

## Achievement Relative to Opportunity

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### 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 University 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 their ability to achieve their original work plan and objectives and consider possible adjustment to that plan/objective.

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

**CIRCUMSTANCES**
**EXAMPLES MAY INCLUDE**

Significant career interruptions

Interruptions due to:

- long parental leave, long service leave and extended periods of sick leave
- impairment, disability or medical conditions, domestic and family violence
- a relationship breakdown
- personal trauma, for example, bereavement
- insecure employment
- significant cultural or religious obligations.

Periods of part-time employment and other flexible working arrangements

Part-time employment and other flexible working arrangements to accommodate carer responsibilities, for example, caring for children or elderly parents.

Non-traditional patterns of achievement

Atypical career experiences such as:

- a later start to academia
- changes in discipline focus
- industry engagements that require confidentiality of authorship.

Cultural, service or representation commitments

The impact of:

- service/committee commitments of staff from under-represented groups, for example, academic women in STEMM, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff cultural obligations/commitments
- high service/administrative obligations (for example, due to Head of School appointments and other heavy 'service'/leadership positions).

The ability of the person to participate in relevant activities that typically influence progression, output or regard

Inability to travel nationally or internationally due to:

- health, carer responsibilities, pregnancy, breastfeeding or financial circumstances
- travel bans related to citizenship or other factors.

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.

**CIRCUMSTANCES**
**EXAMPLES MAY INCLUDE**

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 or could have 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 a 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)** 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)
- pregnancy, breastfeeding, impairment and family responsibilities (Anti-Discrimination Act 1991) (lists not exhaustive).

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:

- with which a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply
- with which a higher proportion of people without the attribute comply or are able to comply
- 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.

## 5.0 Information

Title	Achievement Relative to Opportunity Guidelines
Document number	2023/0001178
Purpose	These guidelines support the University's approach to achievement relative to opportunity.
Audience	Staff
Category	Operational
Subcategory	Staff
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal: 10: Reduced Inequalities
Approval date	28 October 2020
Effective date	28 October 2020
Review date	2025
Policy advisor	Senior Lead (Inclusion and Development)
Approving authority	Director, Human Resources

## 6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	<a href="#">Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act 1992</a> <a href="#">Racial Discrimination Act 1975</a>
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## Sex Discrimination Act 1984

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### Policy

Academic Staff Career Development Framework  
Academic Studies Program Policy  
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy  
Performance Management of Academic Managers Policy and Procedures  
Performance Reviews and Professional Development (Professional and Support Staff) Policy  
Promotion of Academic and Research Only Academic Staff Policy  
Talent Acquisition Policy

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### Procedures

Academic Staff Career Development Procedures  
Academic Staff Probation and Confirmation Procedures  
Probation Procedure (Professional and Support Staff)  
Talent Acquisition Procedure

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### Local Protocol

N/A

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### Forms

N/A

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