

ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS 2021 PROCESS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the process for the Academic Promotions for 2021. Promotions criteria and guidance for making an application are available on the [Academic Promotions webpages](#).
- 1.2. Applications to the 2020 Academic Promotions process will not automatically be re-submitted to the 2021 process unless the applicant emails academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk to confirm that they want their 2020 application, as it stands, to be considered in the 2021 process. All staff can submit either an updated or an entirely new application to be considered in the 2021 process.
- 1.3. 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
- 1.4. A Teaching Fellow applying for promotion will apply under the Education and Scholarship Career Pathway.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. The University recognises the impact of Covid 19, especially on female academics who are most likely to have caring responsibilities that may hinder their academic endeavours. Applicants are encouraged to submit relevant information through the Individual Circumstances Form if they wish to keep these circumstances confidential or through the personal statement section of the application form if they are happy to share this information with the School promotions panel.

2. Process Overview & Timelines

- 2.1. Applications for promotion or notifications that a 2020 application is being used (see 1.2 above) must be sent via email and received by academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk 9am on Monday 15 March 2021.
- 2.2. Applications will be considered at a first meeting of the School Promotions Committee (SPC) between 29 March & 23 April 2021. 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 between 12 & 30 July 2021. 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 early September 2021 and will make a final decision on applications for promotion to Reader and Professor.
- 2.5. The effective date for all promotions (whether originally submitted in the 2020 or 2021 promotions round) will be 1 October 2021. Where possible these will be implemented in the October payroll, otherwise they will be implemented in the next available payroll and backdated to 1 October 2021.

3. Applications

- 3.1. Applications for promotion or notifications that a 2020 application is being used (see 1.2 above) must be sent by email and received by academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk by 9am on Monday 15 March 2021.
- 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. HR will also provide the Head of School with a list of those Lecturer A staff who are currently at the top salary point of their grade and who will automatically be considered for promotion.
- 3.4. Lecturer A staff at the top salary point of their grade will be automatically considered for promotion but will be required to submit an application to the process 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. This may particularly have been the case during the last 12 months as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 4.2. The required quantity of 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 on a confidential basis 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.
- 4.6. If applicants wish to declare individual circumstances that are not confidential and can be made available to all members of the panel they can do so via the Personal Statement at section 12 on the Application form.

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 or Dean of the School (who will normally be Chair)
 - A Pro-Vice-Chancellor or nominee (this could be a Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, a Dean from a different School, or a UEG cluster lead from a different cluster)
 - 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 with reference to the [Promotions Criteria](#) and [Guidance Notes](#):
- Decide on progression from Lecturer A to Lecturer B for those staff at the top of the salary scale who are eligible for automatic consideration, and for whom progression to Lecturer B would be the normal expectation.
 - Decide on outcome of all other applications for promotion from Grade 7 to Grade 8
 - 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. It is vital that accurate records are kept as this will form the basis for any feedback that an applicant requests on their application.
- 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. It is vital that accurate records are kept as this will form the basis for any feedback that an applicant requests on their application.
- 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 September 2021 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.