

Academic Promotion Procedure



1 Purpose

To outline the process for promotion for Academic Employees at all levels.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all full-time or part-time Academic Employees who hold a continuing, contingent-funded, or fixed-term appointment of more than 12 months' duration and who are applying for promotion.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the University Code of Conduct Policy, UniSQ Academic Employee Expectations Framework, and the Guides for Applicants.

3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure outlines the processes for applying for academic promotion and equivalent standing, and addresses the topics of confidentiality, eligibility, application processes, criteria for promotion, application assessment, outcomes and feedback, and reviews.

Any departure from this Procedure may only be made with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021: Standard 3.2 Staffing*

4 Procedures

4.1 Confidentiality

Other than material required for feedback to an applicant or required for consideration of a review, all materials and deliberations relating to promotion applications will be treated in the strictest confidence by all participants in, and observers of, the promotion process. Members of the University Promotion Committees and observers will not discuss applications, recommendations, or deliberations outside of committee meetings. This section does not apply to applicants.

4.2 Eligibility

Academic Employees are eligible to apply for promotion when they have completed a minimum of 12 months' continuous service at the University in a full-time or part-time academic appointment as at the closing date for applications to Levels C, D and E; or at the time they are applying for promotion to Level B.

An unsuccessful applicant in one year is not eligible to apply again the following year, except where:

- The application in the previous year was a first application for promotion to that level; or
- In exceptional circumstances, as approved in writing by the Chair of the Promotion Committee for the level for which they are applying (for applicants to Level C, D or E); or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) for applications to Level B.

In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of the Academic Employee to forward their request to apply for promotion to the Senior Advisor (Academic Development) in the People Portfolio as follows:

- Applicants to Levels C, D and E - no later than two weeks after the call for academic promotion has been made;
- Applicants to Level B - approval needs to be granted by the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor before commencing the online application form.

Where an applicant for promotion tenders their resignation, or is terminated, from their employment with the University prior to the promotion being decided, their application will be regarded as withdrawn.

4.3 Applying for promotion

It is strongly recommended that prior to submitting an application for promotion, Academic Employees seek advice from Supervisors, mentors, discipline experts and/or heads of organisational unit on whether they are likely to be able to make their case for promotion.

Applications for promotion to Levels C, D and E will normally be called in the first half of the year and at least eight weeks before the closing date. Applicants are required to submit their application to academic.promotionapplication@unisq.edu.au in the prescribed format by the specified closing time and date. Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

Applications for promotion to Level B can be submitted at any time throughout the year utilising the online application form.

Applications for all levels must contain the following:

- Confirmation of the applicant's qualifications or evidence of Equivalent Standing;
- A case for promotion with supporting evidence that addresses the promotion criteria (with a focus on achievements in the period since last promotion or appointment to the University);
- An academic portfolio in the prescribed format; and
- A head of organisational unit statement.

When relevant, applications must also include:

- Evidence of Equivalent Standing (for Academic Employees who do not possess the required academic qualification for the level being sought);
- Written approval from the relevant Delegate to apply (for Academic Employees who were unsuccessful for promotion in the previous year, as outlined in Section 4.2) of the Procedure;
- Written approval from the Vice-Chancellor if applying over more than one level, as outlined in Section 4.3.1 of the Procedure.

Up until five working days prior to the assessment of applications, applicants applying to Levels C, D and E may provide a one-page summary of post-submission achievements that have resulted since their application was submitted, in the prescribed format.

4.3.1 Applications over more than one level

An Academic Employee may apply for promotion over more than one level in exceptional circumstances, as approved in writing by the Vice-Chancellor. In such instances, it is the responsibility of the Academic Employee to forward their request to apply for promotion over more than one level to the Senior Advisor (Academic Development) at the People Portfolio, no later than two weeks after the call for academic promotion applications has been made.

4.3.2 Head of organisational unit statement

The role of an applicant's head of organisational unit (typically a Head of School or Centre Director) is to assist applicants in determining readiness for promotion by providing ongoing feedback about achievement across the three core areas of academic work.

As part of the promotion process, the head of organisational unit will be responsible for

providing a written statement to be submitted with the application. The statement must only contain a description of the applicant's achievements against each of the core areas of academic work with a specific focus on verifying the stated achievements of the applicant. The head of organisational unit may consult with other Employees whose judgements they believe may be helpful in completing this statement.

For employees applying to Level B, in areas where the head of organisational unit is not an academic position, the statement must be prepared in conjunction with a relevant academic head (normally a Head of School or Centre Director) that most closely aligns to the applicant's discipline, nominated by the applicant.

The head of organisational unit statement is not confidential and will be viewed by the applicant as part of the promotion process.

4.3.3 Achievement relative to opportunity

Applicants may outline their achievement relative to opportunity, taking into account factors such as career breaks, gender, cultural, family or other factors which may have resulted in an alternative profile in one or more of the criteria. Applicants should refer to the relevant guidelines for further information.

4.4 Criteria for promotion

4.4.1 Academic qualification or Equivalent Standing

Applicants must have the following qualifications in the relevant discipline area, or provide evidence that Equivalent Standing has been obtained:

- For promotion to Level B - a Master's qualification, or a combination of relevant tertiary study or equivalent qualifications, and experience appropriate to their profession or discipline; or
- For promotion to Levels C, D and E - a Doctoral qualification.

4.4.1.1 Applying for Equivalent Standing for promotion purposes

Academic Employees who do not possess the required Master or Doctoral academic qualification for the level of promotion being sought may apply for Equivalent Standing.

Obtaining Equivalent Standing for promotion purposes is a separate process that must be completed by the applicant prior to applying for promotion. To submit an application for Equivalent Standing for promotion purposes, an Academic Employee must outline the case for equivalency using the prescribed form. It is the responsibility of the Academic Employee to provide verifiable sources of relevant evidence to substantiate their case for equivalency.

In determining Equivalent Standing, regard will be given to verifiable evidence of: research

achievement; achievement outside the tertiary sector in industry, business or government employment; professional achievement; and creative/technical achievement.

The intent of Equivalent Standing in this instance is to recognise work completed by an Academic Employee that is significant in nature and comparable with the type of work undertaken in obtaining the relevant academic qualification, and not just the culmination of many smaller pieces of work. If an applicant has been awarded a level of membership by an examining body, profession or similar institute that is widely considered by universities or the profession to be equivalent to a particular academic qualification, then the applicant can be awarded Equivalent Standing for that academic qualification.

Further information on equivalency at Doctoral and Masters level is available in the relevant Knowledge Article.

The People Portfolio will convene an Equivalent Standing Committee to assess an application for Equivalent Standing for promotion and provide a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor will make the Decision, which is final.

4.4.2 Achievement in core areas of academic work

Applicants will be assessed on their performance, achievement, and impact across the following core areas of academic work: Teaching; Research; and Service. Each core area of academic work is defined as:

- **Teaching and associated activities**

Teaching is a creative activity designed to foster Student learning, their ability and desire to undertake scholarly work, and their professional development and creativity. Teaching draws upon the professional and disciplinary expertise of Employees and is continually revitalised by research, scholarly practice consultancy or professional practice. Teaching includes the design, implementation and the evaluation of curriculum materials for all modes of delivery.

Teaching includes engaging in scholarly practice.

Teaching includes face-to-face classroom teaching; the various modes of distance education teaching (including online mode, the preparation of print, voice, visual or electronic materials and contact with Students directly or by telephone, computer link, or video link); the teaching of groups other than Award Students (including fellow Employees); teaching component of HDR supervision; curriculum, Course and instructional design; education leadership and scholarship associated with learning and teaching.

- **Research and associated activities**

Research and scholarship refers to activities that result in the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes. This includes scholarship activities that advance the practice of learning and teaching by making such research findings public.

Research and original achievement encompasses all forms of original intellectual or cultural achievement including: research, exhibitions, performance, unique consultancy and the leadership, scholarship, publication, commercialisation and Information/technology transfer associated with these activities.

- **Service** (including Service to the University, Community and Profession, including Engagement)

Service relates to the need for Academic Employees to contribute in an appropriate and sustained way to the corporate life of the University, the community good and the development of their profession in domains such as: contribution to the formulation and implementation of Academic Policy; the initiation (or active maintenance) of linkages between the University and the community, employers of graduates and professional institutions.

4.4.3 Weighting of core areas of academic work (Levels C, D and E)

Applicants applying for promotion to Levels C, D and E, in consultation with their Supervisor, will nominate the percentage weight they wish to be given in each core area of academic work for consideration by the University Promotion Committee in assessing their application. Applicants should focus their application on their achievements over the last five years, or since their last promotion or appointment to the University (if occurred within the last five years).

Weightings assigned by an applicant must total 100%. In determining the weightings in each core area of academic work, applicants must take into consideration their areas of strength and achievements in each category. Applicants for promotion who area designated as Research Specialists and Teaching/Education Specialists are not required to provide a weighting in their non-core area of work.

The ranges for each core area of academic work are:

Core Area of Academic Work	Teaching and Research	Research Specialist	Teaching/Education Specialist
Teaching	20-70%	0%	60-90%
Research	20-70%	60-90%	0%
Service	10-40%*	10-40%*	10-40%*

** Academic Employees employed in leadership positions (Dean, Associate Dean, Head of School/College, Deputy Head of School/College, Associate Head, Institute Executive Director, Centre Director) at the time of submitting their application may weight service up to 60%.*

4.5 Application and assessment for promotion to Level B

Applications for promotion to Level B will be actioned by the Head of Organisational Unit, no later than 10 days after receipt of the application.

The Head of Organisational Unit will seek the input of the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) and the Associate Dean (Research) or Institute Executive Director (for applicants from the Research Centres) in formulating their advice to the relevant Delegate (Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)).

Applications will be reviewed by the relevant Delegate to determine whether the academic qualification or Equivalent Standing requirements have been met as per the criteria outlined in 4.4.1, and be assessed against each core area of academic work based on the evidence provided in the application against the criteria outlined in 4.4.2, and in accordance with the assessment guidelines in 4.6.2.

The relevant Delegate will assess and make a Decision to approve (or otherwise) applications for promotion to Level B, no later than 10 days after receipt of the application.

Successful applicants will be appointed at Step 1 of the Level B salary classification, with effect from the first day of the month after the promotion Decision has been made.

An unsuccessful applicant may request a meeting with the relevant Delegate to discuss feedback. An applicant's Head of Organisational Unit may also be present at the feedback meeting.

4.6 Application and assessment for promotion to Level C, D, or E

4.6.1 University Promotion Committee

A University Promotion Committee will be formed as per the applicable Terms of Reference to assess all applications for promotion. The committee will consider all applications before recommendations for promotion are made to the Vice-Chancellor.

4.6.2 Guidelines for assessment

The committee will review each application to determine whether the academic qualification or Equivalent Standing requirements have been met for the level of promotion sought, as per the criteria outlined in 4.4.1.

The committee will also assess each application and rate each core area of academic work

based on the evidence provided in the application and any supporting documentation against the criteria outlined in 4.4.2. While the committee will consider the applicant's achievements over their entire career, the emphasis will be on achievements over the last five years, or since their last promotion or appointment to the University.

The academic performance and achievements of each applicant, as presented in the application, are to be evaluated in relation to the norms that prevail in the applicant's particular discipline or field, and relative to opportunity. This means that in terms of expectations for activity and output, consideration will be given to the fraction at which an applicant is employed, periods of absence, and/or personal circumstances. Where Information about an applicant's personal circumstances is provided, that Information will remain confidential to the assessing committee.

During the assessment, the committee will assess the application having regard to:

- Actual performance and achievement at the applicant's current level relative to opportunity;
- Performance and achievement at the level being sought AND demonstrated potential to perform at the level being sought;
- Position classification standards for their current level of appointment and the level of appointment sought; and
- The UniSQ Academic Employee Expectations Framework.

Inherent in this approach is the expectation that, as the level of promotion being sought increases, the nature of the performance, impact and achievement shifts from the conduct of an activity to the leadership, supervision and management of the activity.

Further consideration should be given to the relativity of teaching and research achievements in situations where employees have been substantively employed in roles that are heavily focused on service, for example, Heads of School, Centre Director.

4.6.3 Performance descriptors and ratings

Each core area of academic work will be rated according to the following performance descriptors.

Description	Definition
Distinguished	Outstanding performance by national or international standards, placing the applicant in the top echelon of their professional peer group*.

Meritorious	High level of performance denoting the applicant clearly as a leader among their peers*.
Highly Commendable	Performance at the level sought, or that consistently demonstrates potential to perform at the level sought.
Commendable	Commendable performance above routine at the applicant's present level, but does not consistently demonstrate potential to perform at the level sought.
Satisfactory	Satisfactory performance at a level necessary for the performance of professional activity at the applicant's present level.
Less than Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory performance at a level necessary for the performance of professional activity at the applicant's present level.

* For the purposes of this Procedure the peer group of an applicant is defined as those Academic Employees of Australian universities in the same discipline at the present level of the applicant, and with the same area of focus.

Each applicant will be given a numerical equivalent score according to the following:

Performance Descriptor	Numerical Equivalent	Teaching (weighting%)	Research (weighting%)	Service (weighting%)
Distinguished	9			
Meritorious	8			
Highly Commendable	7			
Commendable	6			
Satisfactory	5			
Less than Satisfactory	4			
Total (WPA)*				

* WPA here means Weighted Performance Average, being the weighted aggregate of performance across the core areas of academic work.

Each numerical equivalent score will be multiplied by the percentage weighting given by the applicant to each core area of academic work to form a Weighted Performance Average. Applicants must be awarded a WPA of 7.0 (and meet the academic qualification or Equivalent Standing requirements) in order to be promotable.

4.6.4 Interviews

The purpose of interviewing promotion applicants is to gather more Information in support of their application for promotion; interviews may provide an additional source of Information in the Decision-making process.

Promotion to Level C

Interviews will be at the Committee's discretion. Applicants may be interviewed when further clarification is required on selected matters within the application. The chair of the committee will make the final Decision as to whether an applicant is required to attend an interview.

Promotion to Levels D and E

Applicants for promotion to levels D and E may be interviewed at the discretion of the panel.

Initial Weighted Performance Average	Interview
Below 6.5	No interview
6.5 to less than 7	Interview
7 and above	No interview

The initial Weighted Performance Average will be calculated via a desktop assessment of the application by all members of the University Promotion Committee. All applications will be assessed according to section 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 of this Procedure.

Regardless of the initial Weighted Performance Average of an application, the committee may interview any applicant to clarify any aspect of their application.

For those applicants invited to attend an interview, interviews will be conducted, as far as is practicable, during the time period outlined in the assessment schedule. Interview dates and times will be conveyed to applicants as early as possible to ensure availability. All Level D and Level E applicants must be available for face-to-face interviews unless there are unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances.

The Chair of the committee may allow a phone or video interview in exceptional circumstances only.

4.6.5 Outcomes and notification

Following the completion of the assessment, the University Promotion Committee will review the applicant outcomes, formulate an overall rating for each applicant, and forward their recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor for a Decision.

The committee may recommend that an applicant be promoted over more than one level. In such cases, additional Information including external referee reports may be sought.

Promotion Decisions will be made by the Vice-Chancellor with due regard to recommendations of the University Promotion Committee. The Vice-Chancellor's Decision is final.

Applicants will be informed of the Decision in writing. All applicants may request a meeting with the Chair of the University Promotion Committee to discuss feedback and are encouraged to invite their Head of Organisational Unit to attend the meeting with them. A representative from People Portfolio will be present at the feedback meeting.

It is strongly recommended that applicants share their feedback with their Supervisors/Heads in order to develop a plan to address the topics raised in the feedback for progress towards future promotion applications.

Successful applicants will be appointed at Step 1 of the salary classification to which they are promoted. Successful promotions take effect on 1 January of the following year. However, a successful applicant may begin using their new title as of the date of the formal written advice informing them that their application has been successful.

4.7 Process review

An applicant for any level may request a review of the academic promotion process by submitting a written request to the Chief People Officer within four weeks of notification of the outcome of the application for promotion.

The Chief People Officer will coordinate a review of the process to be completed by a:

- professorial (Level E) employee of the University who is not from the organisational unit of the applicant; and
- member of the Academic Board, of the level of associate professor or above

At the request of an applicant, an observer may be present from the NTEU. It is the applicant's decision to provide permission to the observer to access their promotion documentation.

The reviewers, and observer where nominated, must not have participated in the current promotion round.

The findings of the review will be provided to the Chief People Officer. If no anomaly in process is found, the decision of the initial University Promotion Committee will stand. Where the review

findings indicate an anomaly in the process that may have caused a material disadvantage to the applicant, a University Promotion Committee will be formed to reassess the original application. Where the outcome of that Committee recommends promotion, that promotion will take effect from the date at which it would have occurred if the initial University Promotion Committee had decided to recommend promotion to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor's decision is final, and there will be no right of a further review on the outcome.

4.8 Delegations

Position	Delegation
Category 1 Delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve promotion to Level C, D, or E. • Approve equivalent standing of academic qualifications for promotion purposes.
Category 2 Delegate	Approve promotion to Level B.

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Chief People Officer
Responsible Officer	Chief People Officer
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Academic Promotion Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	20/3/2024

Effective Date	20/3/2024
Review Date	20/3/2029
Relevant Legislation	Enterprise Agreement
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Code of Conduct Policy
Related Procedures	
Related forms, publications and websites	
Definitions	Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary
	Academic Employee
	As defined in the University of Southern Queensland Enterprise Agreement 2023 - 2026.
	University
	The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.
Definitions that relate to this procedure only	
Keywords	Promotion, academic promotion, equivalent standing, academic expectations
Record No	23/631PL