements may focus in some areas of research performance more than others. While the precise composition of satisfactory performance will vary by case, as a rule of thumb, one would expect the majority of staff operating at a satisfactory level to meet the publication standard and at least one of the other two research standards. All minimum performance criteria should be evaluated relative to opportunity.
Achievement relative to opportunity

Monash will apply an achievement relative to opportunity approach when assessing results under the Research Performance Standards for staff who disclose ‘achievement relative to opportunity’ circumstances.

To enable a more nuanced and contextual assessment of achievements, we will consider both the personal and professional circumstances of staff relative to what is expected at their level in the context of:

- the quality of academic work in the time available rather than the quantity of work produced;
- the opportunity to participate in certain types of activities; and
- the consistency of the activities or output over the period under consideration.

Further information regarding the assessment of achievement relative to opportunity in the context of promotion, including guides for decision makers and applicants, can be found on the academic promotions website.