



Guidance for trial statisticians planning to apply for an academic promotion

ACTA STInG
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GENERAL TIPS ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

- Start thinking about your application very early (many months or even years before you intend to submit your application for promotion) so you can identify when it might be appropriate to apply for a promotion and where the gaps in your CV might be so that you have time to try and fill some of them (e.g., by seeking teaching opportunities if you have little teaching experience). Discuss your application plans with your Supervisor and your Head of School to get their feedback.
- Familiarise yourself with the promotion framework/criteria applicable within your university/institute. Attend any promotion information sessions presented at your university/institute.
- When putting together your application, make sure you address as many criteria as possible in your application.
- Start by listing all your achievements, even the most (seemingly) trivial ones, in a document, even though you may not mention them all in your final application. It can help to have a live document that you update whenever you have a new achievement so that you always have an up-to-date list that you can refer to.
- Use an available template for your application. If none are available, structure your application against the criteria.
- In your application (and potential interview), make sure you tell a coherent story about yourself and your program of research.
- Use graphs that demonstrate your upward trajectory in terms of publications, citations and funding success.
- Use Altmetric or similar systems to quantify your impact on policies, guidelines, etc.
- Try and demonstrate that you are already performing at the level for which you are applying. This can be done by comparing yourself to other academics (at your current level and at the level you are applying for) within your school/faculty/institute by using accepted impact metrics such as the field-weighted citation index (FWCI). This can be found on SciVal or Scopus. You may be able to obtain this information from your school/faculty/institute rather than searching for it yourself.
- Ask some of your colleagues to share their previous (successful) applications and/or check whether your University/Institute has any internally available examples of successful applications. Combine the best elements of these previous applications when preparing your application.
- Ask peers (e.g., manager) to review your application.
- If you need to nominate referees (usually required at levels D and E within the university system), choose them wisely. Preferably select senior researchers from equivalent universities who know enough about your work (e.g., collaborators on some large trials), but are independent enough to be deemed free of conflict (e.g., not from your university/faculty).

INTERVIEW TIPS:

- If your promotion process includes an interview, make sure that you are very well prepared by:
 - > Attending interview skills workshop offered by your university/faculty/institute
 - > Organising mock interviews
 - > Preparing an answer to potential interview questions
 - > Preparing a strong introduction and closing statement
 - > Making sure that in your interview, you tell a compelling and coherent story supported by a few selected examples.

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR TRIAL STATISTICIANS:

- As a trial statistician, one is often part of a wider research team and is not usually the lead of research projects. In particular, opportunities for first/senior authorship on manuscripts tend to be limited. Make sure this is clear in your application (e.g., I have 30 publications in the past five years and, as is typical for researchers in my field of statistics, I am a middle author on the majority of these publications). It can help to note the number of papers that you are second or third author on highlighting the importance of your contribution.
- As a “collaborating biostatistician”, explain that your research involves contributions to cross-disciplinary studies led by collaborators, and that the nature of your contributions therefore differs from those of a traditional academic focusing on pure aspects of their discipline.

- Focus on your leadership role as a statistician. This includes but is not limited:
 - > Statistical leadership on large national and international multi-centre clinical trials including study design, conduct or analysis
 - > Membership of trial data safety monitoring committees and steering committees
 - > Lead statistician on successful grant applications
 - > Lead statistician on innovative study designs
 - > Conduct of complex statistical analyses
 - > Development of new analytical methodologies
 - > Lead statistician on publications in medical journals
 - > Production of technical reports (e.g., government reports)
 - > Post-graduate training on research methods
 - > Supervision of research students
 - > Mentoring
 - > Leadership of groups/programs (e.g., statistics team)
 - > Membership of committees or working groups (e.g. within SSA, ACTA, etc.)
 - > Organisation of workshop, courses, etc.
 - > Invited speaking opportunities at conferences
 - > Awards and prizes.
- Refer to specific guidance from your university/faculty/institute about promotion of biostatisticians/biometricians (if available). For example, the Faculty of Medicine at UNSW has Specific Criteria for Promotion of Academic Biometricians, which recognise the role of biometricians as key academic contributors within a diverse range of research settings and methodologies that includes clinical trials and cohort studies.
- Justify any gaps in your application that may seem unusual for a typical academic but can often affect statisticians. For example, if your opportunities to teach and/or supervise postgraduate students has been limited due to the nature of your position (e.g., you are funded by a specific research project to provide statistical support for that project) then make this clear.



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