



Better practice examples: how Administering Institutions are meeting NHMRC’s gender equality policy requirements

In 2018–19, NHMRC reviewed whether Administering Institutions were continuing to meet the seven gender equality policy requirements in place at that time¹ and has compiled a selection of better practice examples from the information provided.

As institutions vary in size and capacity, this information reflects the different approaches used to ensure the progression and retention of women in health and medical research. Excellence is demonstrated in different ways, including the use of external resources, and there is no ‘one size fits all’ way of working towards gender equality in health and medical research.

The examples included in the table below are illustrative, not exhaustive, with many Administering Institutions describing effective and innovative strategies for addressing gender equality. The intention in publishing better practice examples is to illustrate both the excellent work being done by different types of institutions and to provide examples of measures that could be implemented elsewhere.

1. An institutional strategy that addresses the underrepresentation of women in senior positions in relevant strategic/corporate plans. This strategy should be reviewed frequently to ensure that it is effective and relevant.	
Australian Hearing	<p>Australian Hearing has a <i>Gender Diversity Policy & Procedure</i> in place to ensure the appropriate representation of female employees in leadership roles across Australian Hearing and its research division, the National Acoustic Laboratories.</p> <p>This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains current and effective. It focuses on four main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talent development (e.g. as part of the Performance Development Scheme process, managers can ensure that high potential female employees receive appropriate support with their career progression, whether this is in the form of assistance to secure an appropriate mentor or access to internal or external training and broader development opportunities) • supporting work/life balance (e.g. providing employees with carers leave, flexible work practices, paid parental leave (maternity and paternity), support in returning to work, rostered days off and purchased annual leave) • remuneration equity (e.g. performing regular gender pay analysis and demonstrating that male and female employees receive the

¹ To streamline this review, NHMRC referred to the 2017-18 [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) (WGEA) annual reporting process. Other gender equality achievements were also taken into account, where relevant, including recognition as a WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) citation holder, membership of [Science in Australia Gender Equity](#) (SAGE) and applications for the SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award. For Administering Institutions that are bronze award holders, their applications for this award are published on [SAGE’s website](#). For Administering Institutions that are required to report to WGEA, annual reports are available on [WGEA’s website](#).

	<p>same pay when performing the same roles), and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recruitment, retention and progression (e.g. when recruiting for senior positions, ensure that at least one of the members of the interview panel is a female employee and at least one of the internal or external candidates is female).
Deakin University	<p>Deakin University's gender equity actions are set out under the <i>Gender Equity Plan 2019-2023</i>. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recruitment including the initiation of Faculty based Taskforces to set and guide gender representation targets, in particular for academic roles at levels C-E promotions including a focus on achievement relative to opportunity in all promotion activities and analysis of the career progression metrics of Deakin academic staff over the long term to assess any gender differences that may exist career advancement including actions related to mentoring programs for those returning from career breaks and flexibility, including carer support, for those undertaking career advancement programs and/ or undertaking research fellowships, and culture, leadership and diversity actions addressing intersectionality between binary gender and other identity factors such as disability, culture and gender diversity.
Queensland University of Technology (QUT)	<p>QUT's gender equity policy commits the university to embedding gender equity philosophy and practices into all aspects of the university's activities. The institutional KPI is the representation rate of women in senior staff (levels D and E, plus professional staff above HEW 10), which has been tracked for nearly two decades, and is approaching 44%.</p> <p>The dual strategy has been to equip women to navigate the system; and simultaneously work to make the system fairer by removing biases and barriers. Over the years attention has focused on personal promotion; recruitment; leadership development (a women's leadership course has been running since 1996); and flexible work practices. More recently since 2013, program elements have included mitigating strategies for career breaks (research grants); support for carer costs; writing retreats; and unconscious bias training.</p> <p>In 2016, QUT launched Women in STEM - a suite of programs to improve the retention and advancement of women in STEM, through support programs; workshops; targeted mentoring; and leadership shadowing. As part of the successful application for the SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award, this program was expanded and incorporated into the comprehensive 4-year Action Plan. Senior STEM(M) staff have undertaken 'change agent' training in addition to unconscious bias workshops.</p> <p>The Athena SWAN Action Plan is the current focus of the gender equity strategy, and it complements and supports other elements of the overall strategy. The approach to change underpinning the strategy has been articulated explicitly since 2013 as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attention given to many small things, rather than a single large initiative championing from those already senior - men and women vigilance against unconscious bias, and persistence over time.

2. Mentoring and skills training strategies that promote and seek to increase women's participation.

<p>Australian National University (ANU)</p>	<p>ANU provides additional support for female academics seeking promotion, including providing mentors who assist applicants to prepare for the interview with the assessment committee, as well as formal and informal panel discussions targeting female academics to coincide with the promotion round.</p> <p>Female staff are also supported through ensuring gender representation on selections and promotions committees, access to a number of mentoring, support and leadership programs, including a senior women's leadership program, the Network for Early Career Academics at ANU (NECTAR), and the ANU Mentors program.</p>
<p>The George Institute for Global Health</p>	<p>The George Institute has introduced a Global Women's Health Program within its research portfolio. Part of this incorporates a capacity-building program, including development and travel support for female researchers. The institute also invests in the Franklin Women Mentoring Program, which seeks to develop the institute's female researchers to be future leaders.</p>
<p>The University of Adelaide (UoA)</p>	<p>The UoA's Women's Professional Development Network and Academic Women's Forum both provide professional development, mentoring and support to women. These networks also work as a conduit, raising opportunities to senior leaders and the university's Gender Equality and Diversity Committee. The Academic Women's Forum organises annual promotion workshops for academic women and the university also offers the 'Adelaide Women' leadership development program to women with the potential and willingness to move into senior leadership roles.</p>
<p>University of Southern Queensland (USQ)</p>	<p>USQ offers the Senior Academic Development Program. The program is specifically developed for women and includes mentoring, career workshops and a component designed to support female academics looking to achieve promotion in the next one to three years. The USQ Women's Network also strives to provide and encourage leadership, development and advancement of women in local communities.</p>

3. The provision of parental/maternity leave and carers leave, as well as transitional support to encourage return to work.

<p>St Vincent's Institute (SVI)</p>	<p>After at 12 months of service, both continuing and fixed term employees are entitled to a combination of paid and unpaid parental leave at the birth or adoption of a child, if they are the primary carer of the child. These employees are entitled to 12 weeks on full pay and an employee may take this entitlement on half pay for twice the period.</p> <p>When staff return from maternity leave, they are offered flexible arrangements that include part-time hours, flexible start and finish times, and the ability to do some work from home for the duration of a child's preschool years, wherever possible.</p> <p>Since 2013, the annual <i>SVI Women in Research Award</i> has been presented to a junior female postdoctoral scientist at a Mother's Day celebration, to help her continue her work either while she is absent on maternity leave or on a reduced time fraction due to carer responsibilities.</p>
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	<p>While staff are on parental leave, their email accounts are maintained, and invitations are made to events and meetings with optional attendance. SVI strives to make attendance at meetings easier for staff with caring responsibilities.</p>
<p>University of Technology Sydney (UTS)</p>	<p>After 40 weeks of continuous service (pro-rated for part-time staff) UTS provides 20 weeks of employer-funded paid parental leave for primary carers. This leave may be taken as 40 weeks on half pay. A total of 104 weeks parental leave is available, provided that the combined paid and unpaid leave does not extend beyond the child's second birthday (or 104 weeks from the child's adoption placement date).</p> <p>UTS also provides 20 days of employer-funded parental leave for eligible staff who are secondary carers, with the same eligibility period. The leave must be taken in the three month period following the birth or placement of a child.</p> <p>Transitional support for staff returning from parental leave is also provided. This includes 30 days paid leave for eligible staff to assist the return to work transition or it can be accessed as professional development funding as a return to work bonus, as well as the provision of employer-subsidised childcare, on-site childcare at some sites, breastfeeding facilities and childcare referral services.</p>
<p>4. Working arrangements that cater for individuals with caring responsibilities.</p>	
<p>RMIT University</p>	<p>RMIT University's Gender Equality Action Plan 2016-2020 includes strategies that promote and encourage the uptake of formal and informal flexible working arrangements that enhance business outcomes and improve staff experience.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysing current utilisation rates of flexible work arrangements by gender, managerial status and primary carer status to identify any interactions between use of these options and impact on career progression • reporting on the current use of flexible work arrangements throughout the university and workforce Staff Survey • continuing to embed strategies that reduce the negative impact of using these arrangements on career progression • continuing to embed strategies that improve the satisfaction ratings of women and primary carers in Staff Survey items relating to work life integration and compare to prior Staff Survey results • continuing to provide training, coaching and resources to people managers and senior leaders to ensure they are maintaining a flexible environment for staff, as part of the 'All Roles Flex' model that is currently being rolled out university-wide • encouraging senior leaders and managers to work flexibly, and openly communicate their support of flexibility, and • continuing to review ways of working, infrastructures and systems to ensure they support flexible working.
<p>St Vincent's Institute (SVI)</p>	<p>Carers leave is available to all SVI staff with caring responsibilities, with an upfront accrual available from the day of commencing employment.</p> <p>SVI also recognises that family responsibilities extend beyond any period of parental leave, and workplace flexibility may continue to be required, particularly for parents of pre-school age children. It promotes flexible</p>

	<p>work practices for both men and women to help deal with the demands that a family can bring. This includes part-time work, flexible start and finish times for work days (to allow for picking up children from childcare or school), purchased leave (which caters for school holidays), compressed weeks, as well as carrying out portions of the working week from home, if practical. These working arrangements are also offered to staff caring for elderly parents.</p> <p>In addition, SVI strives to ensure family-friendly meeting times and access to meetings by teleconference or videoconference communication, when required. All staff who are junior postdoctoral fellows and above have access to a laptop that they can take home for work purposes. SVI is also investigating the possibility of providing support for attendance at meetings, such as for childcare or travel, for those with caring responsibilities.</p>
The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health	<p>The Florey has a number of initiatives in place to assist with flexible work arrangements, both formally and informally. A <i>Flexibility at Work Policy</i> supports flexibility at work for staff with family responsibilities and covers the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flexible work hours • carers/family leave • flexibility for employees with family and household responsibilities • purchased leave scheme • family-friendly meeting times • 22 weeks parental leave • ten days paid keeping in touch leave whilst on parental leave, and • part-time options.
5. Remuneration equity between men and women with the same responsibilities.	
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	<p>CSIRO uses a sophisticated machine-learning model to assess like-for-like gender pay equity. At the organisational level, CSIRO has a 0.5% gender pay gap (favouring males), however, using the model, it has been able to identify localised areas where the gap is larger, in either direction. Current work is being undertaken to understand and address these localised gaps.</p>
Curtin University	<p>Curtin University has now conducted an extensive strategic remuneration review of senior management positions with an overall recommendation to align its remuneration strategy, policies and design to ensure equity and fairness. As roles are assessed via the Workforce Planning stream, attention is being given to broader benchmarking of similar roles and the language used to describe the role is without gender or sexuality bias. In addition, advertising practices have been adjusted to include proactive searches to fill vacant senior roles and gender decoder software is being used for recruitment materials.</p>
Griffith University	<p>Griffith University has undertaken to reduce its pay equity gap by one per cent each year.</p> <p>It has engaged in more detailed gender pay gap analyses to identify any specific sources of inequity so that more specific actions may be devised.</p> <p>Each year a like-for-like gender pay analysis is now completed and</p>

	presented prior to decision making on senior staff remuneration.
University of New South Wales (UNSW)	<p>As well as having undertaken a recent gender pay gap analysis, UNSW's remuneration policy includes a number of gender pay equity objectives. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaking a regular and comprehensive pay review, at a minimum every two years, with the results reported to UNSW's Equity Diversity and Inclusion Board and Management Board. These reports are to include an assessment of whether UNSW is on track to achieving its target, which is: <i>for the proportion of all monies paid to females to equal the proportion of all positions filled by females, by 2025</i> • undertaking a regular bonus review by gender, at least once annually and coinciding with UNSW's bonus payment cycle, with the intention that the average bonus percentage outcome for men and women is the same from 2018 onwards • preparing regular gender pay equity progress reports by faculty and division and ensuring that these are cascaded to each dean/division leader (as appropriate) and any other key stakeholders that they nominate • creating a gender pay equity policy/statement, and • overseeing and ensuring that actions are taken by each faculty's dean/division's leader, and their Heads of School/Department, that address pay equity gaps.
6. Employment strategies that encourage the recruitment, retention and progression of women in health and medical research.	
The Heart Research Institute (HRI)	HRI has Career Restart Grants to acknowledge and help overcome some of the barriers women in science face, in particular, the challenge to remain competitive while on maternity leave. The grants total of \$65,000 (\$5,000 for students) is open to HRI researchers/students who are pregnant, on maternity leave, or have returned to work in the last two years. The grant, established in 2016, aims to ensure female researchers who choose to have a family are given support to continue in their careers.
University of Technology Sydney (UTS)	To help recruit and retain more senior women, UTS gained exemptions under the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to conduct targeted recruitment for women in areas of under-representation (STEMM and senior roles) and to provide scholarships for women in STEMM faculties.
Western Sydney University (WSU)	<p>Established in 2017, the Vice Chancellor's Gender Equality Fund provides staff an opportunity to be awarded a grant to support gender equality initiatives and/or promote gender diversity and inclusion at WSU. Primarily, the Fund seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage a nexus between research and practice to allow a deeper understanding of obstacles and steps required to tackle gender inequality within the University and its community • foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and collective effort between stakeholders within the University and its community to promote gender equality, and • enable research informed practice-based outcomes within the University to forge 'real-world' improvements in gender equality strategy, policy and programs.

7. Strategies to address the need for the provision of support for childcare.	
ANZAC Research Institute (ANZAC)	ANZAC research staff have priority access to enrolment in an onsite, long-hour day care facility at below market rates which caters for children from babies to pre-school children.
Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute (VCCRI)	In early 2017, VCCRI introduced a childcare travel award which was established in recognition of the challenges that primary carers face in advancing their scientific careers. This award will enable researchers with family obligations to make childcare arrangements that enable them to participate in conferences and professional meetings.
Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI)	WEHI has a range of targeted programs and support available for women with caring responsibilities. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craven and Shearer award: \$15,000 per annum for women academics to assist with childcare costs. Funds can be used to offset the out-of-pocket costs of regular childcare fees, costs of securing a childcare place before returning to work and/or to contribute to additional after-hours childcare that would allow work to be done that would otherwise not be possible, such as attending a conference, meeting, or experiment going into the evening. • Page Betheras award: provision of technical support for up to three months for women academics on primary carers leave to maintain their lab-based work. • Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre: the institute opened a 100-place childcare centre in July 2018. This is the first centre at an independent medical research institute in Australia.