

# Academic Promotion Procedure

## 1 Purpose

To outline the process for promotion for Academic Employees at all levels.

## 2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all full-time or part-time Academic Employees who hold a continuing, contingent-funded, or fixed-term appointment.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the University Code of Conduct Policy, UniSQ Academic Employee Expectations Framework, and the Guides for Applicants.

## 3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure outlines the processes for applying for academic promotion or equivalent standing, and addresses the topics of confidentiality, eligibility, application processes, criteria for promotion, application assessment, outcomes and feedback, and reviews.

Any departure from this Procedure may only be made with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021: Standard 3.2 Staffing.*

## 4 Procedures

### 4.1 Confidentiality

Other than material required for feedback to an applicant or required for consideration of a review, all materials and deliberations relating to promotion applications will be treated in the strictest confidence by all participants in, and observers of, the promotion process. Members of the University Promotion Committees and observers will not discuss applications, recommendations, or deliberations outside of committee meetings. This section does not apply to applicants.

### 4.2 Eligibility

Academic Employees are eligible to apply for promotion when they have completed a minimum of 12 months' continuous service at the University in a full-time or part-time academic appointment at the time they are applying for promotion.

Employees who hold a fixed-term or contingent-funded appointment are eligible to apply for promotion provided their employment contract extends beyond the date on which the promotion takes effect.

Where an applicant for promotion tenders their resignation, or is terminated, from their employment with the University prior to the promotion being decided, their application will be regarded as withdrawn.

### **4.3 Applying for promotion**

Prior to submitting an application for promotion, Academic Employees must seek advice from Supervisors, mentors, discipline experts and/or heads of organisational unit on whether they are likely to be able to make their case for promotion. An applicant who was unsuccessful in the previous year must ensure they can demonstrate significant progress since that application.

Applications for promotion to Levels C, D, or E will normally be called at least eight weeks before the closing date. Applications for promotion to Level C, D, or E are to be submitted using the online application form.

Applications for promotion to Level B can be submitted at any time throughout the year utilising the online application form.

Applications for all levels must contain the following:

- Confirmation of the applicant's qualifications or evidence of Equivalent Standing.
- A case for promotion with supporting evidence that addresses the promotion criteria (with a focus on achievements in the period since last promotion or appointment to the University).
- An academic portfolio in the prescribed format.
- A head of organisational unit statement.

Up until five working days prior to the assessment of applications, applicants applying to Levels C, D, or E may provide a one-page summary of post-submission achievements that have resulted since their application was submitted using the online application form.

#### **4.3.1 Applications over more than one level**

An Academic Employee may not apply for promotion over more than one level.

### **4.3.2 Head of organisational unit statement**

The role of an applicant's head of organisational unit (typically a Head of School or Institute Executive Director) is to assist applicants in determining readiness for promotion by providing ongoing feedback about achievement across the three core areas of academic work.

As part of the promotion process, the head of organisational unit will be responsible for providing a written statement to be submitted with the application. The statement must address the applicant's achievements against each of the core areas of academic work with reference to the Academic Employee Expectations Framework and include a recommendation to promote or not promote with justification. The head of organisational unit may consult with other Employees whose judgements they believe may be helpful in completing this statement. A head of organisational unit statement that makes a recommendation to not promote will not stop the application from progressing to the University Promotion Committee for assessment.

For Employees applying to Level B, in areas where the head of organisational unit is not an academic position, the statement must be prepared in conjunction with a relevant academic head (normally a Head of School or Institute Executive Director) that most closely aligns to the applicant's discipline, nominated by the applicant.

The head of organisational unit statement is not confidential and will be viewed by the applicant as part of the promotion process.

### **4.3.3 Achievement relative to opportunity**

Applicants may outline their achievement relative to opportunity, considering factors such as career breaks, gender, cultural, family, or other factors which may have resulted in an alternative profile in one or more of the criteria. Applicants need to explain how the factor impacted their performance in one or more of the promotion criteria. Applicants should refer to the relevant Guidelines for further information.

## **4.4 Criteria for promotion**

### **4.4.1 Academic qualification or Equivalent Standing**

Applicants must have the following qualifications in the relevant discipline area, or provide evidence that Equivalent Standing has been obtained:

- For promotion to Level B: a Master's qualification, or a combination of relevant tertiary study or equivalent qualifications, and experience appropriate to their profession or discipline.
- For promotion to Levels C, D, or E: a Doctoral qualification.

#### **4.4.1.1 Applying for Equivalent Standing for promotion purposes**

Academic Employees who do not possess the required Master or Doctoral academic qualification for the level of promotion being sought may apply for Equivalent Standing.

Obtaining Equivalent Standing for promotion purposes is a separate process that must be completed by the applicant prior to applying for promotion. To apply for Equivalent Standing for promotion purposes, an Academic Employee must outline the case for equivalency using the prescribed form. It is the responsibility of the Academic Employee to provide verifiable sources of relevant evidence to substantiate their case for equivalency.

In determining Equivalent Standing, regard will be given to verifiable evidence of: Research achievement; achievement outside the tertiary sector in industry, business or government employment; professional achievement; and creative/technical achievement.

The intent of Equivalent Standing in this instance is to recognise work completed by an Academic Employee that is significant in nature and comparable with the type of work undertaken in obtaining the relevant academic qualification, and not just the culmination of many smaller pieces of work. If an applicant has been awarded a level of membership by an examining body, profession or similar institute that is widely considered by universities or the profession to be equivalent to a particular academic qualification, then the applicant can be awarded Equivalent Standing for that academic qualification.

Further information on equivalency at Doctoral and Master's level is available in the relevant Knowledge Article.

Human Resources will convene an Equivalent Standing Committee to assess an application for Equivalent Standing for promotion and provide a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor will make the decision, which is final.

#### **4.4.2 Achievement in core areas of academic work**

Applicants should focus their application on their achievements over the last five years, or since their last promotion or appointment to the University (if occurred within the last five years).

Applicants will be assessed on their performance, achievement, and impact across the following core areas of academic work: Teaching; Research; and Service. Each core area of academic work is defined as:

- **Teaching and associated activities**

Teaching is a creative activity designed to foster Student learning, their ability and desire to undertake scholarly work, and their professional development and creativity. Teaching draws upon the professional and disciplinary expertise of Employees and is continually revitalised by Research, scholarly practice consultancy or professional practice.

Teaching includes the design, implementation and the evaluation of curriculum materials for all modes of delivery.

Teaching includes engaging in scholarly practice.

Teaching includes face-to-face classroom teaching; the various modes of distance education teaching (including online mode, the preparation of print, voice, visual or electronic materials and contact with Students directly or by telephone, computer link, or video link); the teaching of groups other than Award Students (including fellow Employees); teaching component of HDR supervision; curriculum, Course and instructional design; education leadership and scholarship associated with learning and teaching.

- **Research and associated activities**

Research and scholarship refers to activities that result in the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. Research and scholarship may include synthesis and analysis of previous Research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes, and activities that advance the practice of learning and teaching by making such Research findings public.

Research and original achievement encompasses all forms of original intellectual or cultural achievement including: Research, exhibitions, performance, unique consultancy and the leadership, scholarship, publication, commercialisation and Information/technology transfer associated with these activities.

- **Service** (including Service to the University, Community and Profession, including Engagement)

Service includes activities undertaken by Academic Employees that contribute to advancing the University, the contribution of the University to the community, and the development of the academy or their profession.

#### **4.4.3 Weighting of core areas of academic work (Levels C, D or E)**

Applicants applying for promotion to Levels C, D, or E will nominate the percentage weight they wish to be given in each core area of academic work. In determining the weightings in each core area of academic work, applicants must take into consideration their areas of strength and achievements in each category. The weightings are used in calculating the weighted performance for each core area of academic work and the WPA for each applicant.

Weightings assigned by an applicant must total 100%. Applicants for promotion who are designated as Research Specialists or Education Specialists are not required to provide a weighting in their non-core area of work.

The weighting ranges for each core area of academic work are:

Core Area of Academic Work	Teaching and Research	Research Specialist	Education Specialist
Teaching	20-70%	0%	60-90%
Research	20-70%	60-90%	0%
Service	10-40%*	10-40%*	10-40%*

\* *Academic Employees employed in leadership positions or roles (e.g. Dean, Associate Dean, Head of School, Deputy Head of School, Associate Head, Institute Executive Director, Centre Director) at the time of submitting their application may weight service up to 60%.*

## 4.5 Application and assessment for promotion to Level B

Applications for promotion to Level B will be actioned by the head of organisational unit, no later than 10 days after receipt of the application.

The head of organisational unit may consult with other Employees whose judgements they believe may be helpful in formulating their advice to the relevant Delegate (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research), or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education)).

Applications will be reviewed by the relevant Delegate to determine whether the academic qualification or Equivalent Standing requirements have been met as per the criteria outlined in 4.4.1, and be assessed against each core area of academic work based on the evidence provided in the application against the criteria outlined in 4.4.2, and in accordance with the assessment guidelines in 4.6.2.

The relevant Delegate will assess and make a decision to approve (or otherwise) applications for promotion to Level B, ideally within 10 days after receipt of the application.

Successful applicants will be appointed at Step 1 of the Level B salary classification, with effect from the first day of the month after the promotion decision has been made.

An unsuccessful applicant may request a meeting with the relevant Delegate to discuss feedback. An applicant's head of organisational unit may also be present at the feedback meeting.

## 4.6 Application and assessment for promotion to Level C, D, or E

### 4.6.1 University Promotion Committee

A University Promotion Committee will be formed to assess all applications for promotion. The committee will consider all applications before recommendations for promotion are made to the Vice-Chancellor.

Position	Level C	Level D	Level E	Equivalent Standing
Vice-Chancellor	No	No	Chair	No
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research)	Chair (odd years)	Chair (even years)	Yes	Yes
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education)	Chair (even years)	Chair (odd years)	Yes	Yes
Chair, Academic Board	Or nominee	Yes	Yes	Or nominee
Pro Vice-Chancellor (First Nations)	No	Yes	Yes	No
Dean (First Nations Education and Research)	Yes	No	No	No
Head of School (two-year rotation)	Yes	No	No	No
Academic Employee from STEMM discipline	At Level C, D, or E	At Level D or E	External member at Level E or higher	No
Academic Employee from HASS discipline	At Level C, D, or E	At Level D or E	External member at Level E or higher	No

Promotion committees will contain an appropriate mix of genders.

At the request of an applicant, an observer of the UniSQ branch of the NTEU may be present for the assessment of their application by the Promotion Committee. The role of the observer is related to process only, and observers do not assess applications or offer opinions as to the merit of applications.

#### 4.6.2 Guidelines for assessment

The committee will review each application to determine whether the academic qualification or Equivalent Standing requirements have been met for the level of promotion sought, as per the criteria outlined in 4.4.1.

The committee will also assess each application and rate each core area of academic work based on the evidence provided in the application and any supporting documentation against the criteria outlined in 4.4.2. While the committee will consider the applicant's achievements over their entire career, the emphasis will be on achievements over the last five years, or since

their last promotion or appointment to the University.

As part of the University's commitment to fostering a safe and respectful work environment and in compliance with legal obligations, Human Resources will inform the Chair of the Promotion Committee whether an applicant for promotion has been the subject of a substantiated allegation of Gender-based Violence during their employment at the University for consideration.

The academic performance and achievements of each applicant, as presented in the application, are to be evaluated in relation to the norms that prevail in the applicant's particular discipline or field, and relative to opportunity. This means that in terms of expectations for activity and output, consideration will be given to the fraction at which an applicant is employed, periods of absence, and/or personal circumstances. Where Information about an applicant's personal circumstances is provided, that Information will remain confidential to the assessing committee.

During the assessment, the committee will assess the application having regard to:

- Actual performance and achievement at the applicant's current level relative to opportunity.
- Performance and achievement at the level being sought AND demonstrated potential to perform at the level being sought.
- Position classification standards for their current level of appointment and the level of appointment sought.
- The UniSQ Academic Employee Expectations Framework.

Inherent in this approach is the expectation that, as the level of promotion being sought increases, the nature of the performance, impact and achievement shifts from the conduct of an activity to the leadership, supervision and management of the activity.

Further consideration should be given to the relativity of teaching and research achievements in situations where Employees have been substantively employed in roles that are heavily focused on service, for example, Heads of School, Institute Executive Director.

#### 4.6.3 Performance descriptors and ratings

Each core area of academic work will be rated according to the following performance descriptors.

Description	Definition	Numerical Equivalent
Distinguished	Outstanding performance by national or international	9

	standards, placing the applicant in the top echelon of their professional peer group*.	
Meritorious	High level of performance denoting the applicant clearly as a leader among their peers*.	8
Highly Commendable	Performance at the level sought, or that consistently demonstrates potential to perform at the level sought.	7
Commendable	Commendable performance above routine at the applicant's present level, but does not consistently demonstrate potential to perform at the level sought.	6
Satisfactory	Satisfactory performance at a level necessary for the performance of professional activity at the applicant's present level.	5
Less than Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory performance at a level necessary for the performance of professional activity at the applicant's present level.	4

*\* For the purposes of this Procedure the peer group of an applicant is defined as those Academic Employees of Australian universities in the same discipline at the present level of the applicant, and with the same area of focus.*

Each applicant will be given a numerical equivalent score.

Each numerical equivalent score will be multiplied by the percentage weighting given by the applicant to each core area of academic work to form a total Weighted Performance Average. Applicants must be awarded a total WPA of 7.0 (and meet the academic qualification or Equivalent Standing requirements) and not be awarded an aggregated WPA score of below 5.0 in any core area of academic work to be eligible for promotion.

All applications will be assessed according to section 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 of this Procedure.

#### **4.6.4 Interviews**

Applicants may be interviewed when further clarification is required on selected matters within the application. The chair of the committee will make the final decision as to whether an applicant is required to attend an interview.

Interview dates and times will be conveyed to applicants as early as possible to ensure availability. Applicants must be available for face-to-face interviews unless there are unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances.

The chair of the committee may allow a phone or video interview in exceptional circumstances only.

## 4.6.5 Outcomes and notification

Following the completion of the assessment, the University Promotion Committee will review the applicant outcomes, formulate an overall rating for each applicant, and forward their recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor for a decision.

The committee may recommend that an applicant be promoted over more than one level. In such cases, additional Information including external referee reports may be sought.

Promotion decisions will be made by the Vice-Chancellor with due regard to recommendations of the University Promotion Committee. The Vice-Chancellor's decision is final.

Applicants and the relevant head of organisational unit will be informed of the decision in writing. All applicants may request a meeting with the Chair of the University Promotion Committee to discuss feedback and are encouraged to invite their head of organisational unit to attend the meeting with them. The Chair may nominate another member of the University Promotion Committee to provide the feedback.

Successful applicants will be appointed at Step 1 of the salary classification to which they are promoted. Successful promotions take effect on 1 January of the following year. However, a successful applicant may begin using their new title as of the date of the formal written advice informing them that their application has been successful.

## 4.7 Process review

An applicant for any level may request a review of the academic promotion process through which their application for promotion was decided by submitting a written request (with supporting rationale and evidence) to the Chief People Officer within four weeks of notification of the outcome of the application for promotion.

The Chief People Officer will coordinate a review of the process to be completed by a:

- Professorial (Level E) Employee of the University who is not from the organisational unit of the applicant, and
- Member of the Academic Board, of the level of Associate Professor or above.

The reviewers must not have participated in the current promotion round.

The findings of the review will be provided to the Chief People Officer. If no anomaly in the process is found or if an anomaly in the process is found that likely did not cause a material disadvantage to the applicant, the decision of the initial University Promotion Committee will stand.

Where the review findings indicate an anomaly in the process occurred that likely caused a material disadvantage to the applicant, a new University Promotion Committee will be formed to

reassess the original application.

Where the outcome of the new Committee recommends promotion, and the Vice-Chancellor decides to approve the promotion, that promotion will take effect from the date at which it would have occurred if the initial University Promotion Committee had decided to recommend promotion to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor's decision is final, and there is no right of a further review on the outcome of the process review.

## 4.8 Delegations

Position	Delegation
Category 1 Delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve promotion to Level C, D, or E.</li><li>• Approve equivalent standing of academic qualifications for promotion purposes.</li></ul>
Category 2 Delegate	Approve promotion to Level B.

## 5 References

Nil.

## 6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

## 7 Procedure Information

<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Chief People Officer
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Chief People Officer
<b>Policy Type</b>	University Procedure
<b>Policy Suite</b>	<a href="#">Academic Promotion Policy</a>
<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	

<b>Approved Date</b>	27/3/2026
<b>Effective Date</b>	27/3/2026
<b>Review Date</b>	13/3/2030
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<a href="#">Enterprise Agreement</a>
<b>Policy Exceptions</b>	<a href="#">Policy Exceptions Register</a>
<b>Related Policies</b>	<a href="#">Code of Conduct Policy</a>
<b>Related Procedures</b>	<a href="#">Position Establishment and Evaluation Procedure</a>
<b>Related forms, publications and websites</b>	<a href="#">Achievement Relative to Opportunity Guidelines</a> <a href="#">Position Establishment and Evaluation Procedure (Position Classification Standards)</a> <a href="#">Academic Employee Expectations Framework</a> <a href="#">Academic Promotion SharePoint/Guides for Applicants</a>
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><b>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</b></p> <p><a href="#">Academic Employee</a></p> <p>As defined in the University of Southern Queensland Enterprise Agreement 2023 - 2026 .</p> <p><a href="#">Employee</a></p> <p>A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the Enterprise Agreement and includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University.</p> <p><a href="#">Research</a></p> <p>Research is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.</p> <p><a href="#">Student</a></p> <p>A person who is enrolled in a UniSQ Upskill Course or who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the</p>

	<p>University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled.</p> <p><a href="#">University</a></p> <p>The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.</p> <p><a href="#">Vice-Chancellor</a></p> <p>The person bearing the title of Vice-Chancellor and President, or as otherwise defined in the University of Southern Queensland Act 1998 , including a person acting in that position.</p>
	<p><b>Definitions that relate to this procedure only</b></p>
<p><b>Keywords</b></p>	<p>Promotion, academic promotion, equivalent standing, academic expectations</p>
<p><b>Record No</b></p>	<p>23/631PL</p>