#### **Academic Promotion Guidance for Heads of School/Department and Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors**

This guidance is for Heads of School/Departments and Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors and focuses on their role and responsibilities relating to academic promotion.

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).

## **Equal opportunities**

The University values the diversity of its people and is committed to supporting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination.

In assessing promotion applications, all participants must judge the application directly against the University’s Academic Promotion Criteria. Only information submitted on the paperwork should be considered by the committee when arriving at a decision or recommendation. This is to ensure that the promotion process operates fairly and with due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and to the protected characteristics detailed within the Act. All information related to individual personal circumstances which is noted within the promotion documentation must be kept strictly confidential.

All staff involved in assessing promotion applications are required to attend the following courses prior to sitting on a Promotion Committee/Pre-Committee meeting:

* [‘Embracing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Nottingham’](https://training.nottingham.ac.uk/Course?courseref=EDIUON&dates=0)
* [‘Interview Skills for Chair and Panel Members’](https://training.nottingham.ac.uk/Course?courseref=RS&dates=0)

## **Preparing academic staff for promotion**

To ensure all staff are fully supported and prepared for promotion, Heads of School/Department and Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors are responsible for:

* Ensuring staff are provided with the right opportunities to fulfil their academic potential in support of the School/Department’s operational delivery plan or the Faculty/University’s strategic aims.
* Ensuring staff are provided with the necessary support to enable them to contribute fully and develop their skills and experience, including providing opportunities to progress through promotion, in accordance with their talents, aspirations and expertise.
* Providing open and constructive feedback to staff regarding their promotion readiness and proactively encouraging staff who demonstrate excellence to apply for promotion.
* Understanding and championing equality, diversity and inclusion ensuring staff from under-represented groups are supported and encouraged to apply for promotion. Ensure development and leadership opportunities are allocated openly, fairly and transparently and support all staff to undertake these roles regardless of their personal characteristics and circumstances (i.e. part-time working, caring responsibilities, disability etc).
* Ensuring staff who wish to apply for promotion are advised appropriately on the application process and timetable.
* Providing support for those staff who require adjustments in relation to mitigating circumstances that have impacted on their ability to meet the Academic Promotion Criteria.
* Acting as a role model for staff within their School/Faculty and the wider University in the pursuit of academic excellence.

## **Academic Promotion Process for Head of School/Department and Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor**

Please note – for seconded staff at the overseas campuses where reference is made to Head of School/Department this will mean joint action between the UK Head of School/Department and the appropriate person at the overseas campus.

### **Promotion workshop**

To be fair and equitable, all staff applying for promotion should have the opportunity to attend a promotion workshop. Faculties have a responsibility to deliver these workshops to provide guidance and advice on applying for promotion.

### **Initial discussion**

Applicants wishing to apply for promotion should initially discuss their application with their line manager, ADC appraiser or senior leader (i.e. Head of School/Department, FPVC, APVC) sufficiently in advance of submitting their application. In the case of staff applying from the UNMC or UNNC campuses, this initial discussion must be with their Head of School/Department (UK based) or with the campus Provost (or the most appropriate person).

Applicants should receive open and constructive feedback as to whether their application is ready for submission and if not, where the gaps appear to be, what is needed in general terms for it to be supported and how the applicant could address these issues. Please note 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.

Line managers/Head of School/Department should be aware that 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.

### **Mitigating circumstances and requested adjustments**

If there are mitigating circumstances that may have impacted on the applicant’s ability to meet the Academic Promotion Criteria, this should be discussed by the applicant and appropriate line manager/Head of School/Department prior to an application being submitted. The Head of School/Department will be responsible for approving any requested adjustments and should confirm this on their Head of School/Department Statement. If the reason for mitigation for the applicant is particularly sensitive/personal you can approve an agreed mitigation with the applicant without them having to describe the reason on the application form. **Important note: It is a requirement for all other columns in the mitigation table to be completed for any mitigation to be considered by the relevant Promotion Committee.**

Mitigation will usually be limited to one criterion of the Academic Promotion Criteria. 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.

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.

Examples of mitigation could include, but are not limited to, (1) extending the window of grant capture or outputs to take into account periods of parental leave and return to work (2) extending the window of grant capture or outputs to take into account periods of home schooling/caring responsibilities during the pandemic (3) reduction in quantity of grant capture or outputs as a reasonable adjustment for a disability (4) proportional reduction in outputs across the criteria to take into account part time working. In these examples the term outputs refers to both research and teaching outputs. Please see Guidance for Completing the Academic Promotion Application Form for a written example of a mitigation and agreed adjustment.

### **Head of School/Department Statement and Pre-Committee meeting**

All applicants must complete and submit their Academic Promotion Application Form by email to their Head of School/Department by the deadline set by the School or Faculty.

The Head of School/Department should complete the Head of School/Department Statement for each applicant in preparation for the School or Faculty Pre-Committee meeting.

The Head of School/Department or Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor (FPVC) may convene an advisory School/Faculty Pre-Committee meeting to support an informed view of the promotion cases, as well as ensuring consideration to applications has taken place in a fair and consistent manner.

The Head of School/Department or FPVC must make a brief report to reflect the School or Faculty Pre-Committee discussion (using the Pre-Committee Report Pro Forma), sending it electronically to the FPVC (where appropriate) prior to the Promotion Committee, with a copy to Human Resources (HR) ([BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)) to monitor for equality and diversity purposes. This report will reflect the number of promotion cases considered and how many were supported or not supported (briefly giving the reasons why any applications were not supported where appropriate) by the Pre-Committee.

Following the Pre-Committee meeting, the Head of School must finalise their Head of School/Department Statement, ensuring it reflects the committee discussions and recommendations. For seconded staff at the overseas campuses, an additional statement is required from the appropriate person in UNMC or UNNC. The Head of School/Department must send their statement to the applicant, copying in [BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk) by the deadline set.

All staff will have the opportunity of making a personal promotion application should their Head of School/Department or FPVC not endorse their application.

### **Meeting of the Promotion Committee**

The applicant is responsible for submitting their own Academic Promotion Application Form to HR by the University deadline.

Prior to convening the [relevant Promotion Committee](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/governance/universitycommittees/promotionscommittee.aspx), the FPVC should prepare each promotion case using the Head of School/Department Statement, Pre-Committee Report Pro Forma and through further consultation with the Head of School/Department and more widely within and/or outside the University where appropriate. In the case of applications from a member of staff from an overseas campus, the FPVC should also consult with the relevant Provost (or the most appropriate person).

The FPVC is responsible for presenting each promotion case at the relevant meetings of the Promotion Committees – describe the individual’s role and contribution within the framework of the agreed School/Department’s aims and objectives. The FPVC will also comment, where applicable, on the individual’s teaching and curriculum leadership portfolio. In the case of promotion applications from UNMC or UNNC, the FPVC should also take into account the overseas context when presenting the case.

Applications for promotion to levels 4 and 5 will be considered by the relevant Faculty Promotion Committee chaired by the FPVC. Applications for promotion to levels 6 and 7 will be considered by the University Promotion Committee. Applications to level 7 are considered twice by the University Promotion Committee. Firstly, to determine if the criteria have been met sufficiently to request references from external advisers and secondly to consider the references once they have been submitted.

All applications will be reviewed in a consistent and fair manner by the relevant Promotion Committee. Applicants will be considered in batches by career pathway; Research and Teaching, Teaching and Curriculum Leadership, and Research. It will take into account all the evidence and details submitted and assess the application against the Academic Promotion Criteria.

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

### **Process**

For applications for promotion to level 7, three external advisers will be appointed in total, one nominated by the applicant, and two nominated by the School/Department. References from external advisers will be sought following the first meeting of the University Promotion Committee.

Heads of School/Department must 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 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. FPVCs can use the External Adviser Nominations spreadsheet for recording and sharing the nominated external advisers with HR. These should be sent to HR ([BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)) as soon after the first meeting of the level 7 Promotion Committee as possible.

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 such references will be sought by the Director of HR 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.

The FPVC will present, at a second meeting of the University Promotion Committee, the reports from the external advisers for level 7 applications. The Promotion Committee will then arrive at its decision.

### **Requirements for external advisers**

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 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 Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor 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.

## **Confidentiality and feedback to applicants**

The detailed proceedings, especially with regard to the names of applicants and the discussions of the various Committees concerned with promotion, are to be treated as strictly confidential. However, the importance and value of providing appropriate information and feedback to applicants is also recognised, especially to the unsuccessful applicants.

Promotion Committees are required to complete a Promotion Committee Feedback Pro-Forma for each applicant which will allow the committee to recognise areas of excellence as well as specifically note where the applicant has not met the Academic Promotion Criteria. The HR representative sitting on the committee will be responsible for recording the feedback and ensuring it is approved by the Promotion Committee. Once it is finalised, the HR representative should send the Promotion Committee Feedback pro-forma to the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor (FPVC), copying in HR ([BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:BR-HR-Promotions@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)).

It is the responsibility of the FPVC to ensure that all applicants are informed of the outcome of their application in a timely manner. Specific feedback on the promotion application should only be shared with the applicant once the Promotion Committee Feedback pro forma has been approved by the FPVC.

The Head of School/Department and the individual should then review the Appraisal and Development Conversations (ADC) goals of the individual to reflect the feedback from the Committee. In the case of overseas applications, the FPVC should put in place the most appropriate feedback mechanisms, which may be via the campus Provost or the Head of School/Department (UK base).

## **The Promotion Committees**

### **Applications to levels 4 and 5**

The Faculty Promotion Committee which will consider promotion applications to levels 4 and 5, has the following membership:

* FPVC (Chair)
* Faculty APVCs
* Head of School/Department (or nominee)
* Two non-professorial members (to be agreed at Faculty Level)
* One professorial member (to be agreed at Faculty Level)
* An out of Faculty committee member
* Faculty HR Business Partner (Secretary)
* Faculty Director EDI and People

\*FPVCs may wish to exercise discretion and flexibility as to membership of the committee including considering equality and diversity of its composition. The DVC/Director of HR will be responsible for approving the final constitution of the Faculty Committee.

### **Applications to levels 6 and 7**

The University Promotion Committee which will consider promotion applications to levels 6 and 7, has the following membership:

* Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
* Pro-Vice Chancellors
* Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors
* Pro-Vice-Chancellor Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity
* Director of HR (Secretary)
* Three non-professorial representatives (elected by Senate) – for level 6
* Three professorial representatives (elected by Senate) – for level 7