**Academic Career Pathways - School Briefing**

**Strategic ambitions overview**

Internally, the University has launched its new Strategic Framework 2025; and has introduced a new set of Key Performance Indicators and targets to measure its progress towards the successful realisation of these strategic goals. It is therefore timely to review the University’s current academic career structures to align them fully with these newly formulated strategic priorities. Senate and Council both support the Academic Career Pathways concept.

Pathways will be a process that better supports diversity through a more transparent fairer career pathways process which facilitate rather than constrain career progression linking personal areas of strength and interest to School and institutional academic priorities. The University is especially committed to increasing the academic career progression of female faculty.

Of significance, is the intention to promote *parity of esteem* across all our activities whereby staff will apply their expertise in the pursuit of education, research, engagement and leadership, aligning organisational ambitions and individual aspirations?

**Current career pathways and academic titles**

The University currently has staff who are engaged on standard academic contracts that require staff to engage in teaching and research and Teaching Fellow Contracts for those employed in teaching only roles. Under the proposals agreed by Senate in 2013, Teaching Fellows are appointed on other related terms and conditions of employment and not the standard academic contract. We wish to align contracts of employment to demonstrate the University’s commitment to education excellence and achieving parity of esteem between education and research.

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

1. **The Teaching and Research Career Pathway:** covering Lecturer A to Lecturer B, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor;
2. **The Teaching Fellow Career Pathway:** Teaching Fellow (G7) to Teaching Fellow (G8), Senior Teaching Fellow and Professorial Teaching Fellow;
3. **The Research Fellow Career Pathway:** Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B, Senior Research Fellow and Research Professor.

Currently a member of staff who may wish to pursue an education-focused career must accept employment on an “other related” contract and adopt the academic titles ascribed to the Teaching Fellow Career Pathway. Some staff regard the title of Teaching Fellow as having less status within the academic community. It is important to state that this is not the view of the University and, indeed, the University intended the academic career structure with three equivalent career pathways to reinforce the parity of status across education and research.
Rationale for Change

The rationale for the change is to have contractual arrangements that align fully with the new Strategic Framework, and externally reflect how academic roles at the institution are delivering the University’s goals in relation to REF, TEF and, in due course, the KEF.

This in practice means that under the single academic career pathway all eligible staff will carry the title of either, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader or Professor. All academic staff employed to carry out work under this framework would be engaged on the standard academic contract.

Features and benefits of a single career framework

A single career framework would be supported by academic profiles for each grade of staff from G7 to G10. These would set out representative activities under each of the three dimensions of the new Strategic Framework: education, research and engagement. We have added ‘leadership’ as another integral component in support of the aim to embed competency-based succession planning into our career structures with clear criteria for progression. This is to recognise that experience acquired in leadership roles will be relevant for future promotion.

The Academic Career Pathways concept is founded on a values based approach, consistent with Sussex values, for example recognising citizenship and including behavioral competencies as part of the evidence based criteria. The University recognises that behaviours and leadership skills are important attributes for the academic community to possess which is the rationale for incorporating these components into the role profiles.

Implementation

It is intended that the transitional process will be founded on a basis of mutual agreement. As an initial step Teaching Fellows will be invited to attend consultation meetings with Heads of Schools or nominees to discuss their individual circumstances relating to the balance of their duties between teaching, research, knowledge exchange and leadership. Representatives and HR are welcome to be involved. The University has a process document which outlines the transition process for Teaching Fellows which can be found at the Promotions page of the HR website http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/personnel/promotionrewardprocedures.