# **Academic Promotion Guidance for Applicants**

This guidance is intended for staff wishing to apply for promotion to provide additional information and context to the Academic Promotion Procedure.

The documents referenced in this guidance can all be found on the [Academic Promotion web pages](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/promotionandregrading/promotion/index.aspx).

## **Introduction**

The University’s academic promotion process recognises and rewards the demonstration of excellence in the work of our academic staff in support of the [University strategy](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/strategy/home.aspx) and in line with our [University values.](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/strategy/values.aspx)

The academic promotion process is designed to be fair, transparent and inclusive and is applicable to staff within the Research and Teaching (Research and Teaching, Teaching and Curriculum Leadership and Research) job family, including seconded staff in UNMC and UNNC.

## **Considering when to apply**

It is expected that individuals will be recruited to the University at the right level of role for their experience and skills. Following appointment and when staff can demonstrate that they meet the Academic Promotion Criteria then they may wish to consider applying for promotion. There is no set timeframe when this could take place and no prohibition on consecutive annual applications.Similarly, there is no time limit for individuals who have previously been promoted to then apply for a further promotion, this should be when that individual can evidence the criteria at the next level.

Staff subject to a formal disciplinary, or who are currently being monitored for underperformance are not normally eligible for consideration for promotion during the period of warning, sanction, or performance monitoring.

Promotion from Clinical Lecturer/Clinical Assistant Professor to Clinical Associate Professor and Honorary Consultant are not considered through this procedure.

### **For level 4 applicants**

For research staff on level 4 Research Career Training Grade, progression to R&T level 4 is dependent on the award of a PhD and there is no requirement to use this promotion procedure for such advancement.

Where research staff on level 4 are awarded a personal Fellowship and the funds have been received, the member of staff concerned should complete the [Fellowship Pro Forma](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/promotionandregrading/promotion/rt-level-4-staff-who-have-been-awarded-personal-fellowships.aspx) for Promotion to R&T level 5. This pro-forma should then be sent to the faculty Human Resources Business Partner who will gain approval from the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange. Only in these circumstances can an individual be promoted to level 5 without having to use the promotion procedure.

## **Mitigating circumstances and requested adjustments**

The University recognises that an individual’s personal characteristics and life/family circumstances may impact on their work, and endeavours to consider the impact of personal circumstances in a fair manner at all stages of the promotion process.

It is important to us that all staff at the University have the opportunity to reach their full potential. If there are mitigating circumstances that may have impacted on an applicant meeting the Academic Promotion Criteria, they should discuss and agree mitigation with their line manager/Head of School/Department and complete the mitigation table in the application form, in line with the applicant guidance document. **This process must be followed in order for mitigation to be considered by the relevant Promotion Committee.**

Requested adjustments should apply to quantity rather than quality of outputs and applicants should have evidence against all criteria at previous levels in their career (unless there is a previously agreed reasonable adjustment for a disability in place) so that an upward trajectory can be demonstrated.

Mitigation will usually be limited to one criterion of the Academic Promotion Criteria – Specific Expectations. If mitigation is being requested beyond more than one criterion or additional support is required to determine appropriate mitigation, then the relevant HR Business Partner should be contacted by the applicant (copying in the line manager/Head of School/Department) for assistance before submission of the application.

## **Roles and career pathways**

The academic promotion procedure aims to ensure that the University offers promotion opportunities to staff that take account of the individual's career profile and pathway.

Academic careers and promotion are considered under one of three career pathways*.* Each of the areas of contribution may be represented to a different extent dependent on the focus of an individual’s role, as well as their career pathway. Pathways will normally be reflected in a formal agreement of role responsibilities and should be recognised through a contract of employment.

An application for promotion is made only in relation to an applicant’s existing career pathway. If an applicant requires a change of career pathway this should be processed prior to a promotion application being submitted. For more information about changing career pathways see the process on the [R&T Career Change Pathway webpage.](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/jobfamilies/rt-career-change-pathway/rt-career-change-pathway.aspx)

The three pathways, and job titles for the Research and Teaching job family are:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Research and Teaching** | **Research** | **Teaching and Curriculum Leadership** |
| 4a |  | Research Assistant | Teaching Assistant |
| 4 |  | Research Fellow | Teaching Associate |
| 5 | Assistant Professor | Senior Research Fellow | Assistant Professor |
| 6 | Associate Professor | Principal Research Fellow | Associate Professor |
| 7 | Professor | Professor | Professor |

## **Criteria for promotion**

All staff in the Research and Teaching job family may put themselves forward for promotion where they consider their knowledge, skills and experience match the relevant criteria.

The University’s promotion process recognises a high level of achievement in three broad areas of activity:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Research and/or scholarship | } Including engaging with business/external  } communities – knowledge exchange and  } global research – international |
| * Teaching and curriculum leadership activity |
| * University and academic service, good citizenship, and demonstration of the University [values](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/strategy/values.aspx) | For example by offering high level leadership, collegiality, inclusivity, knowledge exchange, pastoral care and administration within the University, or by engaging on behalf of the University with the wider community civically and globally. |

All applicants are expected to demonstrate high achievement in the areas applicable to the focus of their role and all must include evidence of university and academic service. Each individual case will be judged on its merits and limited to information included in the submitted paperwork.

In the case of a promotion application from an academic veterinary clinician it is recognised that professional clinical practice is a significant part of the role. The balance of activities may be different from that of other Research and Teaching roles and there is likely to be less focus on research, given the importance of clinical practice in teaching and knowledge transfer.

The University is a signatory of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). As such the University commits to focus on the scientific content of publications as a basis for review of quality, and consideration of value and impact of research conducted, rather than any proxy measures such as Journal Impact Factor.

The Academic Promotion Criteria is grouped by career pathway and provided for each level.

## **University requirements for teaching-related posts (Teaching & Curriculum Leadership and Research and Teaching routes)**

As part of its commitment to maintaining the highest academic standards in teaching and curriculum leadership, the University expects all newly appointed or promoted teaching-related staff to gain a qualification or recognition by a professional body as accepted by HESA, if not already achieved. Applicants will not be eligible for promotion to the next level in the job family until this requirement has been completed. Please see the Summary of University Requirements for Teaching-Related Posts for the requirements for each level.

## **Salary on Promotion**

Academic promotions are made to reward achievement. Successful applicants will be moved to the bottom point of the [salary scale](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/pay/salaryscales/index.aspx) relevant to their new level. If current salary is already at or above that amount, they will be moved to the next point upon the salary scale relevant to their new level.

This will mean a salary increase on promotion and access to a new salary scale up which the promoted applicant can progress.

## **External advisers (for promotion to level 7 only)**

For staff applying for promotion to level 7, three external advisers will be appointed to provide a reference in support of their application. Two will be nominated by the School/Department, and one will be nominated by the applicant.

The external adviser nominated by the applicant should be contacted informally by the applicant to gain their agreement to act in this capacity prior to the applicant submitting their application for promotion. Once agreement is sought, the applicant should include details of their nominated external adviser in their application form.

Heads of School/Department will not discuss the choice of School/Department-nominated advisers with the applicant, though the applicant may inform the Head of School/Department of any possible external adviser that should not be approached and the reason why.

Appointment of the external advisers will be made on the recommendation of the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor (FPVC), whose decision is final as to who to put forward as External Adviser(s). Applicants will not be asked to provide further names of potential external advisers. The FPVCs are responsible for compiling the names and current contact details of a sufficient number of external advisers to allow the Promotion Committee to select those who may be contacted for a reference. It must be made clear that the final selection of external advisers is made by the University, and the final choice of names proposed to the FPVC should be determined separately from the applicant, by the Head of School/Department. The Promotion Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, also seek external references additional to those noted above.

All advisers must be external to the University, including the one personally nominated by the applicant and ideally from different external institutions. All referees must be able to comment objectively on the application and so within the previous five years must not have had any formal personal relationship with the applicant, such as line management responsibility, have had no input to the application, hold no personal relationship such as relative or close friend/collaborator, a co-author or joint grant holder of the applicant. Where it becomes clear that a referee is connected to the applicant, the Promotion Committee has the discretion to seek a further independent reference.

External advisers should, where possible, be from Russell Group universities (or their equivalent abroad) and of major academic standing in the field and a sufficient number must be from UK institutions to allow the selection of at least one UK based external adviser. It is, however, understood that external advisers of high standing from other institutions may be nominated where appropriate, for example to match closely the area of expertise of the applicant. External advisers from outside UK Higher Education Institutions should normally only be used where they have a good understanding of the UK Higher Education system. Consideration could be given to U21 Institutions. External advisers should normally be of Professorial (level 7) status. If this is not the case, then justification of this must be supplied by the FPVC to the Promotion Committee.

To ensure equivalence, if an external adviser is drawn from systems using the North American system of academic titles, the precise rank, i.e. assistant, associate or full professor, must be stated. External advisers will also be asked to declare any interest with regard to the applicant.

All such references will be sought by the Director of Human Resources or nominee, on behalf of the Committee. Referees will be issued with the University’s Academic Promotion Criteria and are invited to comment upon the extent to which they feel the applicant meets the criteria.