

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PROMOTION PROCEDURE
ACADEMIC STAFF
(APPLICATIONS TO GRADES 7-9)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document outlines the procedure for applying for promotion to academic, posts grades 7 – 9. Separate procedural documents apply for promotion to academic posts, grades 5-6.
- 1.2 As part of the implementation of the Framework Agreement, the University adopted a role evaluation tool (HERA). This tool uses an externally validated uniform scoring system to help allocate staff to grades on the basis of their work responsibilities. The University's procedures for promotion incorporate the HERA Role Evaluation elements and have been developed and agreed following consultation with the University's recognised trade unions.
- 1.3 The Procedure is consistent with the University's commitments as outlined in Aberdeen 2040 strategy.
- 1.4 The Procedure also aims to ensure that the University recognises responsibilities which are undertaken and the development of the skills required to deliver them in a fair and objective manner and in this connection, the consideration of applications for promotion will also include a quality judgment undertaken by the appropriate Promotion Sub-Committee.
- 1.5 As part of the implementation of the Framework Agreement, a number of generic role profiles for Academic, Research and Teaching Staff were agreed at national level. The University has adopted the use of these National Academic Role Profiles* and therefore the criteria for promotion for Academic, Research and Teaching Staff are those specified in the National Profiles. The University will normally require an individual to achieve a 75% match to a profile before it is accepted that an appropriate match exists. The National Role Profiles contain 12 elements. Any application for promotion must satisfy a match with elements 1 & 2. Copies of the National Academic Role Profiles are available [here](#).
- 1.6 In **exceptional** circumstances where an individual is precluded from undertaking teaching duties by (i) the terms and conditions of their appointment and/or (ii) in the institutional contractual arrangements underpinning their work, they will not be expected to satisfy a match with Element 1 (Teaching & Learning Support). The individual will still be expected to match at the higher level in 9 out of the remaining 11 Elements, including a match at the essential Element 2.

Footnote

At Aberdeen, the National Academic Role Profiles were scored, using HERA, by fully trained Role Analysts drawn from the University's management and UCU. Local amendments to the Profiles were agreed in February 2013.

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 Timescales and Procedure

The timescale and procedure for application to the promotion exercise will be advertised to all staff on an annual basis. In general, promotion decisions will also follow an annual cycle. An exception to this will be where an individual applies for, and is appointed to a promoted role within the University.

Line managers will offer staff an opportunity at least once per year to discuss promotion prospects. This will ordinarily take place during the Annual Review and line managers should encourage applications where appropriate whilst being realistic and constructive where further development is required.

2.2 Fairness and Equity

The University of Aberdeen is committed to ensuring that all applications for promotion are fully considered on their own individual merits, within a framework of equality and fairness, irrespective of contractual status. Any career breaks or other lengthy periods of absence or periods of part time working which have affected the volume, but not quality, of outputs will be taken into consideration in order to support such staff and ensure they are not disadvantaged. The Academic Role Profiles describe expected levels of responsibility, complexity, contribution, achievement and esteem – not their volume, duration or range. Any member of staff involved in the promotion exercise will be required to declare a conflict of interest where they believe this may exist.

The University operates a process of 'blind review' of applications for promotion. Applicants are asked not to indicate their gender when completing their application form. Anonymity will cease once Role Analysts have completed the scoring process and the promotions sub-committees/committees will have named applications.

2.3 Criteria for Promotion

This procedure deals specifically with promotion. The types of role changes and evidence required are:

- Increases in responsibility and/or complexity in the duties undertaken;
- Significant changes to job duties that affect the level of responsibility attached to the role;
- Evidence presented in the application indicating that the level at which duties are being undertaken in relation to the relevant HERA elements has changed;
- Measures of external and internal (academic) standing and esteem.

An individual's ability to work overseas is not in itself a factor that will influence whether an application for promotion is successful. Rather, the factors outlined above will be used to determine this.

Notwithstanding, working overseas may in turn lead to evidence of these factors being met. Similarly, the role of an individual who is not able to work overseas and remaining in the UK may also develop in such a way that these factors are met.

It is recognised that a number of individuals within the University undertake the following additional duties as part of their role which can be taken into account in making an application for promotion. It should be noted that undertaking the duties associated with these roles is deemed to be part of an individual's overall duties and will not warrant promotion in isolation:

- Radiation Protection Supervisors;
- Laser Protection Supervisors;
- General Safety Advisors;
- Role Analysts.

Decisions on promotion will be based on changes in levels of responsibility; an individual's demonstrated contribution within their present role and their personal achievements. These will be evidenced by supporting information and be subject to verification by the appropriate Head of School.

2.4 Staff Promotion Committee

The Staff Promotion Committee has delegated authority from the University Court to consider recommendations on promotion from all Promotion Sub-Committees and to approve recommendations on behalf of the Court. The Staff Promotion Committee will delegate responsibility for the initial assessment of candidates to the relevant Promotion Sub-Committees and will receive recommendations from these Sub-Committees for consideration and approval. The formal composition and remit of the Committee is:

Composition - Principal (Convener)
Senior Vice Principal
University Secretary
Vice Principals
2 Role Analysts
Trade Union representative (observational capacity only)

The Convener will ensure an appropriate gender balance in the composition of the Sub-Committee.

Remit - To consider recommendations received from the Promotion Sub-Committees and to agree and approve the outcomes of the promotion exercise

The Arts and Sciences Promotion Sub-Committees will consider all applications received for promotion to Grades 7-9 in their area of responsibility. To ensure consistency of approach one VP will sit across all sub-committees, whilst the Head of School for Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition will sit across both Science Sub-committees.

2.4.1 **Arts Promotion Sub-Committee**

Composition - Vice Principal (Convener)
Heads of School
1 Dean of Teaching and Learning
1 Dean of Research
1 further Vice Principal
At least 2 Role Analysts
Human Resources Partner (Clerk)
Trade Union representative (observational capacity only)

The Convener will ensure an appropriate gender balance in the composition of the Sub-Committee.

2.4.2 **Sciences Promotion Sub-Committee 1**

Composition - Vice Principal (Convener)
Heads of School
1 Dean of Teaching and Learning
1 Dean of Research
1 further Vice Principal
At least 4 Role Analysts
Human Resources Partner (Clerk)
Trade Union representative (observational capacity only)

Coverage - Institute of Medical Sciences
Natural & Computing Sciences
Geosciences
Biological Sciences
Engineering

The Convener will ensure an appropriate gender balance in the composition of the Sub-Committee.

2.4.3 **Sciences Promotion Sub-Committee 2**

Composition - Vice Principal (Convener)
Heads of School
1 Dean of Teaching and Learning

1 Dean of Research
1 further Vice Principal
At least 4 Role Analysts
Human Resources Partner (Clerk)
Trade Union representative (observational capacity only)

Coverage - Psychology
Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health
Institute of Applied Health Sciences
Education for Medical & Dental Sciences
Dentistry

The Convener will ensure an appropriate gender balance in the composition of the Sub-Committee.

If additional information is required in respect of any applications for promotion, it is expected that the Arts and Sciences Sub-Committees will co-opt appropriate individual(s) as advisory members. The advisory members will normally be individuals with recognised experience in the discipline or subject area and/or the immediate line manager of the applicant. Their role will be to assist the Sub-Committee members in ensuring that they are in possession of the full information required to make an informed decision on the application for promotion under consideration.

Remit - To consider the applications received for promotion against the stated criteria and to make recommendations on promotion to the Staff Promotion Committee.

2.5 Function of the Role Analysts at the Promotions Committee

The function of the Role Analysts is to explain the HERA metric/national academic role profiles as appropriate and advise the other Committee members on their initial assessment of the role in question based wholly on the paperwork presented to the Analysts at the outset of the process.

Prior to the committee, the Role Analysts will have made their assessment 'blind' i.e. they will not be aware of the gender of the applicant. After this stage the committee members will however be aware who the applicant is, and therefore their gender and the level of application.

The Analysts will receive the views, judgements, assessments of evaluations and any additional information provided by the other members of the Committee and are entitled to amend their initial assessment in light of the discussion and the evidence presented.

Following a full consideration of all the evidence, the Committee will agree a single score sheet which will provide the basis of the feedback to the candidate.

3 PROCEDURE FOR PROMOTION EXERCISE

3.1 Application

All applicants seeking promotion through this Procedure are strongly encouraged to consult the accompanying [guidance notes](#) to assist them in preparing their submission.

Applicants are asked not to indicate their gender when completing the form. Applicants should use only their surname and Employee ID number and are asked where possible not to make evaluations which would give an indication of their gender.

The anonymity will cease once Role Analysts have done their scoring and promotions committees will have named applications.

3.1.1 Applications

All Academic applicants will be required to submit the following information:

- **A fully completed application form.** This should clearly indicate the duties undertaken which warrant promotion and be within the word limits as indicated. Guidance on completing the application form is outlined in the [Academic Staff Guidance Notes](#);
- **A Curriculum Vitae.** The Curriculum Vitae **MUST** be completed using the Standard Curriculum Vitae Form. The completed form must adhere to the word limits outlined in the [Academic Staff CV template](#);
- **A PURE report**
- **For teaching and research staff, applicants will be required to identify the category of National Academic Role Profile within which they are seeking promotion, ie Teaching and Scholarship, Teaching and Research or Research.**

3.1.2 It is not appropriate to submit student course evaluation forms as part of an application.

3.1.3 Application forms will not be accepted unless they contain the mandatory information referred to above and have been submitted on the current version of the application form within the set word limits. Incomplete applications or those submitted on template forms utilised in previous exercises will be returned to the applicant unprocessed.

3.2 Individuals are encouraged to discuss their application with their Line Manager/Head of School, HR Partner or one of the University's Role Analysts prior to final submission to the Line Manager and then Head of School. Line Manager/Heads of School will give consideration to encouraging members of staff within their area of responsibility who they feel may meet the criteria for promotion to submit an application. Where such an application is initiated by a Line Manager/Head of School on behalf of the applicant, the application form must contain the information highlighted above.

3.3 The Head of School will be required to complete the Head of School Evaluation form and (i) confirm that the application form is an accurate reflection of the requirements of the post, (ii) consult with appropriate senior colleagues on the applicant's suitability for this promotion (iii) outline whether or not they support the application and (iv) provide an evaluation clearly indicating why the application is supported or not. Role Analysts will receive (i) confirmation that the application is an accurate reflection. Information under (iii) and (iv) will not be shared with Role Analysts.

3.4 All information in support of an application should be submitted to the Head of School as separate documents, i.e. the application as one document and the CV as a separate document. The Head of School will submit these separate documents, electronically in a pdf format, to Human Resources (e-mail: promapps@abdn.ac.uk) in accordance with the timescales of the annual exercise. Human Resources will arrange for all the information submitted by an applicant to be considered by the members of the relevant Promotion Sub-committees.

3.5 Upon consideration of applications received, the Sub-Committee may recommend that an application may be more appropriately considered under another career track. In these circumstances, the applicant will be notified of the Sub-Committee's recommendation and be provided with the opportunity to re-submit their application. The applicants will have the option to proceed with the original application if they wish.

3.6 Applications for Promotion to Lecturer (Scholarship) (Grade 7), Lecturer (Grade 7),

All applications for promotion received will be referred to the relevant Promotion Sub-Committee for consideration. An initial assessment of Academic, Research and Teaching applications for promotion will be undertaken by the Role Analysts to determine whether there is a match in principle to one of the National Academic Role Profiles.

Recommendations in respect of candidates considered by the Promotion Sub-Committees will be communicated to the Staff Promotion Committee for consideration.

3.8 Applications for Promotion to Senior Lecturer (Scholarship) (Grade 8), Senior Research Fellow (Grade 8), Senior Lecturer (Grade 8), Reader (Grade 8), Personal Chair (Grade 9)

3.8.1 In addition to the procedures specified above where the promotions sub-committee considers that a prima facie case exists for promotion, External Evaluations will be sought for consideration for promotion to Senior Lecturer (Scholarship), Senior Research Fellow, Senior Lecturer, Reader, or Personal Chair. The purpose of the External Evaluations is to enhance the decision making process

and to contribute to matching the applicant to the higher graded role profile. Further guidance on the selection of External Evaluations is available [here](#).

- 3.8.2 All applicants for promotion to Grades 8 and 9 are required to submit with their application, 1 Personal Reference from individuals whom they would normally list as a Personal Referee. The reference cannot be from the applicant's Head of School. Further guidance on requirements is available [here](#).
- 3.8.3 In addition, 3 External Evaluations will be required for promotion to Senior Lecturer (Scholarship), Senior Research Fellow, Senior Lecturer, Reader (Grade 8) or Personal Chair roles. 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 should be from individuals who can comment on the international standing of the applicant whilst for Teaching & Scholarship there should be at least one.
- 3.8.4 The Head of School will be asked to confirm the details of External Evaluators to be contacted and HR will prepare correspondence to be sent from the Head of HR, on behalf of the Principal and Vice Chancellor. The individual member of staff has the right to specify with justification the names of individuals whom they would prefer should not be contacted as External Evaluators and this information should be provided at the time of application. It will be the normal expectation that the Sub-Committee will not contact those specified individuals.
- 3.8.5 The promotions sub-committees retain discretion to discount evaluations that they deem to be inappropriate or disingenuous.
- 3.8.6 Applicants are advised that the External Evaluators will be provided with a copy of the application form, Head of School Assessment and Standard CV to facilitate the production of a fully informed assessment of the submission.
- 3.8.7 In instances where an External Evaluator has been contacted to provide an evaluation for the same applicant (whose application was deemed unsuccessful) in the previous two years they will be sent the original evaluation and asked to update/confirm if anything has changed.
- 3.8.8 In instances where an External Evaluator is clearly unwilling to provide an evaluation, consideration will be given to the significance of this.
- 3.8.9 In accordance with UK Data Protection legislation all evaluators will be advised that their evaluation will be released to the applicant should a Subject Access request be lodged by the applicant for sight of the evaluator's report.
- 3.8.10 The Promotion Sub-Committee may appoint an Advisor to analyse the external evaluations and to present a summary of the information received from the evaluators to the Sub-Committee to help inform the decision-making process. In instances where External Evaluations are clearly supportive, the convenor may decide there is no requirement to appoint an Advisor. The Advisor will be impartial and will not take any part in the final decision-making process of the Sub-Committee. Where a Sub-Committee agrees to co-opt an Advisor, they will be expected to identify individuals from whom External Evaluations should be sought. In the absence of an Advisor being co-opted, the Head of School.
- 3.8.11 If an application is considered unsuitable for Personal Chair (Grade 9), the applicant will be advised that their application may be considered for Reader instead.

3.9 Circulation of Papers

A full set of papers will be circulated to all Sub-Committee members no later than one week in advance of the meeting. The applicant also has the right to see all papers referring to them on request.

3.10 Consideration by Committees

In considering applications for promotion the relevant Promotion Sub-Committees may:

- Recommend promotion to a higher grade;
- Reject the application providing appropriate feedback, with specific evaluation to the Role Profile/HERA job evaluation elements.

4 NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

All candidates will be notified of the outcome of their application for promotion at the earliest opportunity. If the application is successful they will be notified after the meeting of the Staff Promotion Committee. If the application is unsuccessful they will be notified either (i) following the meeting of the sub-committee where the application is not supported or (ii) following the meeting of the Staff Promotion Committee where the application is not supported. Successful applicants will receive their revised grading from an effective date of 1 August.

Candidates whose applications are unsuccessful will be advised of the reasons for this in writing. Constructive feedback will be provided by the Head of School and convenor of the Promotion Sub-Committee/Staff Promotion Committee covering the process by which the decision was made and the reason for the decision in each specific case making evaluation to HERA job evaluation/National Academic Role Profiles as appropriate. Candidates will also be given the opportunity of discussing their application and future support requirements and/or ambitions. They will also be advised of their right to appeal the decision on procedural grounds only.

Candidates whose applications are successful will be advised of the contractual details of their promotion by the Human Resources Office.

5 APPEAL

5.1 Any applicant has the right of appeal against the decision made by the Staff Promotion Committee or Sub-Committee where no recommendation is being made.

5.2 **The appeal process is not intended to query the judgement reached on the application for promotion. Therefore, appeals will only be taken forward on the grounds of alleged procedural irregularities.**

5.3 Notification of an appeal, clearly outlining the alleged procedural irregularity, must be made in writing to the Head of HR within 10 working days from the date of issue of the promotion outcome. The detailed grounds of the appeal should normally be lodged within 15 working days from the date of the original intimation of intention to appeal. In exceptional circumstances members of staff may seek an extension in writing to these timescales from the Director of People.

5.4 Appeals will be considered as follows:

(i) where the appeal is submitted following rejection by the Promotion Sub-Committee – in the first instance by the Senior Vice Principal. If the Senior Vice Principal decides that there is a case to be heard it will be referred to the Staff Promotion Committee;

(ii) where the appeal is submitted following rejection by the Staff Promotion Committee - in the first instance by the Senior Vice Principal. If the Senior Vice Principal decides that there is a case to be heard, the appeal will be referred to the Appeal Committee. The appeal will be heard in line with the Procedure for Hearing an Appeal in the University which is available at:

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/policies-guidance-3691.php>

5.5 It is the normal expectation that appeals will be heard by the end of October in the year of the application.