Achievement Relative to Opportunity

1.0 Purpose
These Guidelines support the University’s approach to achievement relative to opportunity.

2.0 Scope
These Guidelines are intended to assist all staff, including:
- academic and professional staff
- staff needing to articulate their performance relative to opportunity
- staff assessing performance relative to opportunity.

These Guidelines:
- define achievement relative to opportunity
- provide examples of the types of circumstances that may impact on people’s opportunities
- define where in the employee lifecycle achievement relative to opportunity may be considered.

3.0 Guidelines
Griffith has a long-standing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. The Strategic Plan 2020-2025 commits to:
- increasing under-represented groups in our staff, including at leadership levels
- embracing diversity, including in recruitment, promotion and professional development.

Applying the principles of achievement relative to opportunity supports the fair inclusion, recognition and reward of a diversity of existing and potential staff.

3.1 What is achievement or performance relative to opportunity?
Achievement relative to opportunity is the evaluation of a person’s achievements based on the opportunities that have been available to them. In applying achievement relative to opportunity, we prioritise:
- the level and conditions of appointment (including the nature of the academic work profile and employment type)
- the quality and impact of the person’s work
- outcomes given the time and/or resources available to the person
- any ongoing impact on achievement related to the person’s circumstances.

3.2 Where may achievement relative to opportunity be considered?
The principles established in this document can be considered whenever performance is assessed. This includes:
- the recruitment and selection process
- confirmation of a staff member following a probationary period
- assessment of performance
- provision of opportunities such as professional development (for example, Academic Studies Program [ASP], leadership programs)
- promotion applications
- access to resources such as internal grant applications, HDR scholarships and competitive access to equipment.

### 3.3 Circumstances where opportunities may be impacted

A person’s opportunities may be impacted by a range of circumstances. We encourage staff to articulate these circumstances to enable the University to accurately assess achievement relative to opportunity. Staff are encouraged to initiate early communication with their supervisor about circumstances that may impact on their ability to achieve their original work plan and objectives and consider possible adjustment to that plan/objectives.

Below are examples of circumstances that could result in a different pattern of success. This list is not exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstances</th>
<th>Examples may include</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant career interruptions</td>
<td>Interruptions due to:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- long parental leave, long service leave and extended periods of sick leave</td>
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<td>- impairment, disability or medical conditions, domestic and family violence</td>
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<td>- a relationship breakdown</td>
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<td>- personal trauma, for example, bereavement</td>
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<td>- insecure employment</td>
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<td>- significant cultural or religious obligations.</td>
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<td>Periods of part-time employment and other flexible working arrangements</td>
<td>Part-time employment and other flexible working arrangements to accommodate carer responsibilities, for example, caring for children or elderly parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-traditional patterns of achievement</td>
<td>Atypical career experiences such as:</td>
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<td>- a later start to academia</td>
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<td>- changes in discipline focus</td>
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<td>- industry engagements that require confidentiality of authorship.</td>
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<td>Cultural, service or representation commitments</td>
<td>The impact of:</td>
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<td>- service/committee commitments of staff from under-represented groups, for example, academic women in STEMM, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff cultural obligations/commitments</td>
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<td>- high service/administrative obligations (for example, due to Head of School appointments and other heavy 'service'/leadership positions).</td>
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<td>The ability of the person to participate in relevant activities that typically influence progression, output or regard</td>
<td>Inability to travel nationally or internationally due to:</td>
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<td>- health, carer responsibilities, pregnancy, breastfeeding or financial circumstances</td>
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<td>- travel bans related to citizenship or other factors.</td>
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</table>
Guidelines

Griffith University

Achievement Relative to Opportunity Guidelines

Circumstances | Examples may include
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Impact of major international, national and local events | Previous or current (Griffith or other) University or industry shutdowns due to:
| • pandemics
| • natural disasters
| • war or political unrest.

Other temporary or ongoing circumstances that could impact on performance | Circumstances such as:
| • impacts of a permanent or temporary disability (including related to physical and mental health)
| • language barriers experienced by people from a non-English speaking background.

3.3.1 Impacts of pandemics or natural disasters on opportunity

Griffith University acknowledges the possible impacts that pandemics or natural disasters have had on its staff. Below are examples of circumstances that could result in altered outcomes due to such impacts. This is not an exhaustive list but may be considered when evaluating staff productivity and achievement during the pandemic or natural disaster impact period.

Circumstances | Examples may include
--- | ---
Interruptions due to pandemics or natural disasters | Interruptions due to:
| • university or industry shutdowns and loss of access to infrastructure
| • cancellation or postponements of research agreements with research partners
| • carer responsibilities for children learning from home
| • carer responsibilities for ill children, ill or elderly parents or ill family members
| • personal ill health or ongoing condition deemed high risk and hence required extended social distancing measures
| • financial distress and hardship through loss of family business and/or income
| • valued expertise, where research is redirected to pandemic or natural disaster specific research
| • state and federal duties such as Army Reserve or State Emergency Services.

3.4 Confidentiality and privacy

We commit to respecting the privacy of staff members who do not wish to disclose information on their circumstances within assessment documentation such as promotions applications. Staff can be assured that information disclosed will:
| • only be used for the purposes of assisting in the assessment of the staff member’s performance and achievements
| • be kept confidential.
3.5 Alignment with national bodies

National bodies also articulate the concept of “relative to opportunity”. Griffith’s Guidelines are consistent with these definitions:

- **NHMRC** considers “relative to opportunity” to mean that assessment processes should accurately assess an applicant’s track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including considering whether productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant.

- Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE), defined by the [Australian Research Council (ARC)](https://www.arc.gov.au), aims to ensure assessment processes accurately evaluate a researcher’s career history relative to their current career stage, and considers whether their productivity and contribution is commensurate with the opportunities that have been available to them.

These Guidelines are also consistent with the ARC’s Research Impact Principals and Framework definition for “Research impact”, which is the contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture, beyond the contribution to academic research.

3.6 Indirect discrimination

State and Federal Acts seek to prohibit or eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination on the grounds of:

- pregnancy, breastfeeding and family responsibilities (Sex Discrimination Act 1984)
- disability (Disability Discrimination Act 1992)
- descent or national or ethnic origin (Racial Discrimination Act 1975)

The purpose of assessing achievement relative opportunity is to also ensure that people with these particular attributes (for example, who may be more likely to experience career interruptions, part-time employment, capacity to travel, or first languages other than English) are not disadvantaged.

Under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, for example, indirect discrimination on the basis of an attribute happens if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a term:

a) with which a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply; and

b) with which a higher proportion of people without the attribute comply or are able to comply; and

c) that is not reasonable.

4.0 Definitions

For the purposes of these Guidelines and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

- **ARC** stands for the Australian Research Council.

- **NHMRC** stands for the National Health and Medical Research Council.

- **Research impact** means, as defined by the ARC, the contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture, beyond the contribution of academic research.

- **ROPE** stands for Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence, as defined by the Australian Research Council.
**INFORMATION**

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<td>Policy advisor</td>
<td>Chief People Officer</td>
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<td>Executive Group</td>
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**RELATED POLICY DOCUMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

| Legislation | Sex Discrimination Act 1984  
Disability Discrimination Act 1992  
Racial Discrimination Act 1975  
Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy      | [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)  
[Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)  
[Probation Policy for General Staff - Continuing and Fixed Term Appointments](#)  
[General Staff Performance Review](#)  
[Academic Staff Career Development Framework](#)  
[Promotion of Academic and Research Only Academic Staff Policy](#)  
[Academic Studies Program Policy](#) |
| Procedures  | [Academic Staff Probation and Confirmation Procedures](#) |
| Local protocols | N/A |
| Forms       | N/A |