

DETERMINING CRITICAL INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE BARRIERS AND ENABLERS FOR CAREER PROGRESSION IN MEDICAL RESEARCH



WOMEN

IN SCIENCE

PARKVILLE PRECINCT

BACKGROUND

Previously, in 2016, WiSPP collected baseline data from the five participating institutes. The chosen metrics align closely with both the Workplace Gender Equality Agency ([WGEA](#)) and Science in Australia Gender Equity ([SAGE](#)) frameworks but were adapted to the specific context of Medical Research Institutes. WiSPP's 2016 metrics gathering exercise was valuable in quantifying accepted indicators of the issue (e.g. representation at different career levels). However, quantifying gender balance in the key drivers that might determine career progress proved more difficult to obtain, and some data (e.g. access to project resources and co-authorships) was difficult to interpret.

For our 2019 data collection, we chose to map out these key drivers with two long-term goals in mind:

- (i) to enable the integration of the data into a more interpretable and actionable framework, and
- (ii) to highlight missing data on key drivers of career progression (e.g. awards, development opportunities), hopefully paving the way to a more comprehensive data collection approach in the future.

This has been a highly collaborative exercise, with dedicated WiSPP volunteers (spanning research and professional services staff) working closely with People and Culture departments and other representatives from all five institutes.

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In determining the data to collect for this project, the WiSPP Metrics Working Group considered the cycle of career progression and conceptualised the virtuous/vicious cycle in Figure 1. We recognised that careers tend to progress through iterations, in which Opportunities lead to Achievements which lead to Recognition, which leads to further Opportunities.

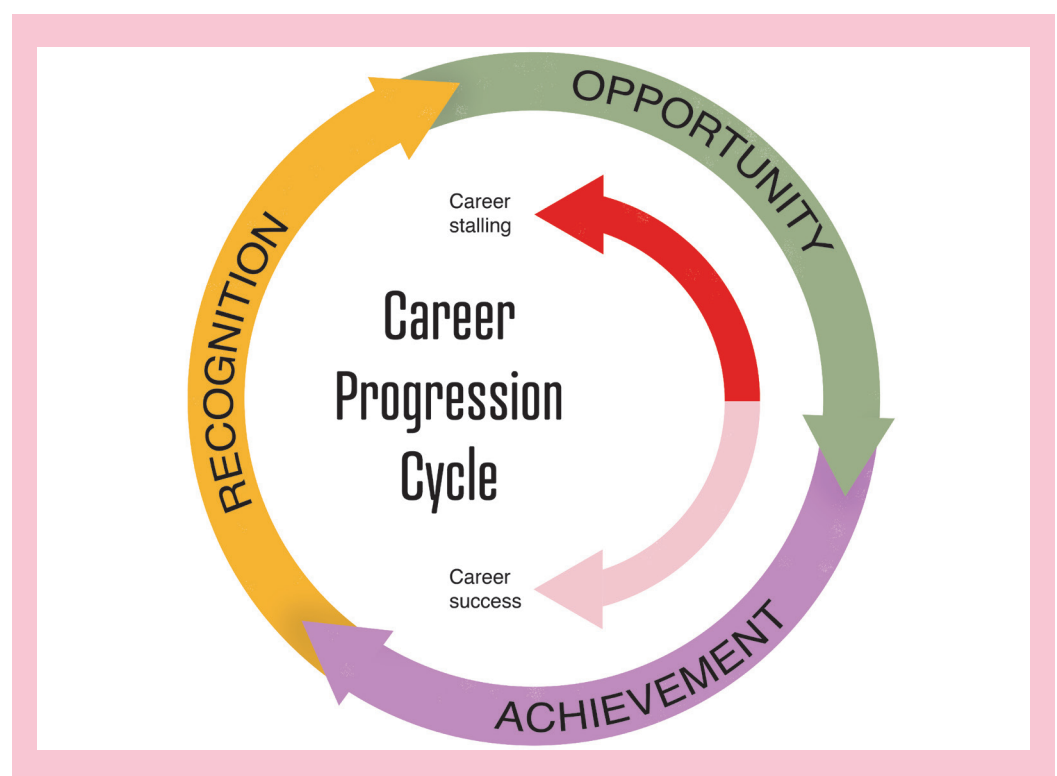


Figure 1:

The virtuous/vicious cycle of career progression.

To map the many interrelated elements of the career progression cycle we broke this down further into three layers: the core features of research success, which includes aspects traditionally included in a research track record, such as publications, grants, collaborations and access to students; the underlying enablers of research success, which includes factors that assist in building that track record, such as mentors, awards, networks, and time; and finally, institutional facilitation, which provides the support for successful career progression (Figures 2, 3, & 4). We conceptualised these elements as cogs that when working together promote successful career progression. When these cogs are not running smoothly, or are blocked by career inhibiting elements, research careers can stall.

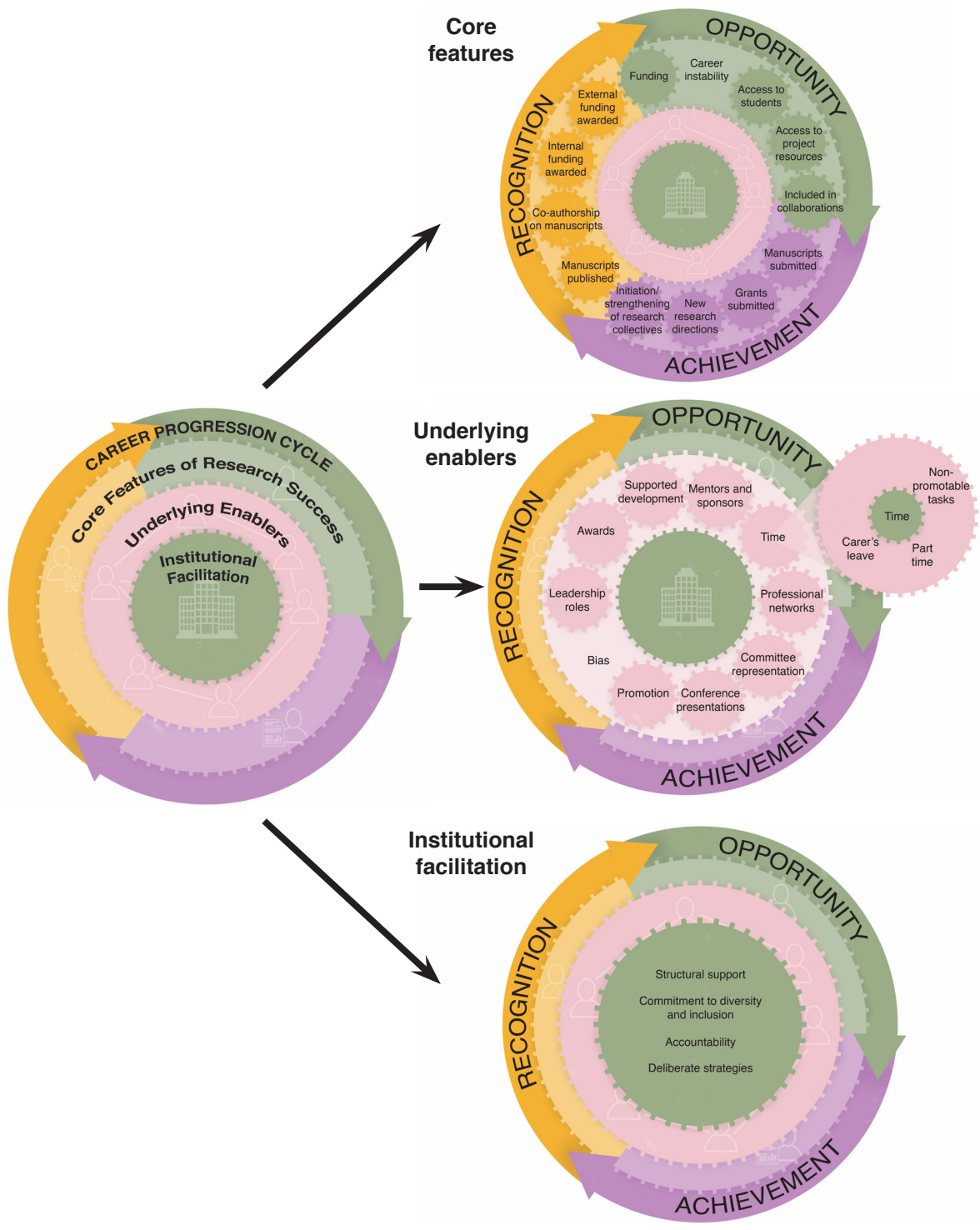


Figure 2:

The layers of career progression cycle: core features, underlying enablers, and institute facilitation.

Individual contributors within these layers are summarised on the right-hand side: core features (top), underlying enablers (middle), and institute facilitation (bottom).

DATA PROCESSES

To capture data on these elements that ought to be measurable we determined three sources of data needed to be collected.

1. Quantitative data on gender composition at all levels of the workforce, governing bodies, new recruitment and promotions.
2. A survey to be completed by the Human Resources teams and relevant institute personnel.
3. Individual attitudinal and experiential survey to be completed by institute employees.

Figure 3:

All elements of the Career Progression Cycle that should be measurable.

This covers core features (outer wheel), underlying enablers (middle wheel), and institute facilitation (centre wheel).

