

ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS 2020 PROCESS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the process for the Academic Promotions for 2020. Promotions criteria and guidance for making an application are available on the [Academic Promotions webpages](#).
- 1.2. The promotions process will apply to those on the University's two career pathways for Academic staff:
 - The Education and Research/Education and Scholarship Career Pathway: Lecturer A to Lecturer B; Senior Lecturer; Reader and Professor
 - The Research Fellow Career Pathway: Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B; Senior Research Fellow; Research Professor
- 1.3. A Teaching Fellow applying for promotion will apply under the Education and Research/Education and Scholarship Career Pathway.
- 1.4. Consideration of equality & diversity issues in accordance with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy is critical to the effective operation of this procedure. School Promotion Committees should be representative and all members of the panel must have completed the University's online Unconscious Bias training (it is the Chair's responsibility to check that this is the case). On a confidential basis, applicants may submit information about any individual personal circumstances they believe may have restricted their opportunity to perform against the specified Promotions Criteria via the [Individual Circumstances Form](#).

2. Process Overview & Timelines

- 2.1. Applications for promotion must be sent via email and received by academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk by 5.30pm on Wednesday 11 March 2020.
- 2.2. Applications will be considered at a first meeting of the School Promotions Committee (SPC) in March 2020. The SPC will make a decision on promotions from Lecturer A to Lecturer B and Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B. For all other promotions, the SPC will decide whether applications should proceed to the next stage of the process. If so, Independent Academic Assessments will be obtained.
- 2.3. The second meeting of the SPC will take place in June 2020. The remaining applications for promotion will be reconsidered alongside the Academic Assessments. The SPC will make a final decision on applications for promotion to Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow, and will consider whether the applications for Reader and Professor should proceed to the Academic Promotions, Advancements and Titles Committee (APATC).
- 2.4. The APATC will take place in July 2020 and will make a final decision on applications for promotion to Reader and Professor.
- 2.5. The effective date for all promotions will be 1 October 2020.

3. Applications

- 3.1. Applications for promotion must be sent by email and received by academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk by 5.30pm on Wednesday 11 March 2020.
- 3.2. Applications should be made on the [Promotion Application Form](#) using the [Application Guidance](#). All of the supporting evidence should be presented on the Promotion Application Form and no additional documents or alternative formats will be accepted, with the exception of the Individual Circumstances Form which applicants may also submit if appropriate (see section 4). It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all relevant and required information has been provided in their application.
- 3.3. The HR Co-ordinator will create Box files for each Head of School and will upload the applications for each School to the file. The HR Co-ordinator will also provide a list of those members of staff who are currently at the top salary point of Grade 7 and who will automatically be considered for promotion.
- 3.4. It is the normal expectation that eligible Lecturers and Researchers at the top salary point of Grade 7 will be promoted to Grade 8 unless there are serious performance concerns; however, they will be required to submit an application in order to be considered. The Head of School will contact the staff on the list to advise them that they need to submit an application.
- 3.5. Members of staff who have not yet completed their probationary period are not precluded from applying for promotion.

4. Individual Circumstances

- 4.1. The University recognises that equality of opportunity does not mean treating everyone the same and some applicants for promotion will need to be assessed differently in order for them to achieve equality of opportunity. For example, where individuals have had career interruptions due to caring responsibilities, ill health or disability, this period of absence may need to be taken into account.
- 4.2. The required quantity of productivity and/or outputs may be adjusted to take account of declared individual circumstances, but the required quality thresholds will remain unchanged.
- 4.3. Applicants wishing to declare individual circumstances should use the [Individual Circumstances Form](#) and send it to academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk along with their application for promotion.
- 4.4. Individual Circumstances Forms will be sent to the HR Business Partner for the School who will share and discuss them with the Head of School in confidence in advance of the first SPC meeting. If an applicant's promotion proceeds to the APATC, their individual circumstances form will be sent to the Director of HR who will discuss the circumstances in confidence with the Vice Chancellor in his role as Chair of the APATC if necessary. No other party will have access to the details of the applicant's individual circumstances submission unless (i) the

applicant making the disclosure requests it; (ii) it is agreed with the applicant that additional advice needs to be sought and the nature of the requirement means this cannot be done on an anonymised basis; or (iii) in the unlikely event that in order to meet the University's legal or ethical obligations it is necessary to share the non-anonymised data with others.

- 4.5. During the SPC and APATC meetings, the existence of individual circumstances will be taken into account only in the event that there are concerns about whether or not the applicant has met the criteria for promotion. The HR Business Partner and Head of School (or Director of HR and the Vice Chancellor at the APATC) will declare that individual circumstances have been submitted (but not the details) and whether or not they support the submission. The Committee Chairs are responsible for ensuring that any individual circumstances are taken into account.

5. School Promotions Committees

- 5.1. The Chair of the SPC (or nominee) is responsible for convening the SPC meetings and for ensuring appropriate and balanced representation on the Committee.

- 5.2. The SPC should comprise:

- The Head of School (who will normally be Chair)
- A Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee)
- At least one Professor from another School
- The Director of Research and the Director of Teaching & Learning
- Academic staff from the School at Senior Lecturer level and above, reflecting the academic diversity of the School
- A Human Resources representative
- A Secretary (normally a member of Professional Services staff from the School).

- 5.3. Smaller Schools may combine their SPC with that of a cognate School or Schools, where this supports the academic interests and strategic goals of all parties. All Heads of School (or their nominees) should be members of the Committee. The other committee members should comprise a balanced representation from all contributing Schools.

- 5.4. The purpose of the SPC is to consider the quality of all cases for promotion against the criteria and to ensure objectivity and consistency founded on an evidence-based process.

- 5.5. Members of the SPC will treat applications for promotion and discussions during the SPC meetings in the strictest confidence.

6. School Promotions Committee First Meeting

- 6.1. The Chair of the SPC and the Secretary to the SPC will be responsible for providing other members of the SPC with access to the Promotions Box File, for preparing an agenda for the meeting and for populating the template outcomes spreadsheet with the cases to be considered (template spreadsheet to be provided by HR).

- 6.2. The SPC will consider the following for all career pathways with reference to the [Promotions Criteria](#) and [Guidance Notes](#):
- Decide on progression from Grade 7 to Grade 8 for those eligible staff at the top of the Grade 7 salary scale (would normally be approved unless there are serious performance concerns)
 - Decide on outcome of applications for promotion from Grade 7 to Grade 8 for those not yet at the top of the Grade 7 salary scale
 - Consider whether there is a *prima facie* case for applications for promotion to Grade 9 and above
 - Where there are doubts about whether or not an application meets the criteria, take advice from the Head of School and HR Business Partner about whether any individual circumstances have been submitted and whether these are supported (see section 4).
- 6.3. At the meeting, the Secretary will record the decisions, reasons and feedback points in the outcomes spreadsheet. It will not be necessary to take separate minutes of the meeting.
- 6.4. The Secretary will upload the outcomes spreadsheet to the School Promotions Box File normally within one working day of the meeting, and invite members of the SPC to approve the outcomes within a specified deadline.
- 6.5. The Head of School is responsible for informing applicants of the outcome of the first SPC (i.e. whether they have been successful, have been approved to go forward to references, or have been unsuccessful) normally within two calendar weeks of the meeting. Confirmation letters for those who have been promoted or have been unsuccessful will be prepared by the HR Co-ordinator and given to the Head of School to distribute. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a meeting with the Head of School, who will provide feedback as recorded in the outcomes spreadsheet. Unsuccessful applicants will be given details of how to request a Process Review in their confirmation letter and will be given a deadline of two calendar weeks in order to do so (see section 10).

7. Independent Academic Assessments and Head of School statements

- 7.1. Heads of School are responsible for providing details of Independent Academic Assessors for all applications under the Research and Education & Research pathways to the HR Co-ordinator using the [Independent Assessors Form](#) within one calendar week of the first SPC. Guidance on identifying Independent Academic Assessors is available on the form.
- 7.2. Independent Assessors will be completely independent and should not have previously collaborated closely with the applicant as a co-author or co-researcher; nor provided them with supervision. Applicants should not approach potential Assessors directly and, if they are aware of the Assessor(s) being identified, should not communicate with the Assessor about their promotion application and the request for an assessment in any way. If they do so, this may result in the Assessor no longer being regarded as completely independent and/or it may prejudice the applicant's promotion application.

- 7.3. The HR Co-ordinator will request Independent Assessments by email, copied to the Head of School. The HR Co-ordinator will request assistance from the Head of School in the event that it is necessary to chase up responses.
- 7.4. For those applying for promotion under the Education & Scholarship pathways, their application will be assessed by a panel of Independent Assessors selected by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and Students, and the panel will provide feedback on the applications.
- 7.5. When Independent Assessments are received, the HR Co-ordinator will upload them to the School Promotions Box File.

8. School Promotions Committee Second Meeting

- 8.1. The Chair of the SPC and the Secretary to the SPC will be responsible for prompting other members of the SPC to review the Academic Assessments in the Box file and preparing an agenda for the meeting.
- 8.2. The SPC will consider the following for all career pathways with reference to the [Promotions Criteria](#) and [Guidance Notes](#):
 - Decide on the outcome of applications for promotion to Grade 9 with reference to the Independent Academic Assessments
 - Consider whether applications for promotion to Reader and Professor should progress to consideration at APATC, with reference to the Independent Academic Assessments
 - Where there are doubts about whether or not an application meets the criteria, take advice from the Head of School and HR Business Partner about whether any individual circumstances have been submitted and whether these are supported (see section 4).
- 8.3. A minimum of three Independent Academic Assessments must be available for promotion to Senior Lecturer, four for Reader and four for Professor in order for the SPC to make a final decision on an application for promotion at the meeting. If this is not the case, the SPC will make an 'in principle' decision on the case, which will be revisited after the meeting, once the required number of Assessments are received. The Chair of the SPC is responsible for ensuring that these 'in principle' cases are revisited and concluded, and that the outcomes are recorded in the outcomes spreadsheet and communicated to the HR Co-ordinator.
- 8.4. At the SPC meeting, the Secretary will record the decisions, reasons and feedback points in the outcomes spreadsheet. It will not be necessary to take separate minutes of the meeting.
- 8.5. The Secretary will upload the outcomes spreadsheet to the School Promotions Box File normally within one working day of the meeting, and invite members of the SPC to approve the outcomes within a specified deadline.
- 8.6. The Head of School is responsible for informing applicants of the outcome of the second SPC (i.e. whether they have been successful, have been approved to go forward to APATC, or have been unsuccessful) normally within two calendar weeks of the meeting. Confirmation letters for those who have been promoted or have been unsuccessful will be prepared by the HR

Co-ordinator and given to the Head of School to distribute. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a meeting with the Head of School, who will provide feedback as recorded in the outcomes spreadsheet. Unsuccessful applicants will be given details of how to request a Process Review in their confirmation letter and will be given a deadline of two calendar weeks in order to do so (see section 10).

- 8.7. The Head of School will write a statement for each of the applicants who have been agreed to go through to the APATC meeting using the [Head of School Statement form](#) and upload it to the Box file within one calendar week of the second SPC meeting.

9. Academic Promotions, Advancements & Titles Committee

- 9.1. The APATC will meet in July 2020 following the second meeting of the School Promotions Committee to consider and decide upon which cases will be promoted to Reader, Professor or Research Professor. The minutes will be taken by an HR representative.

- 9.2. Where applications are unsuccessful, decisions, reasons and feedback points will be recorded in the minutes and discussed with the appropriate Head of School by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor within two calendar weeks of the APATC taking place. The Head of School is responsible for informing applicants of the outcome of the APATC. Confirmation letters will be prepared by the HR Co-ordinator and given to the Head of School to distribute. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a meeting with the Head of School, who will provide feedback as recorded in the minutes of the APATC and as discussed with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Unsuccessful applicants will be given details of how to request a Process Review in their confirmation letter and will be given a deadline of two calendar weeks in order to do so (see section 10).

10. Process Review for Unsuccessful Applicants

- 10.1. Each application is considered on academic evidence provided following a careful and transparent process. Decisions on the academic merits are final. However if applicants feel that the process has not been properly followed then a Process Review may be requested.

- 10.2. Unsuccessful applicants can request a Process Review at the stage their application is unsuccessful (i.e. after the first SPC, the second SPC or APATC). Details of how to request such a review and the deadline for doing so will be set out in the applicant's outcome letter.

- 10.3. Process Review requests should be emailed to academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk by the deadline. The Deputy Director of HR will review the evidence to assess whether or not there is a *prima facie* case. If so, it will be referred to the Provost who will appoint a senior academic to review the process. The outcome of the review will be final. A complaint against an unsuccessful application for promotion will not be considered under any other University procedures.