

Women in STEM Decadal Plan

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY RESPONSE

2021 REVIEW AND UPDATE



Macquarie University is committed to creating and maintaining a culture that embraces equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do. We aim to drive real change through an innovative and systemic approach. We have set ambitious actions and targets for progressing gender equity, and we are proud of our progress to date. This document illustrates how the commitments and actions outlined in Macquarie's *Towards Gender Equity 2.0* (workplace gender equity strategy) align with and support the Women in STEM Decadal Plan.

Opportunity 1: Leadership and cohesion

Our workplace gender equity strategy identifies senior leadership as a key driver and priority area for action. The following examples show how our senior leaders are leading cultural change towards achieving gender equality at Macquarie.

LEADING CHANGE – OUR FIXING THE SYSTEM APPROACH

While the six priority areas within our strategy may not be unusual, our approach to achieving change is. To make real progress, we know that we need to transform the traditional approach to gender equity. Our approach is to fix the system – we are focusing our attention on the policies, systems, processes and cultures that create and maintain inequality. We are changing the way we do things. We use data and academic research to guide and design innovative and targeted actions. While our journey towards gender equity has not been without challenges, significant progress has been achieved in a short time. We are encouraged by the momentum, leadership and community engagement aimed at fixing the system. For more information on our approach and progress, visit our [website](#) and view our *Fixing the System for Gender Equity* video.

Macquarie was asked to review and update this report in March 2021. Our review and updates on progress in this document are given in purple and marked with a side bar, as shown here.



L-R: Pete Boyle, Head of U@MQ and Co-Chair of GESAT; Jo Hatton, Manager, Workplace Diversity and Inclusion; Distinguished Professor Lesley Hughes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Integrity and Development) and Co-Chair of GESAT; Professor S Bruce Dowton, Vice-Chancellor



Fixing the System for Gender Equity video, 2019

GENDER EQUITY KPIS FOR OUR EXECUTIVE GROUP

Since 2018, each member of the University's Executive Group has had a KPI to progress gender equity. This is the only mandatory executive-level KPI. The Executive Group is provided with the information and data necessary to identify key areas for action in their faculty or portfolio.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR GENDER EQUITY

Macquarie's Gender Equity Self-Assessment Team (GESAT) comprises academic and professional staff at all levels from across the University. Responsible for driving the implementation of the Workplace Gender Equity Strategy, the GESAT has been integral in putting the fixing the system approach into practice. Diversity and inclusion committees are being set up to lead change at a local level. These committees have already implemented a number of innovative actions and are making significant progress. For example, the Department of Physics and Astronomy recently received a Silver Pleiades Award from the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in Astronomy Chapter of the Astronomical Society of Australia. All the diversity and inclusion committees will be represented on the GESAT, providing opportunities to engage a wide network of leaders and staff in tackling equality, diversity and inclusion issues at the local level.

2021 UPDATE: In 2020, the GESAT committee transitioned into 'MQ Inclusion' – a University-level committee combining coordinated local action with whole-of-institution leadership and strategy. This represents a shift from a focus on gender equity, to equality, diversity and inclusion – we are taking what we've learnt on our journey towards gender equity, and applying our Fixing the System approach more broadly.

The membership of MQ Inclusion is made up of representatives from eight faculty and portfolio diversity and inclusion committees. This enables the sharing of success stories, evidence-based actions, and information across the University, as well as an opportunity to identify and address university-wide D&I priorities and actions. Please watch this video for more information about MQ Inclusion and our local D&I committees. MQ Inclusion reports to the Executive group via MQ's two executive sponsors for D&I.

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Leaders and managers are key to fostering an inclusive culture. We are currently improving training and development to new and existing managers at Macquarie. Inclusive leadership principles will be embedded to ensure our managers have the skills and knowledge required to support diverse teams and create inclusive workplace environments.

EMBEDDING D&I IN UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

MQ Inclusion has been working with members of the University Executive Group to develop D&I Principles that will inform key projects and change processes under the University's 2020–2024 Operating Plan. This will ensure the design process considers D&I, and that new processes and policies enable D&I. This is building on our systemic approach – ensuring D&I and gender equity are built into all areas of our University.

"Our approach is to fix the system, not try to fix the individuals who work within that system – to ensure that our culture, our work practices, our promotion pathways et cetera are free from bias and inclusive for everyone."

Nicole Gower

VICE-PRESIDENT, PEOPLE AND SERVICES

"We are finding all the institutional barriers to gender equity and fixing those, rather than 'fixing' women."

Distinguished Professor Lesley Hughes

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND DEVELOPMENT) AND CO-CHAIR OF GESAT

"Fixing the system means a combination of having a set of KPIs that includes commitment to the Gender Equity Strategy, and then, very thoughtfully and consciously throughout the year, making sure that those KPIs are met. Making gender equity the way we do business – that is, business as usual. That's how we fix the system – we reset the system."

Professor David Wilkinson

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ENGAGEMENT)

Opportunity 2: Evaluation

Our gender equity strategy is underpinned by in-depth data analysis. We are committed to ongoing analysis to track our impact and identify 'what works'.

ANNUAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Our workplace gender equity strategy includes targets and success measures against which progress will be assessed. Annual gender equity reports to the Executive Group and to the University Council highlight progress to date and key workforce data, and identify future areas for action.

SAGE ATHENA SWAN

Macquarie has received a SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Award. This award recognises our progress and planned actions to address gender inequity in STEM. SAGE (Science in Australia Gender Equity) was established to pilot an accreditation framework, based on the United Kingdom's Athena SWAN Charter, in Australian science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) higher education and research institutes. The accreditation process required us to conduct in-depth self-assessment of our structures, systems and culture to identify gender equity-related gaps and barriers, then propose a robust and measurable action plan to address the issues. Macquarie's SAGE action plan aligns with our workplace gender equity strategy.

2021 UPDATE: In 2020, Macquarie became the only university to hold two Athena SWAN Awards, when Australian Astronomical Optics, a department within Macquarie's Faculty of Science and Engineering, received a SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Award.

LEGISLATIVE REPORTING

In line with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, Macquarie reports annually to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) on six gender equality indicators.

WGEA EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Macquarie University received a WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equity Citation in 2020. This recognises our active commitment to gender equity, with annual reporting alongside our strategy and success measures.



"I'm extremely proud that Macquarie has been awarded a SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Award. This is an internationally recognised acknowledgement of our ongoing commitment to, and progress towards, gender equity at the University. The accreditation process at Macquarie has been highly collaborative, involving colleagues across the University. We know that we need to be bold and innovative to create real change for equity, diversity and inclusion, and at Macquarie we're ensuring we focus on addressing the causes of under-representation and inequality, not the symptoms. We're already seeing the impact of this approach and will continue to make it a key priority for our university."

Professor S Bruce Dowton
VICE-CHANCELLOR



L-R: Lesley Hughes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Integrity and Development) and Co-Chair of GESAT; Professor Judith Dawes

Opportunity 3: Workplace culture

Our fixing the system approach aims to address the underlying causes of inequality by removing the potential for bias from our policies, processes and workplace culture. Following are examples of our progress to date and areas for future action.

NEW ACADEMIC PROMOTION POLICY AND PROCESS

Traditional academic promotion processes in higher education often embed bias that favours some activities (research) over other activities (teaching and service). Research suggests these traditional models result in gender disparities in application and success rates. In 2017, we reviewed and changed to be more inclusive and to better recognise and value the work of all academics. The new streamlined process was designed to recognise individual strengths, support flexible career pathways and provide greater transparency. It has resulted in increased application rates from women, positive feedback from staff of all genders and equitable success rates. A detailed analysis of gender equity outcomes formed part of the review of the new promotion policy.

2021 UPDATE: Continued analysis has shown sustained positive impacts of this new policy. Anecdotal evidence also indicates the policy has impacted on workload allocation and uptake in citizenship and leadership activities.

RECRUITMENT

We identified that existing recruitment practices are a significant contributor to the under-representation of women in particular disciplines and in senior leadership roles. While women who apply to work at Macquarie fare well through our recruitment process, we want to attract a more equal representation of female applicants. To improve gender diversity, a number of initiatives have been put in place with positive outcomes:

- **Senior recruitment:** Since 2017, Macquarie has mandated that recruitment firms provide gender-diverse longlists for senior appointments.
- **Discipline-specific action:** Our School of Engineering undertook a recruitment drive in 2018, led by the Dean of Engineering. Staff networks were used to identify potential female candidates, who were then encouraged to apply. Extra care was taken to review gender balance while creating a longlist, and the school committed to interviewing every woman on that longlist. As a result, the school's representation of academic women increased from 5 per cent to 25 per cent.
- **Anonymous recruitment:** Several department-led pilots of anonymous recruitment (at long listing and short listing stages) have been undertaken. Positive feedback was received from these pilots, so further testing of anonymous recruitment will be undertaken.
- **Recruitment training:** New training has been developed that integrates bias mitigation and inclusive recruitment strategies. All recruiting managers are encouraged and expected to attend.

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND CARERS

Macquarie's parental leave provisions are sector-leading and our parental leave policies are deliberately gender neutral. We have developed a number of additional activities to better support parents and carers at Macquarie, including:

- **Primary Carer Conference Support Scheme:** The scheme provides financial support for caring arrangements, including childcare, so that staff with primary carer responsibilities can attend conferences: up to \$500 for local conferences, \$1000 for national conferences, \$2000 for international conferences.
- **Restart grants:** Provide funding of up to \$20,000 to Macquarie academics after parental leave of six months or more to kickstart research.
- **Carers Hub:** Launched in 2019, the Carers Hub is an online resource to support parents and carers at Macquarie before, during and after leave. The hub provides helpful resources; information on policies, which make it clear that leave provisions are available to staff of all genders; conversation guides for employees and managers; and carers stories that share how Macquarie staff balance family, work and other commitments.
- **Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace:** Macquarie is accredited by the Australian Breastfeeding Association as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.
- **Childcare:** A new childcare centre has opened on campus. Waratah Cottage provides long day care, casual care and vacation care options, offering at least 60 new childcare places. As with Banksia and Gumnut, Macquarie University Staff (including Macquarie University Hospital staff) receive priority for places at Waratah.

INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Macquarie recently launched a new Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy, with accompanying mandatory all-staff training. Macquarie's 'Respect. Now. Always.' action plan was launched by the University's Vice-Chancellor in 2018. The plan covers action on staff and student policies, leadership, education and support services.

2021 UPDATE: New all-staff mandatory training has been launched. This new module, titled 'Our culture: Preventing bullying, discrimination and harassment', helps staff know their rights and responsibilities as employees, to challenge attitudes and practices that may lead to harmful conduct, and to respond to incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

'Drawing the Line' training has been run in several departments. The workshops are designed to support teams to discuss perceptions of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour and how to work towards an inclusive team culture. This training has been evaluated, and progress to date presented at an international conference.

SUPPORT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Macquarie University Research Fellowship Scheme provides three years salary and project funding to postdoctoral researchers. After our analysis found evidence of bias in selection that had favoured men, a 40/40/20 model was applied from 2018, mandating that at least 40 per cent of recipients are female.

"We're sending a very clear message: 'You don't have to fit this strict stereotype. We recognise you're excellent in the variety of academic work that you do.' And this has had an excellent outcome for us already."

Professor Mariella Herberstein
CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE

"I saw the opportunity for a transformative moment. Maybe there was a chance that we could significantly increase the ratio of women in the school."

Professor Darren Bagnall
DEAN, SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

Opportunity 4: Visibility

MARKETING TARGETS AND MONITORING

Our Group Marketing team has established gender equity targets and now undertake regular reporting. This has resulted in an increase in female representation, to 45 per cent, in internal and external media channels.

GENDER EQUITY WEEK

Initiated in 2018, Gender Equity Week is an annual celebration of International Women's Day and an opportunity to celebrate our progress towards gender equity. A range of initiatives are held during the week that celebrate the achievements of women and encourage gender equity, including:

- **International Women's Day:** Professor Cordelia Fine (2018, author of *Delusions of Gender* and *Testosterone Rex*) and Catherine Fox (2019, author of *Stop Fixing Women*) joined us on International Women's Day. Both authors have influenced our fixing the system approach to gender equity.
- **Macquarie Women Shaping the Future Symposium:** Ten female academics representing all faculties presented TED-style talks. The 2019 event was opened by our Vice-Chancellor, who noted that the collective noun for a group of women is 'an amazement'.
- **Hidden Figures of STEMM Exhibition:** The exhibition celebrates women scientists whose contributions have been ignored or underappreciated.

Gender Equity Week activities, events and communications continued in 2020 and 2021.

SUPERSTARS OF STEMM

Associate Professor Ronika Power was one of 30 inaugural Superstars of STEMM in 2018. This national program, run by Science and Technology Australia, equips women in STEMM with advanced communication skills and provides opportunities to use them, in the media, on the stage, and in speaking with decision-makers. Subsequently, three Macquarie women were selected in the 2019 cohort.

2021 UPDATE: Macquarie has been well represented in subsequent Superstars of STEMM cohorts, with four female scientists taking part in the 2021 program: Associate Professor Heather Handley, Associate Professor Joanne Jamie, Dr Noushin Nasiri and Dr Vanessa Pirota.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY GUEST LECTURE 2019: Catherine Fox in conversation with Nicole Gower, Vice-President, People and Services

"The Superstars of STEMM program has made a staggering difference in my life [...] I have built a strong social media presence from nothing; been invited to give a TED talk and innumerable public lectures; and I am receiving invitations to serve on national and international advisory boards."

Ronika Power
PROFESSOR



MACQUARIE'S 2021 SUPERSTARS OF STEMM (L-R): Associate Professor Heather Handley, Associate Professor Joanne Jamie, Dr Noushin Nasiri and Dr Vanessa Pirota

Opportunity 5: Education

Macquarie runs many widening participation activities focusing on attracting, supporting and retaining women in STEMM, including:

- **Women in STEMM scholarships:** These scholarships attract more female students to study STEMM-related degrees.
- **Peer-assisted learning:** In the Faculty of Science and Engineering, final-year female undergraduate students support first-year female students.
- **Pilot STEMM scheme:** Former female STEMM students partner with current female STEMM students for support in the transition from study to the workplace.
- **Junior Science Academy:** Launched in 2014, the academy runs activities on campus during school holidays for preschool and primary school children to explore STEMM concepts through fun, hands-on activities. In 2018, nearly 3000 children took part in the program, of which 45 per cent were female.
- **Pioneering Women in STEMM program:** Begun in 2016, this multi-week program aims to deepen students' understanding of the real-world applications of STEMM. The program has reached 100 female students to date, with 98 per cent reporting that they intended to study a STEMM-based degree.

Opportunity 6: Industry action

Macquarie received an Athena SWAN Bronze Award, as part of the SAGE pilot in Australia, and has formed strong links and collaborations with other universities in the sector. We will continue to support the development of SAGE in Australia and hope to strengthen the links already established between universities to further our efforts towards gender equity.



2021 Update:

New opportunity – COVID-19 Response

Macquarie University has considered gender equity throughout its response to COVID-19, and has been monitoring the impacts on gender equity, and communicating commitments and actions to staff.

JOINT SECTOR STATEMENT

The Vice-Chancellor signed a joint Australian higher education sector position statement, 'Preserving Gender Equity as a Higher Education Priority During and After COVID-19', in June 2020. This acknowledges the gendered effects of COVID-19 and outlines a shared commitment to mitigating these impacts. This joint sector statement has resulted in strong collaborative relationships and sharing of actions and best practice.

COVID-19 GENDER EQUITY RESPONSE PLAN

The University ran an all-staff survey to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on our staff community. This survey included an analysis of gender differences in experiences. In response to this data, and emerging academic research on the gendered impacts of COVID-19, Macquarie prepared the COVID-19 Gender Equity Response Plan. This was confirmed by the Executive Group, and included the following priority areas for action:

- maintaining workplace gender equity and broader diversity and inclusion commitments
- mitigating any disproportionate impact on women's research productivity
- acknowledging the impacts of caring responsibilities and progressing a flexible workplace culture
- maintaining a focus on supporting survivors of family and domestic violence



FIND OUT MORE

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