

# Academic Career Pathways - School Briefing Communication

## 1. Strategic Ambitions Overview

- 1.1 The University has launched its Strategic Framework 2025, and has introduced a set of Key Performance Indicators and Targets, to measure its progress towards the successful realisation of its strategic goals. It is therefore timely to review the University's current academic career structures in order to align them fully with these newly formulated strategic priorities. The University's present academic career structures have therefore been updated to reflect the University's commitment to achieve **parity of esteem** between education and research. Senate and Council support the Academic Career Pathways concept.

## 2. Current Career Pathways and Academic Titles

At present, the University operates three parallel academic career pathways:

- 2.1.1 The Teaching and Research Career Pathway: covering Lecturer A to Lecturer B, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor;
- 2.1.2 The Teaching Fellow Career Pathway: Teaching Fellow (G7) to Teaching Fellow (G8), Senior Teaching Fellow and Professorial Teaching Fellow;
- 2.1.3 The Research Fellow Career Pathway: Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B, Senior Research Fellow and Research Professor.

## 3. Academic Career Pathways Working Group

- 3.1 A Working Group chaired by Professor Steve Maguire, Dean of Sussex University Business School, and comprising a number of Heads of School, have unified the Teaching and Research Career Pathway and the Teaching Fellow Career Pathway, into a new, integrated Pathway that combines the Education & Research route and the Education & Scholarship route, to embody the principle of parity of esteem between education and research.
- 3.2 This means that there are now two parallel academic career pathways as set out below:
- 3.2.1 The Education and Research Career Pathway: covering Lecturer A to Lecturer B, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor:

*This route applies both to staff who engage in education and research; and to staff who focus on education and scholarship. To this extent, it facilitates career progression along the education only route, previously only possible under the Teaching Fellow Career Pathway.*

- 3.2.2 The Research Fellow Career Pathway: Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B, senior Research Fellow and Research Professor, *which remains unchanged*.

#### **4. Features and Benefits of the Updated Career Pathways Model**

Under the new model:

- 4.1 Those staff currently engaged as Teaching Fellows, Senior Teaching Fellows and Professorial Teaching Fellows can carry the academic title of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader or Professor, in accordance with their current grade and responsibilities.
- 4.2 Furthermore, staff currently holding Teaching Fellow titles will be offered the opportunity to move to the standard academic contract from their current “other related” contract, placing them on par with academic colleagues who carry out education and research. By placing all faculty staff on an academic contract and the same academic titles, irrespective of whether their work is focused on education and scholarship or education and research, it underpins the University’s commitment to education excellence and achieves parity of esteem between education and research.
- 4.3 The Research Fellow Career Pathway is for those staff who only carry out research and will continue without any changes. As these staff are engaged on standard faculty contracts and are not required to carry out any education as part of their role, they require a separate research only career pathway that affords them opportunities for progression in accordance with research based criteria. The current Research Fellow Career Pathway fulfils this purpose.

#### **5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- 5.1 The University is especially committed to improving opportunities for the academic career progression of female and other under-represented groups amongst our diverse faculty through a more transparent, fairer process, which facilitates career progression linking personal areas of strength and interest to School and institutional academic priorities. In effect, by enabling staff to apply their expertise in the pursuit of education, research, engagement, citizenship and leadership, it helps to better align organisational ambitions to individual aspirations.

#### **6. What this means for staff currently engaged on the Teaching Fellow Career Pathway**

- 6.1 If a member of staff is currently employed on an ‘other-related’ contract as hitherto required under the Teaching Fellow Career Pathway, they will be offered the opportunity to move to a standard academic contract and assume the academic title **commensurate** with their current role, e.g. a Senior Teaching Fellow, would become a Senior Lecturer. This would be by mutual agreement. No member of staff will be required to change their contractual terms.

- 6.2 **It is important to state that staff do not need to apply through the Academic Promotions process to move to a commensurate grade. The process for moving to an academic contract will be through individual consultation meetings. Thus, the deadline for the current Academic Promotions process of 19<sup>th</sup> March does not apply to this process.**
7. **Can a member of staff currently employed on the Teaching Fellow Career Pathway apply for promotion under the new model?**
- 7.1 Any member of staff employed on a current Teaching Fellow or Senior Teaching Fellow contract may apply for promotion on an education excellence or education leadership route under the current Academic Promotions process for 2019. The Academic Promotions Guidance for the 2019 promotions round, which have remained unchanged from last year, sets out the relevant education-focused criteria in Appendix A.
- 7.2 A current Teaching Fellow who wishes to apply for promotion, should prepare their application as if they were applying to become a Senior Teaching Fellow or a Professorial Teaching Fellow. The criteria for promotions have not changed, just the academic title that will be awarded if successful.
- 7.3 Thus, the key difference is that successful promotions will be offered on a full academic contract, and the standard academic title of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor will apply as appropriate.
8. **What this means for staff currently engaged on the standard three-legged contract who wish to focus their work to concentrate on an education excellence or education leadership role**
- 8.1 A member of staff who wishes to refocus their role to be education-focused, from an education and research role, will now be able to do so without having to change to an 'other-related' contract or to change their academic title. The change in responsibilities will be reflected in a letter varying the contract to reflect the new focus of the role. This will make explicit that there is no obligation on the individual member of staff to carry out research as a requirement of their role.
9. **What if a member of staff who changes focus now in either direction, wishes to revert to their previous area of expertise in the future?**
- 9.1 Under the new career model, a member of staff can shift the focus of their work again in the future, if this is agreed with their Head of School or line manager, and the change in the individual's work is aligned to School and University academic priorities.

## 10. Implementation

### Academic Role Profiles

10.1 The Academic Career Pathways Working Group has developed a set of *Academic Role Profiles* for each grade of staff from G7 to G10. These provide information about the nature and content of academic roles at each Grade. The intention is that these set out a detailed and helpful list of expectations, which can be used for recruitment, appraisals and discussions including academic development and career progression. **The Academic Role Profiles will also be used as part of the transition process where staff decide to move to new contracts, or to refocus the nature of their current role and responsibilities.** The role profiles outline:

(i) Threshold activities which indicate the expected level of achievement at each grade level, to facilitate career development discussions.

(ii) The types of evidence that may be taken into account when evaluating the nature and level of an individual's work.

10.2 The new academic role profiles have not been developed specifically for the 2019 Academic Promotions Process, but they can be used as a helpful reference document. For example, a current Teaching Fellow who is applying for a Senior Lecturer role could use the Grade 9 Academic Role Profile, to find examples of the types of activities and evidence, that would be useful in demonstrating their relevant experience and achievements, to support their case for promotion.

10.3 The new academic role profiles can provide a useful reference document for **appraisal** meetings. The examples of activities and evidence contained within them, provide a much clearer basis for the appraisal discussion to reflect on one's annual achievements, and can be used to agree objectives and expectations for the coming year. This added level of clarity is important in informing cases for academic promotion and discretionary pay review, from the point of view both of the applicant and of those evaluating the case. To this end, appraisals discussions are intended to make transparent the School and Departmental expectations of staff, and to encourage colleagues to set themselves ambitious goals to sustain high performance, and to facilitate their own career development and progression.

The full set of Academic Role Profiles can be found at  
[www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/personnel/promotionrewardprocedures](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/personnel/promotionrewardprocedures)

## 11. Education Portfolios

11.1 Education Portfolios are increasingly used in Higher Education around the world, in promotions and tenure processes, in order for applicants to 'showcase' their contribution

to, and leadership of, the education provision of their institution. More detailed information on Education Portfolios are attached at Appendix A.

## **12. Briefing Sessions**

12.1 These changes are new to Sussex. It is therefore important that all staff understand the purpose and details of the new Academic Career Pathways model: what it means for staff, and how it will work in practice for example, an understanding of the process by which staff may transfer from a Teaching Fellow contract to an academic contract. Thus, the University plans to hold:

- (i) a Heads of School briefing session;
- (ii) University level briefing sessions for faculty. These may be of particular interest to those staff currently employed:
  - as Teaching Fellows, Senior Teaching Fellows, or Professorial Teaching Fellows
  - on three-legged contracts who wish to move into an education excellence or education leadership role
  - an individual engaged in an education-focused role, who has developed significant research outputs, which align fully to School and University research goals and priorities who wishes to move to a more research-focused role, and remain on an academic contract.

## **13. Individual Consultation Meetings**

13.1 Individual consultation meetings will be arranged with staff who fall under any of the three categories above. This is very much an open process, and meetings may be initiated by the Head of School or an individual member of staff.

13.2 The purpose of this meeting will be to align the individual's areas of expertise to School Plans and to explain the implications of any contractual changes for them.

13.3 The University has prepared a document explaining the Transition Process in more detail, which is available at [www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/personnel/promotionrewardprocedures](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/personnel/promotionrewardprocedures)

## Education Portfolio Guidance

1. Education Portfolios are increasingly used in Higher Education around the world, in promotions and tenure processes, in order for applicants to 'showcase' their contribution to, and leadership of, the education provision of their institution. The material included in the Portfolio should be carefully selected, and some suggested materials are listed below. The list is not exhaustive and the format of each Education Portfolio will be distinct. We recommend that Portfolios are roughly about 10-15 pages, and include some reflective elements. There are many sample Education Portfolios available online, and if any applicant would like more guidance they may contact the PVC (Education and Students).
  
2. **Roles, Responsibilities and Goals:**
  - 2.1.1 A statement of education roles and responsibilities
  - 2.1.2 A reflective statement of education goals and approaches ('education philosophy')
  - 2.1.3 A list of courses taught, with enrolments and comments as to whether the course is new, online, etc.
  - 2.1.4 Number of tutees, PhDs etc.
  
3. **Contributions to Institution or Profession:**
  - 3.1.1 Service on education and related committees
  - 3.1.2 Mentorship of colleagues on education matters
  - 3.1.3 Peer Review/Observation of teaching
  - 3.1.4 Publications in education journals/blogs
  - 3.1.5 Work on curriculum revision or development
  - 3.1.6 Obtaining funds/ equipment for teaching labs, programmes
  - 3.1.7 Provision of training in teaching for PhD students
  
4. **Activities to Improve Education:**
  - 4.1.1 Participation in seminars or professional meetings on education
  - 4.1.2 Design of new modules
  - 4.1.3 Design of interdisciplinary or collaborative courses or education projects
  - 4.1.4 Use of new methods of teaching, assessing learning, marking
  - 4.1.5 Evidence of inclusive education practices
  - 4.1.6 Preparation of a textbook, open educational resource, courseware, etc.
  
5. **Honours or Recognitions:**
  - 5.1.1 Education awards from department, school, and institution
  - 5.1.2 Education awards from profession
  - 5.1.3 Invitations (based on education reputation) to consult, give workshops, write articles, etc.
  - 5.1.4 Requests for advice on education by committees or other organized groups

6. **Representative Course Materials:**

- 6.1.1 Syllabi
- 6.1.2 Course descriptions with details of content, objectives, methods, and procedures
- 6.1.3 for evaluating student learning
- 6.1.4 Reading lists
- 6.1.5 Assignments
- 6.1.6 Exams and quizzes
- 6.1.7 Handouts, problem sets, lecture outlines
- 6.1.8 Descriptions and examples of visual materials used
- 6.1.9 Descriptions of uses of computer or other technology in teaching

7. **Materials Showing Extent of Student Learning:**

- 7.1.1 Scores on standardized or other tests, before and after teaching
- 7.1.2 Students' lab books, or other workbooks
- 7.1.3 Students' papers, essays or creative works
- 7.1.4 Coursework from the best and poorest students with teacher's feedback to students
- 7.1.5 Written feedback on student work

8. **Evaluations of Teaching:**

- 8.1.1 Summarized student evaluations of teaching, including response rate and students' written comments and overall ratings
- 8.1.2 Results of students' exit interviews
- 8.1.3 Letters from students, preferably unsolicited
- 8.1.4 Comments from a peer observer or colleague teaching the same course
- 8.1.5 Letter from division head or chairperson

9. **Miscellaneous Sources on Education Effectiveness:**

- 9.1.1 Comments from students' parents or employers
- 9.1.2 Statements from colleagues in the department or elsewhere, re: preparation of students for advanced work