

ACADEMIC PROMOTION PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The University is committed to ensuring the recruitment, retention and promotion of high-quality academic staff. To enable this, the University has implemented the Academic Career Pathway which sets out the criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor.

2. Principles

2.1 Academic Promotion

The promotions process forms part of a wider performance review process, so that an individual receives clear guidance on the expectations of their role, identification of their training and development needs and feedback on their performance, as identified through the annual appraisal, personal research plan, academic workload distribution processes and allocated academic management structure duties.

Opportunity should be taken during the appraisal process to discuss career progression with individuals and encourage suitable applications to be made to the Faculty Promotion Committee.

Applicants should be aware of the Academic Career Pathway, which provides the criteria against which an application will be assessed.

2.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The grading/salary of an individual member of staff should not be less favourable than that of others on grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, religion or belief, political belief, sexual orientation, transgender status, pregnancy or childbirth, membership of a trade union, fixed term or part-time working, or age.

The University recognises that not all careers follow a standard, uninterrupted route. For part-time members of staff (or those who have had a period of absence such as maternity leave or a career break), whilst there will be no difference in the level of achievement required, special consideration will be given to the volume/range of evidence and any gaps in output. Applicants should indicate any special circumstances, which they wish to be considered as part of their application.

The Promotions Committees should seek to ensure consistency of judgement from year to year. All promotions should be subject to review by HR to ensure that they meet our Diversity and Inclusivity ambitions.

The University will take steps to encourage members of underrepresented groups to apply for promotion.

2.3 Appeal

Only the decisions and recommendations of the Faculty Promotions Committee can be appealed to the University Promotions Committee. Once promotions are subject to external review, (Associate Professor and Professor), appeals can only be raised in relation to procedural irregularity under the appeal stage of the Grievance Procedure.

2.4 Feedback

A standardised template will be used to provide applicants with themed, evidence-based feedback related to the requirements of the Academic Career Pathway, along with advice on how to proceed with any future applications.

2.5 On-going Commitment

It should be understood that in addition to continuing to deliver highly effective teaching in all cases, colleagues promoted to Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor will be expected to demonstrate continuing performance and achievement at this new level in teaching, research, enterprise and engagement, professional practice or leadership. This will be monitored by assessing the staff member's performance against the criteria, relevant role profile and reflected in the annual appraisal.

Should a staff member consistently fall below the expected standard for the role the University's performance capability procedure will apply. Promotion is seen not just as a mark of significant achievements to date, but also as an expectation of significant achievements in the future.

3. Application Process

3.1 Governance

Faculty Promotions Committee (FPC)

Each Faculty shall have a Faculty Promotion Committee (FPC), to make decisions on Senior Lecturer applications and make recommendations to the University Promotions Committee (UPC) on Associate Professor and Professor applications.

The Executive Dean will Chair the FPC.

Membership: Executive Dean, Heads of School, Dean of Education and Outcomes, Director of Research and KE, and HR Business Partner.

The Finance Partner will provide the Dean with financial modelling of the possible outcomes by email in advance of the meeting. This will be treated confidentially and used only for planning purposes by the Dean.

St Mary's is committed to the Promotions Committees being diverse as part of our Diversity and Inclusion ambitions. Human Resources will provide summative statistical data on applications to the Chair of Faculty Promotion Committees, monitoring Diversity and Inclusion criteria.

If an Executive Dean, Director of Research and KE, Head of Academic Student Experience and Enhancement, or Dean of Education and Outcomes is applying for promotion, their

application should be considered by the UPC. If a Head of School is applying for promotion, they should recuse themselves from the consideration of their case by the FPC.

Where academic colleagues sit outside of the normal Faculty structure, applications will be received by Faculty within which the majority of the duties are delivered, and thereafter considered in the same way.

University Promotions Committee (UPC)

The UPC should normally meet twice a year to make decisions on Associate Professor and Professor applications and appeals, and consider Senior Lecturer appeals.

Membership: Vice Chancellor (Chair); Provost; Nominated Professor*; Director of Human Resources, External Expert**

*Rotational post and membership should not normally exceed 3 years.

** Normally attends 1 UPC meeting only

Attendees: Executive Deans to attend the first UPC meeting.

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3.2 Biennial Promotion Round

- Applications for promotion to Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor will normally be invited in October, with a view to submission in November. Applications on the standard application form should be submitted to Academicpromotion@stmarys.ac.uk.
- Prior to the closing date for applications, sessions will be offered to assist members of staff who are interested in making an application for promotion. Attention will be paid to objectives set out in the University's Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter action plans.

- **Faculty Promotion Committee (FPC)**

FPC should meet in December to consider all applications for promotion.

Following consideration of cases by the FPC, members of staff are entitled to know whether or not they are being recommended for promotion.

Feedback in the standard template will be given by the FPC to individuals whose submission is not successful.

Minutes of FPC should have sufficient detail to effectively inform feedback provided.

A member of staff for who is not being recommended for promotion to Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor may make an appeal to the UPC.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Director of Human Resources and statements should not be longer than two sides (Helvetica 11).

Appeals should be received no later than the date specified in the FPC outcome.

University Promotions Committee (UPC)

UPC convenes for its first meeting (normally February) to consider recommendations and identify those applications requiring external review, based on the applications and reports received from FPC.

The UPC will consider appeals made by applicants who are not recommended by the Faculty Promotion Committee.

Executive Deans will attend the first University Promotion Committee meeting in the cycle to speak to recommended applications for Associate Professor and Professor, and respond to questions on appeals against FPC decisions.

Where the UPC are satisfied that a Professor application is of sufficient merit relative to the criteria to be considered by external referees, a request will be sent to a minimum of three external assessors appropriate to the field of work of the applicant, including independent experts. For Associate Professor applications, references can be sought at the discretion of the panel where the outcome is unclear.

UPC will choose alternative referees if, in its academic judgement, those provided are not of adequate standing. All academic references are sought in confidence and are non-disclosable to the applicant.

The decision to seek external referees does not establish that the Academic Career Pathway Criteria have been met. It establishes that on first impression the case merits moving to the next stage in the academic promotion process.

If the UPC does not receive the referees responses in the set deadline, the committee will make its decision based on the available information only.

- UPC convenes for its second meeting (normally Easter) and will consider the external reviews and all relevant information in making an academic judgement on Associate Professor roles and whether to proceed to interview stage for Professor roles.
- An academic member of University Promotion Committee will provide feedback to the relevant Dean or Head of School, for those unsuccessful at the UPC stage. This will then be shared with the individual on the standard template.
- Applicants applying for Professorships will then be invited to interview with the UPC panel. The interview panel will consider all available information in reaching their academic judgement, including performance at interview.
- The award of Associate Professor and Professor is made by UPC and sent to Academic Board for noting only.
- The title of Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor will, if approved, be taken up at the start of the following academic year.
- At the earliest opportunity, normally within twelve months of the award of a professorship, each Professor will undertake an appropriate inaugural activity (lecture, exhibition, presentation) to mark the award of the title.

Where retention of a key individual is demonstrably at risk, an accelerated promotions process may, at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, be considered. Where the appointment of a key individual is identified, amendments to the

promotions process may be made with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor upon advice from the Provost and the Director of Human Resources.

3.3 Submission Guidance

Candidates are advised to seek peer review of their application by their Subject Lead or equivalent senior academic.

Applicants for the title of Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor should put forward a submission comprising the following elements:

- A completed application form which outlines their candidacy against three elements of the Academic Career Pathway – noting that Teaching and Learning is compulsory and a maximum narrative of **3,000 words in total**. Committee members are not required to read additional appendices which exceed the word count.
- Applications over 3,000 words in length will be returned to the applicant
- Academic curriculum vitae.
- Contact details (to include name, email address and full title) of suggested external academic referees of national / international standing in the subject area (a minimum of two Senior Lecturer / three Associate Professor and Professor), who should be able to offer a respected and informed assessment of the applicant's expertise, standing and achievements.
Referees should be impartial/independent and should not include the immediate Head of Department, PhD supervisor, close active collaborators, friends or relatives. It is recommended that all academic references are from existing Professors, where possible.
When application is made under the Professional Practice Pathway, a maximum of one reference may be from a non-academic referee.
- Previous year's appraisal score should be included in the application form.
- Applicants who are unsuccessful should agree a development plan with their line manager ahead of any future application.
- A promotions cycle is counted as starting at the beginning of each academic year.

Applications not including the above steps will be returned to the candidate for editing.

Candidates are advised that the application should address explicitly the criteria for the award of a Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor and indicate those aspects of their work, which they believe qualify them for the appointment.

Evidence submitted by the candidate should focus on activity undertaken at St Mary's University. Activity undertaken at previous institutions will inform the promotion process, but balanced relative to activity undertaken at St Mary's.

Applicants should indicate any special circumstances, which they wish to be considered as part of their application in relation to gaps in the volume and range of outputs (e.g. maternity or career breaks).

Applications may be updated by exception, only when important additional information becomes available during the application process e.g. substantial grant application outcome or qualifications achieved.

Individuals subject to formal University procedures in the year of application will not be considered for promotion. If the case is not upheld, the application can be considered outside of the normal process, at the discretion of the Vice Chancellor.

Dependent on the title for which an application is being made and the three career pathways identified, the statement should include some of the following:

- Teaching and Learning (compulsory)

This area encompasses the activities of teaching delivery, module/programme and short course development, and course/learning design. An application may also include work as a mentor; pedagogic research; innovation in teaching and learning; activities aimed at improving the student experience (e.g. learner support, working with students with disabilities and from different cultural backgrounds); external recognition of involvement in improving teaching (e.g. funded projects, consultancy work, contribution to conferences); quotes from QAA reports or external examiner's reports.

- Research

Research activity covers all aspects of the creation and application of new knowledge, however that manifests itself within your discipline. Research outputs as follows: books; single authored or co-authored; chapters in books: single authored or co-authored; edited collections; papers/articles in refereed journals refereed papers presented to conferences; non-refereed papers/articles in journals, monographs, other publications or conferences; research posts; research income; PhD completions.

- Enterprise and Engagement

This pillar covers externally facing activities, including knowledge exchange, public engagement and enterprise. It includes contributions to public engagement initiatives and activities which generate mutual benefit, influencing internal and external priorities and practice. It encompasses creation of partnerships with other organisations (commercial and non-commercial), leadership in societal engagement and demonstrating research impact. Enterprise activity covers engagement and income-generating activity with business, the public sector and the third sector on research, policy-making, executive education and professional development. Additionally, this category may include working influence and impact on society, economy, industry, government or public policy.

- Professional Practice

This area covers continuous development and maintaining a national reputation in the field of practice, maintaining an in-depth technical knowledge of, and an up-to-date understanding of, developments affecting the practice of the profession, offering consultancy or policy advice to public or regulatory bodies and holding advisory board membership of professional organisations. Evidence may include commissions, exhibitions, including catalogues, guides etc.

- Leadership

Includes evidence of making a continuing contribution to the leadership and management of the University, Faculty or School. Evidence will include citizenship activity, success in leadership roles such as Course Lead or Subject Lead, leadership of disciplinary or multi-disciplinary projects, active participation in University projects / initiatives such as EDI, Sustainability or WP, and mentoring junior colleagues.

3.4 Advertised Posts

For academic and research posts which are advertised as being suitable for Associate Professor or Professor, the selection panel will be given delegated responsibility on behalf of Academic Board to award an Associate Professor or Professorial title. On some occasions, external members of the selection panel may be asked to assess the suitability of applicants via correspondence.

Up-dated September 2025
University Promotions Committee