

**University of Aberdeen**  
**Academic Promotion**  
**Guidance - External Evaluations**

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## **1. External Evaluation requirements**

As part of the Academic Promotion Policy and Procedure, external evaluations are required for applications to Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Fellow, Reader and Chair, where the University Promotion Committee determines that a prima facie case for promotion exists.

External evaluation is integral to the Procedure, to ensure we maintain the highest academic standards in comparison with our peers. The purpose of the external evaluation, therefore, is to enhance the decision-making process and to contribute to assessing the application against the promotion criteria.

The number of external evaluations sought will be as follows:

- For applications to Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow – 2
- For applications to Reader and Chair – 3

In recognition of the difference in the external profiles of staff applying for promotion to Professor on the Teaching & Research and Research tracks compared to the Teaching & Scholarship track, at least 2 of the evaluations for the Teaching & Research and Research tracks for promotion to Professor should be from individuals who can comment on the international standing of the applicant whilst for Teaching & Scholarship track there should be at least one.

## **2. Nominating external evaluators**

External evaluators are nominated by the Head of School, following discussion with other relevant senior academic staff, consulted as part of the process to develop the Head of School Evaluation.

**External evaluators are not referees and are chosen on the basis of their ability to provide an independent, objective and informed judgment on the quality and impact of the applicant's academic activities.**

Applicants can specify, with justification, the names of individuals whom they would prefer should not be contacted as external evaluators. They should not, however, be consulted about which external evaluators should be nominated.

The external evaluator should be regarded as independent and have appropriate standing in the discipline at professorial level or equivalent and be familiar with the general standards for promotion within UK universities. Exceptionally, external evaluators may be chosen from other types of institution. They must not be currently

employed by the University of Aberdeen or have been employed in the previous two years.

External evaluators will be asked to confirm how they know the candidate in their report. **An external evaluator should not be a co-grant holder, co-author (within the last ten years), PhD supervisor, friend or collaborator of an applicant.** Evaluators are required to make a full declaration of how they know the candidate, and whether a report from them could be perceived by a reasonable person as conflicted.

### **3. What should be included in an assessment?**

External evaluators are provided with the Academic Promotion Framework of Criteria, the applicant's application form and detail about their academic career track to ensure that all necessary areas are covered.

In seeking an external evaluation, the University is looking for a balanced and informed view of the applicant's case for promotion from a senior external expert focusing on the quality of their work. Evaluators will be asked to complete a standard form with the aim of providing a critical assessment of the evidence given by the applicant against the minimum threshold criteria, as well as any additional information provided by the applicant under additional pillars.

Evaluators will be asked to comment on the strength of the case in relation to the evidence provided and what is expected by the Framework of Criteria. Evaluators will be asked to focus on the quality of contribution over the quantity of activity.

Evaluators will be asked to comment on whether they believe the application meets the standards of promotion to the level sought, with reference to the Framework of Criteria, as well as how it compares to recent successful applications for promotion at the equivalent level within their institution.

### **4. What information should be excluded?**

The University will consider equality factors associated with the quantity of output as part of the application – either as the applicant has included this information in their application or separately in the Individual Circumstances form. The nominated external evaluation is, therefore, not required to comment on any known equality factors in their assessment e.g., part time working.