



Following the Senior Banding Briefing sessions held in September 2021, the following FAQs have been developed to support the process, categorised into the following sections:

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Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Q Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

An EIA has been completed based on the current known issues and how the new system aims to address these. The link to the EIA can be found [on SharePoint](#) and will be a living document, which will be regularly reviewed and updated throughout the process.

Q How will the new banding address the gender and ethnicity gaps?

The banding structure provides clarity on the criteria and expectations across the bands, which are open and transparent. There is equality of opportunity to apply for re-banding on an annual basis and to verify/challenge banding through the indicative banding exercise. A Faculty led-triennial review will also take place to ensure staff are within the correct band based on their contribution/performance. Recognising that some staff from protected groups may be less like to self-promote, staff who don't put themselves forward for re-banding, but identified as should do, will be encouraged to apply and supported to complete their application. Equality monitoring will take place through the indicative banding exercise and any issues will be managed.

Q Banding is fairly common among Russell Group universities and other institutions. What is the evidence on the effect of banding on the gender pay gap?

Other universities have experienced positive changes regarding reducing the pay gap for women, ethnic minorities and disabled staff through the introduction of a banding process.

Q Where can staff seek support if they are experiencing stress/mental wellbeing issues as a result of this exercise?

Please talk to your Head of School/Department or HR Business Partner (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/aboutus/hr-business-partnering.aspx>) in the first instance to enable support and advice and to be provided.

Process

Time and workload

Q Why is the process being implemented now on the back of the Covid-19 pandemic and the increase in workload associated with this?

The original timeline was to introduce a new process in August 2020, but due to the pandemic, the activity was paused. However, we do want to realise the benefits of the new approach for our staff and for the University as soon as we can. If there are colleagues who have particular concerns over the workload associated with completing the self-assessment form and CV before 17 December 2021 they should discuss this with their Head of School/Department.

Q What is the estimated time this exercise will cost the University?

We appreciate the indicative banding exercise will take time, both for individuals, Heads of School/Department and Faculty/University committees. It is important that the initial process is robust and transparent to ensure placement/confirmation of banding is correct.

On an annual basis, only those who wish to apply for promotion to a higher band will complete a self-assessment form. **Staff will not be required to complete/update their paperwork every three years via the triennial review.**

Q What is the estimated workload of undertaking the exercise?

The time to undertake the self-assessment process, through testing, is estimated to take 3 to 4 hours, although for some people this may be more and some may be less.

Q Are all Level 7 staff expected to self-assess?

Those indicatively in Band A there is the option to self-assess to apply for a higher band. Those in Bands B, C and D are required to make a self-assessment and submit a CV.

Q What is the approach for Head of School/Department/APVC applications currently in role and when the term ends?

There is no requirement to complete a self-assessment form, unless they wish to do so. There will be no penalty for not completing the self-assessment process. When the Head of School/Department/APVC/AFPVC term ends, it is recognised that there will be a period of time required to re-establish academic responsibilities and contribution, so as such assessments will take place after the end of the leadership term. To ensure that Heads of School/Department/APVC/AFPVC upon ending their term are not disadvantaged by the process, should downward banding take place, then four years pay protection would apply.

Q If you do not self-assess will you automatically get annual cost of living increment?

The annual pay award/cost of living rise will continue to be applied under the new scheme.

Q What will happen if an individual does not submit their paperwork?

The expectation is that everyone required to self-assess (those in Bands B, C and D) will do so. Staff in Bands B, C and D who do not submit paperwork will be assessed on the information available to the School/Faculty, which will be considered by the University Committee who will make the decision based on the available information. For those indicatively placed in Band A, there is the option to complete a self-assessment.

Q What happens to clinical academic staff in the Vet School?

They are in scope for the exercise. Clinical medical academics are out of scope as their pay structure is determined by the NHS.

Q What happens to the timescales/deadlines for staff with extenuating circumstances eg maternity, long-term sickness etc?

Those with extenuating circumstances, such as absence away from work will not be disadvantaged as a result of the process. Where these arise, they will be appropriately managed based on individual circumstances.

Information required

Q Does the CV need to be in the standard format provided?

Unless there are circumstances where an alternative CV has been agreed with the Head of School/Department, the standard CV format will need to be submitted.

Q How will the impact of the pandemic be considered for individual's self-assessment?

The self-assessment form specifically asks staff to provide information about the impact of the pandemic on recent activity. A long lead-in time to complete the self-assessment has been incorporated into the process in response to the ongoing implications of Covid-19.

Q Is a formal teaching qualification eg Fellowship of Advance HE an absolute requirement for the Senior Banding Process?

The minimum requirement is that individuals with a teaching emphasis will demonstrate sustained and high-quality achievements in both teaching and curriculum leadership, **normally** supported by a relevant PhD, PGCHE and at least Senior Fellowship of Advance HE (formerly HEA) and extensive professional success and achievements.

Q Is there any scope to streamline the process of assessment to avoid the additional administration that this will inevitably bring?

It is important that the initial exercise is as robust and thorough as possible via the self-assessment process. We will be looking to streamline the future processes as much as possible, taking the learning and feedback from the indicative banding exercise into account.

Support and decision-making

Q Where can staff get advice about completing their paperwork?

Please speak to your Head of School/Department in the first instance, or relevant leadership members/teams. Some Schools/Departments will be communicating their approach to the exercise and any additional awareness/support sessions being offered.

Q How will ADC fit into the process?

ADC provides opportunities to have development and career aspiration conversations, including any support required for staff to fulfil their aspirations for re-banding. Conversations about re-banding readiness (in the same way as promotion readiness for staff below Level 7) are encouraged, alongside development conversations and agreeing objectives to support career aspirations.

Q Does only the current year's performance affect the new banding?

Evidence is based on the criteria within the Academic Framework and CV, not just based on one year's performance, but will be over a longer timeframe. Committees, supported by the Head of School Statement, will look at all the evidence on the self-assessment form and CV to inform the final decisions.

Q How will the Faculty committees that review banding for individuals be constituted?

In a similar way to Faculty Promotions Committees. University Committee will make the final decision and will comprise of the DVC, Faculty FPVCs, Portfolio PVCs and the HR Director.

Q Who will make judgements on the CVs, will this be internal or external assessors?

This will be internally through Faculty and University Committees.

Outcomes

Q What are the possible outcomes of the indicative banding exercise?

Under the indicative exercise if confirmed as within the correct band, placement on new salary scale will normally be to the same or nearest highest point within the band. If confirmed within a higher band, placement on the new salary scale will normally be to the bottom point of the higher band.

Q Can professors be down-banded from their current banding?

There may be circumstances where this is the outcome where an individual is currently paid at a higher band compared to their evidence of contribution/performance, confirmed through the outcome of the indicative banding exercise. In these circumstances, four years' pay protection will apply.

Q If someone is down-banded and given the four years' pay protection, do they have the chance to improve to progress to the original salary rather than actually being down banded?

Absolutely, during the four-year period, support will be provided with the intention that staff will remain in the band.

Q What is the likely number of candidates who might go down in pay band through the indicative exercise?

Unable to know the likely numbers relating to the indicative banding exercise.

Q What is the legal basis for the University reducing a person's salary without their consent?

Legal advice has been sought and we are applying our University policy of four years' pay protection for any individuals where down-banding will apply through the indicative banding exercise.

Q Is there an appeals process?

Yes, the indicative banding appeals process will be on the grounds of procedural irregularity, which is the same as the academic promotions process.

Q Is there a University quota for each of the different categories A, B, C etc?

No quota has been assigned. Placement/confirmation of banding will be based on evidence of contribution via the self-assessment process.

Q Can you estimate yet how much money the exercise will save (if any) for the University?

This is not a cost cutting exercise, it is anticipated that the University will spend more money initially through staff being re-banded to a higher band and the initial pay protection period.

Business as usual process

Q How often will there be an opportunity for re-banding?

After the initial exercise, there will be annual opportunities to apply to be re-banded supported by a Faculty-led triennial review.

Q How often will staff be given the opportunity to apply to move bands? Is this going to become like the yearly promotions process that the University already has, but for Professorial roles as well?

Yes, after the initial exercise, the annual process will be similar to a yearly promotions process, with staff able to apply for re-banding should they feel they meet the criteria at a higher band.

Q Is the annual process applying for the banding to be reviewed or applying for an increment within your existing band?

The annual re-banding process would enable staff to be considered for re-banding. On an annual basis, staff in Bands B, C and D can also be considered for a consolidated increment through the Nottingham Reward Scheme.

Q Could you explain what form you expect the 'three-year review within Faculties' will take?

This has yet to be fully developed and the learning from the initial exercise will help to devise the three-year review process ready for 2026.

Q Can staff be banded down as a result of the three-year review?

No, the three yearly review will be used to review staff who have not put themselves forward for re-banding and to look at the EDI across Faculties to support this process. Professors are expected to continue to contribute at the level of their confirmed band or to progress up the bands based on increasing contribution/levels of performance to support the University's ambition and to strive for excellence.

Q Will staff have to complete/update their paperwork everything three years as part of the triennial review?

No, there is no expectation that all staff will be required to do this as part of the triennial review.

Level 7 Academic Framework

Q What are the differences between bands A, B, C and D?

In terms of the criteria within the Academic Framework, Band A is the entry point, Band B the career grade and Bands C and D are the highest bands.

Q Many Level 7 have a high teaching load, therefore, why are the criteria for Research and Teaching pathway solely based on research metrics?

Criteria across the Teaching and Curriculum Leadership and the Research and Teaching Pathways include reference to teaching excellence/contribution. There are then many further Teaching and Curriculum Leadership criteria listed under the indicative examples of further contribution, which cumulatively will build a case for a particular banding outcome.

Q There has been a positive push to move to valuing 'team science' (hence away from silo working and measuring success only in terms of PI grants), how do the Research and Teaching pathway metrics support this positive move?

At the higher bands, the criteria only refer to "evidence of PI responsibility". The value of team working is absolutely recognised. At the moment, only one person can be the PI (noting that UKRI are currently reviewing this), however, the criteria states "evidence of PI responsibility" not that being a PI is expected at the higher bands.

Q Are colleagues on a Research and Teaching track expected to draw primarily on the specific pathway criteria or can they draw on their expertise in both Research and Teaching and Teaching and Curriculum Leadership?

They are expected to meet the specific pathway core criteria, but there are also numerous "indicative examples" which cover a broader range of contributions, recognising the different roles played by our academics.

Q What is the timeframe for demonstrating achievement of specific pathway criteria ie does it relate to particular REF periods in relation to research and Knowledge Exchange activity, or are we to draw on evidence from throughout our time at Level 7?

There is no University-wide timeframe - it will differ between disciplines and we will be guided by Heads of School and FPVCs over what is appropriate in each area. This is not based on performance over the last year or over only the last three years for the triennial review.

Q How can scholarly output be defined as 'a minimum of 4 in the last 6 years at 4*', when for years outputs at 3* and 4* were acceptable?

The criteria attempts to set out our expectations for each band and to demonstrate how these are increased at the higher bands. They are very much in line with the criteria that we have used for academic promotions for many years, including in the criteria that were revised two years ago.

Q Obviously, assessing REF papers is quite contentious and people have not yet been told how their papers were scored for the latest round of REF. In future years, those assessments might not be available either, so how will these things be judged in determining how many 4* papers people have?

We started to try not to reference 3* and 4* papers within the framework, but providing a different definition has been challenging. Any papers not submitted to REF can still be referenced and taken into account in both the indicative and business as usual processes. We are looking for quality not quantity through the assessments and may rely on subject matter experts to provide context.

Q What steps have been taken to ensure that there is parity of esteem (and opportunity for higher banding) across different subject areas?

Criteria typically refer to disciplinary expectations, and we will be guided by Head of School and FPVCs over these (just as we are for academic promotions). For example, in terms of research funding, we typically consider the need to secure external funding at levels available for a particular subject area, and these differ significantly between (for example) STEM and Arts & Social Science. On publications, we know we will see more double weighted monographs in Social Science & Arts, and across the board, we may see contributions to Impact Case Studies as substitutes for academic publications.

Q How will the criteria be nuanced based on different disciplines?

Heads of School/Department and Faculty PVCs should be able to provide guidance on their expectations for different disciplines, just as they have done for many years for academic promotions. Benchmarking data has been generated recently in support of the next University Research Strategy and we will look to share this with Faculties and Schools to assist them with this.

Q On the Research and Teaching Pathway, the "Specific Expectations" of the bands only refer to research. What about the expectations for contribution to excellence in Education and Student Experience and to leadership/administration beyond research?

Reference to Teaching and Curriculum Leadership and University/Academic Service and Good Citizenship is referenced across all bands both for the core and indicative criteria.

Q Will contributions to management be valued equally to research-related achievements?

The criteria includes indicative examples of collegiality, leadership, good citizenship and academic service throughout the bands and will form an important part of the self-assessment. There is appreciation that leadership roles take away time from research/teaching activities. To ensure there is no disadvantage to those undertaking significant leadership roles (ie Head of School/Department/APVC), delays will be introduced regarding the exercise to enable them, when they finish their leadership role, time to get back on track with their academic responsibilities.

Q How will you ensure that collegiality is rewarded?

Collegiality is reflected strongly in the core criteria on "University & Academic Service & Good Citizenship" in each band. The criteria are additive, building on those at lower bands. The first criterion for R&T under level 7 Band A relates to teaching excellence. There are then many further Teaching and Curriculum Leadership and broader leadership criteria listed under the indicative examples of further contribution, which cumulatively will build a case for a particular banding outcome.

Salary Scales

Q If you think the indicative band is correct, but that your spine point is not, is this an opportunity to ask for reconsideration?

The indicative exercise will look at the banding only not the spine point within this. Equality data will be reviewed and if there are any EDI implications resulting from the exercise then this will be managed appropriately.

Q For those below the current standard maximum, will the Banding Exercise mean that salaries will freeze and be prevented from reaching the designate maximum through a natural course as in the past?

After the exercise, if you are mapped to Band B, C or D, you will not receive an automatic annual increment although you may receive one via the Nottingham Reward Scheme. In addition, you will be able to apply to be promoted to a higher band on an annual basis.

Q Why is the ceiling on Band A being reduced?

This is to recognise that staff can apply to be re-banded on an annual basis following the indicative banding exercise, which would mean higher salary increases under those circumstances. Incremental performance related reward on an annual basis will be managed through the Nottingham Reward Scheme. The new salary scale has 3% increments compared to 2% under the current salary structure.

Q How do the salary increments work?

Within Band A, there will be automatic increments up to the maximum point in Band A, there are no automatic increments in Bands B, C and D, awarding increments for those in these bands will be managed through the Nottingham Reward Scheme.

Nottingham Reward Scheme

Q Will the number of increments in a school be limited in the way that they were historically in PDPR?

There will be a limit, however, the budget for the Nottingham Reward Scheme is being reviewed as part of the exercise.

Q Indicative banding has mapped our current salaries onto a broad pay band. In the case of bands B, C & D, is further progression only possible via recognition of performance?

Where banding is confirmed, staff will move to the same or nearest highest point on the new scale. Annual incremental reward for those in Bands B, C and D will be managed through the Nottingham Reward Scheme.

Q Who is eligible to apply for a consolidated (increment) via the Nottingham Reward Scheme?

Colleagues in Bands B, C and D will be eligible for both consolidated and non-consolidated rewards. Those in Band A will only be eligible for a non-consolidated reward.

Market supplements

Q What approach are we taking for market/other supplements?

Market supplements and our approach to this is being developed. The banding exercise relates to base salary only.

Q What is the impact of the new banding on the AVA and clinical supplement for veterinary surgeons working at the University?

Banding is on base salary. Work is being undertaken to formalise additional supplements.