

# ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS 2024 PROCESS

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the process for the Academic Promotions for 2024. Promotion's criteria and guidance for making an application are available on the [Academic Promotions webpages](#).
- 1.2. The promotions process will apply to those on the University's three career pathways for Academic staff:
  - The Education and Research Pathway: Lecturer A to Lecturer B; Senior Lecturer; Reader and Professor
  - Education and Scholarship Career Pathway: Lecturer A to Lecturer B; Senior Lecturer; Reader and Professor
  - The Research Fellow Career Pathway: Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B; Senior Research Fellow; Research Professor (No Reader position available on Research)
- 1.3. A Teaching Fellow applying for promotion will apply under the Education and Scholarship Career Pathway.
- 1.4. An applicant should only apply for promotion on the pathway they are currently on; the Academic Promotions process should not be used to change career pathway. If an applicant needs clarification on their pathway, they can contact [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) for confirmation.
- 1.5. Consideration of equality & diversity issues in accordance with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy is critical to the effective operation of this procedure. School Promotion Committees should be representative and all members of the panel must have completed the University's online Unconscious Bias training (it is the Chair's responsibility to check that this is the case). On a confidential basis, applicants may submit information about any individual personal circumstances they believe may have restricted their opportunity to perform against the specified Promotions Criteria via the Individual Circumstances Form.
- 1.6. The University recognises the impact of Covid 19, especially on female academics who are most likely to have caring responsibilities that may hinder their academic endeavours. Applicants are encouraged to submit relevant information through the Individual Circumstances Form if they wish to keep these circumstances confidential or through the personal statement section of the application form if they are happy to share this information with the School promotions panel.

## 2. Process Overview & Timelines

- 2.1. Applications for promotion must be sent via email and received by [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) 9am on Monday 11 March 2024.
- 2.2. Applications will be considered at a first meeting of the School Promotions Committee (SPC) between 25 March & 19 April 2024. The SPC will decide on promotions from Lecturer A to

Lecturer B and Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B. For all other promotions, the SPC will decide whether applications should proceed to the next stage of the process. If so, Independent Academic Assessments will be obtained.

- 2.3. The second meeting of the SPC will take place between 8 & 26 July 2024. The remaining applications for promotion will be reconsidered alongside the Independent Academic Assessments. The SPC will make a final decision on applications for promotion to Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow, and will consider whether the applications for Reader and Professor should proceed to the Academic Promotions, Advancements and Titles Committee (APATC).
- 2.4. The APATC will take place in early September 2024 and will make a final decision on applications for promotion to Reader and Professor.
- 2.5. The effective date for all promotions will be 1 October 2024. Where possible these will be implemented in the October payroll, otherwise they will be implemented in the next available payroll and backdated to 1 October 2024.

### **3. Applications**

- 3.1. Applications for promotion must be sent by email and received by [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) by 9am on Monday 11 March 2024.
- 3.2. Applications should be made on the [Promotion Application Form](#) using the [Application Guidance](#). All of the supporting evidence should be presented on the Promotion Application Form and no additional documents or alternative formats will be accepted, with the exception of the Individual Circumstances Form, Declaration of a Conflict-of-Interest Form, and Independent Academic Assessor Details Form, which applicants may also submit if appropriate (see sections 4, 5 & 8). It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all relevant and required information has been provided in their application.
- 3.3. An applicant knowingly providing false information on the application form may result in disciplinary action.
- 3.4. Application deadline extensions can be given under extenuating circumstances, subject to the discretion of the Head of School. A request for an extension should be submitted to the Academic Promotions team at [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk). The promotions team will then discuss the request with the relevant Head of School, who will have final approval.
- 3.5. The HR Co-ordinator will create 'Box' files for each Head of School and will upload the applications for each School to the file. HR will also provide the Head of School with a list of those Lecturer A staff who are currently at the top salary point of their grade and who will "automatically" be considered for promotion.
- 3.6. Lecturer A staff at the top salary point of their grade will be "automatically" considered for promotion but are still required to submit an application form in order to be considered. The Head of School will contact the staff on the list to advise them that they need to submit an application.
- 3.7. Members of staff who have not yet completed their probationary period are not precluded from applying for promotion.

#### **4. Individual Circumstances**

- 4.1. The University recognises that equality of opportunity does not mean treating everyone the same and some applicants for promotion will need to be assessed differently in order for them to achieve equality of opportunity. For example, where individuals have had career interruptions due to caring responsibilities, ill health or disability, this period of absence may need to be taken into account. This may particularly have been the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.2. The required quantity of outputs may be adjusted to take account of declared individual circumstances, but the required quality thresholds will remain unchanged.
- 4.3. Applicants wishing to declare individual circumstances on a confidential basis should use the [Individual Circumstances Form](#) and send it to [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) along with their application for promotion.
- 4.4. Individual Circumstances Forms will be sent to the HR Business Partner for the School who will share and discuss them with the Head of School in confidence in advance of the first SPC meeting. If an applicant's promotion proceeds to the APATC, their individual circumstances form will be sent to the Director of HR who will share and discuss them with the Vice Chancellor in their role as Chair of the APATC. No other party will have access to the details of the applicant's individual circumstances submission unless;
  - (i) they require access to be able to administer the process (e.g. the HR Coordinator overseeing the Box files)
  - (ii) the applicant making the disclosure requests it; (see point 4.6)
  - (iii) it is agreed with the applicant that additional advice needs to be sought and the nature of the requirement means this cannot be done on an anonymised basis; or
  - (iv) in the unlikely event that in order to meet the University's legal or ethical obligations it is necessary to share the non-anonymised data with others.
- 4.5. During the SPC and APATC meetings, the existence of individual circumstances will be taken into account only in the event that there are concerns about whether or not the applicant has met the criteria for promotion. The HR Business Partner and Head of School (or Director of HR and the Vice Chancellor at the APATC) will declare that individual circumstances have been submitted (but not the details if listed as confidential) and whether or not they support the submission. The Committee Chairs are responsible for ensuring that any individual circumstances are taken into account.
- 4.6. If applicants wish to declare individual circumstances that are not confidential and can be made available to all members of the panel, they can do so by selecting the 'tick box' on the Individual Circumstances form. Reference to 'all members of the panel' includes SPC and APATC (if applicable).

#### **5. Conflicts of Interest**

- 5.1. In the interests of transparency, since 2022 schools are required to publish the names of all those who will sit on the SPC. Applicants may refer to this list and where they believe a committee member may have a conflict of interest they should declare it using the [Conflict of Interest Form](#) and send it to [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) along with their application for promotion.
- 5.2. On the form, applicants must detail how they believe a conflict of interest would arise should the panel member in question evaluate their application for promotion. Applicants are also asked to declare whether or not the cause of the conflict of interest has already been formally raised.
- 5.3. A Human Resources Business Partner will share the form, in confidence, with the relevant Head of School (except where the Head of School is the subject of the form, in which case the Provost will assume the Head of School role for the purposes of this process).
- 5.4. Where the declaration form regarding conflicts of interest relates to an issue concerning Equalities, Diversity or Inclusion issues, the HR Business Partner will liaise with the PVC Culture, Equality and Inclusion (PVC CEI) instead of the Head of School (or Provost).
- 5.5. The Head of School/PVC CEI/Provost (as appropriate) and HR Business Partner will review the form and will consider whether, based on the evidence presented, the SPC member in question should recuse themselves from considering the applicant's application form.
- 5.6. Should recusal be the recommended outcome the HoS/Provost/PVC CEI will notify the SPC member confidentially that they will be required to recuse themselves when consideration of the relevant candidate's application is considered by the SPC, including any discussion of their outcome and feedback.
- 5.7. The applicant may, if they so wish, discuss their concerns over a conflict of interest with the Head of School prior to emailing the [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) inbox. Where this is the case the Head of School should discuss the matter confidentially (i.e. without giving specifics) with the HR Business Partner in the first instance to seek guidance on how to handle such a request.
- 5.8. The applicant will be informed of the outcome of these confidential discussions prior to their application being considered. There is no right of appeal against the decisions made by those considering the conflict-of-interest claim.

## **6. School Promotions Committees**

- 6.1. The Chair of the SPC (or nominee) is responsible for convening the SPC meetings and for ensuring appropriate and balanced representation on the Committee.
- 6.2. The SPC should comprise:
  - The Head of School or Dean of the School (who will normally be Chair)

- A Pro-Vice-Chancellor or nominee (this could be a Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, a Dean from a different School, or a UEG cluster lead from a different cluster)
  - At least one Professor from another School
  - The Director of Research and the Director of Teaching & Learning
  - An Education & Scholarship specialist (likely to be the PVC for Education & Students or their nominee)
  - Academic staff from the School at Senior Lecturer level and above, reflecting the academic diversity of the School
  - The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) representative from the School (to advise on EDI issues only, not to comment on academic considerations or outcomes)
  - A Human Resources representative
  - A Secretary (normally a member of Professional Services staff from the School).
- 6.3. Smaller Schools may combine their SPC with that of a cognate School or Schools, where this supports the academic interests and strategic goals of all parties. All Heads of School (or their nominees) should be members of the Committee. The other committee members should comprise a balanced representation from all contributing Schools.
- 6.4. Where possible, Schools should try to avoid having SPC members who are also applying for promotion.
- 6.5. The purpose of the SPC is to consider the quality of all cases for promotion against the criteria and to ensure objectivity and consistency founded on an evidence-based process.
- 6.6. Members of the SPC will treat applications for promotion and discussions during the SPC meetings in the strictest confidence.

## **7. School Promotions Committee First Meeting**

- 7.1. The Chair of the SPC and the Secretary to the SPC will be responsible for providing other members of the SPC with access to the Promotions Box File, for preparing an agenda for the meeting and for populating the template outcomes spreadsheet with the cases to be considered (template spreadsheet to be provided by HR).
- 7.2. The SPC will consider the following with reference to the [Promotions Criteria](#) and Guidance Notes:
- Decide on progression from Lecturer A to Lecturer B for those staff at the top of the salary scale who are eligible for “automatic” consideration, and for whom progression to Lecturer B would be the normal expectation.
  - Decide on outcome of all other applications for promotion from Lecturer A to Lecturer B and Research Fellow A to Research Fellow B (i.e. Grade 7 to Grade 8).
  - Consider whether there is a *prima facie* case for applications for promotion to Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow and above (i.e. Grade 9 and above). If it is determined there is a *prima facie* case, the application will proceed to independent assessments.

- Where there are doubts about whether or not an application meets the criteria, take advice from the Head of School and HR Business Partner about whether any individual circumstances have been submitted and whether these are supported (see section 4).
- 7.3. At the meeting, the Secretary will record the decisions, reasons, and feedback points in the outcome's spreadsheet. It will not be necessary to take separate minutes of the meeting. It is vital that accurate records are kept as this will form the basis for any feedback that an applicant requests on their application.
  - 7.4. In order to facilitate the efficiency of the process, those applying for Senior Lecturer or above on the Education and Research or Research only pathway will submit a list of Independent Assessors alongside their application form. Heads of Schools are responsible for checking the submitted assessor forms during the meeting and confirming the list of assessors meet the criteria and guidance. This confirmation will need to be recorded in the outcomes spreadsheet.
  - 7.5. The Secretary will upload the outcomes spreadsheet to the School Promotions Box File normally **within one working day of the meeting** and invite members of the SPC to approve the outcomes within a specified deadline to allow HR to draft the outcome letters and begin the process of collecting Independent Assessments accordingly.
  - 7.6. The Head of School is responsible for informing applicants of the outcome of the first SPC (i.e., whether they have been successful, have been approved to advance to the next stage, or have been unsuccessful) normally **within two calendar weeks of the meeting**. Confirmation letters for those who have been promoted or have been unsuccessful will be prepared by the HR Co-ordinator and given to the Head of School to distribute. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a meeting with the Head of School, who will provide feedback as recorded in the outcomes spreadsheet. Unsuccessful applicants will be given details of how to request a Process Review in their confirmation letter and will be given a deadline of two calendar weeks in order to do so (see section 11).

## **8. Independent Academic Assessments**

- 8.1. In the interests of best practice, since 2023, applicants applying for Senior Lecturer and above under the Research and Education & Research pathways are responsible for providing details of Independent Academic Assessors using the Independent Assessors Form and submitting to [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) along with their application for promotion. Guidance on identifying Independent Academic Assessors is available on the form and discussions with line managers/Heads of Schools are encouraged if required.
- 8.2. Independent Assessors will be completely independent and should not have previously collaborated closely with the applicant as a co-author or co-researcher; nor provided them with supervision. Applicants should not approach potential Assessors directly and should not communicate with the Assessor about their promotion application and the request for an assessment in any way. If they do so, this may result in the Assessor no longer being regarded as completely independent and/or it may prejudice the applicant's promotion application.
- 8.3. For applicants proceeding to the Second School Promotion Committee meeting under the Research and Education & Research pathways, Heads of Schools are responsible for checking the submitted independent assessor form and confirming the list meets the criteria and guidance in the first SPC meeting.

- 8.4. The HR Co-ordinator will request Independent Assessments by email, copied to the Head of School. The HR Co-ordinator will request assistance from the Head of School in the event that it is necessary to chase up responses or to provide additional assessors if required.
- 8.5. For those applying for promotion under the Education & Scholarship pathway, their application will be assessed by a panel of Independent Assessors selected by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and Students. The panel will provide feedback on the applications.
- 8.6. When Independent Assessments are received, the HR Co-ordinator will upload them to the School Promotions Box File.

## 9. School Promotions Committee Second Meeting & Head of School statements

- 9.1. The Chair of the SPC and the Secretary to the SPC will be responsible for prompting other members of the SPC to review the Academic Assessments in the Box file and preparing an agenda for the meeting.
- 9.2. The SPC will consider the following for all career pathways with reference to the [Promotions Criteria](#) and Guidance Notes:
  - Decide on the outcome of applications for promotion to Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow with reference to the Independent Academic Assessments
  - Consider whether applications for promotion to Reader and Professor should progress to consideration at APATC, with reference to the Independent Academic Assessments
  - Where there are doubts about whether or not an application meets the criteria, take advice from the Head of School and HR Business Partner about whether any individual circumstances have been submitted and whether these are supported (see section 4).
- 9.3. A **minimum** of three Independent Academic Assessments, (2 UK and 1 non-UK) must be available for promotion to Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow, four assessments (3 UK and 1 non-UK) for Reader and four assessments (2 UK and 2 non-UK), in order for the SPC to make a final decision on an application for promotion at the meeting. If this is not the case, the SPC will make an 'in principle' decision on the case, which will be revisited after the meeting, once the required number of Assessments are received. The Chair of the SPC is responsible for ensuring that these 'in principle' cases are revisited and concluded, and that the outcomes are recorded in the outcomes spreadsheet and communicated to the HR Co-ordinator.
- 9.4. At the SPC meeting, the Secretary will record the decisions, reasons and feedback points in the outcomes spreadsheet. It will not be necessary to take separate minutes of the meeting.
- 9.5. The Secretary will upload the outcomes spreadsheet to the School Promotions Box File normally **within one working day of the meeting** and invite members of the SPC to approve the outcomes within a specified deadline to allow HR to draft the outcome letters accordingly. It is vital that accurate records are kept as this will form the basis for any feedback that an applicant requests on their application.

9.6. The Head of School is responsible for informing applicants of the outcome of the second SPC (i.e. whether they have been successful, have been approved to go forward to APATC, or have been unsuccessful) normally **within two calendar weeks of the meeting**. Confirmation letters for those who have been promoted or have been unsuccessful will be prepared by the HR Co-ordinator and given to the Head of School to distribute. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a meeting with the Head of School, who will provide feedback as recorded in the outcomes spreadsheet. Unsuccessful applicants will be given details of how to request a Process Review in their confirmation letter and will be given a deadline of two calendar weeks in order to do so (see section 11).

9.7. The Head of School will write a statement for each of the applicants who have been agreed to go through to the APATC meeting using the Head of School Statement form and upload it to the Box file **within one calendar week of the second SPC meeting**.

## **10. Academic Promotions, Advancements & Titles Committee**

10.1. The APATC will meet in September 2024 following the second meeting of the School Promotions Committee to consider and decide upon which cases will be promoted to Reader, Professor or Research Professor. The minutes will be taken by an HR representative.

10.2. Where applications are unsuccessful, decisions, reasons and feedback points will be recorded in the minutes and discussed with the appropriate Head of School by the Provost (or their nominee) **within three calendar weeks of the APATC taking place**. The Head of School is responsible for informing applicants of the outcome of the APATC. Confirmation letters will be prepared by the HR Co-ordinator and given to the Head of School to distribute. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered a meeting with the Head of School, who will provide feedback as recorded in the minutes of the APATC and as discussed with the Provost (or their nominee). Unsuccessful applicants will be given details of how to request a Process Review in their confirmation letter and will be given a deadline of two calendar weeks in order to do so (see section 11).

## **11. Process Review for Unsuccessful Applicants**

11.1. Each application is considered on academic evidence provided following a careful and transparent process. Decisions on the academic merits are final. However, if applicants feel that the process has not been properly followed as outlined in this document, then a Process Review may be requested.

11.2. Unsuccessful applicants can request a Process Review at the stage their application is unsuccessful (i.e. after the first SPC, the second SPC or APATC). Details of how to request such a review and the deadline for doing so will be set out in the applicant's outcome letter.

11.3. Process Review requests should be emailed to [academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academic.promotions@sussex.ac.uk) by the deadline. The Deputy Director of HR will review the evidence to assess whether or not there is a *prima facie* case. If so, it will be referred to the Provost who will appoint a senior academic to review the process. The outcome of the review will be final. A complaint against an unsuccessful application for promotion will not be considered under any other University procedures.