

Academic Promotions Guidance for Members of Promotions Groups and Panels

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1. Introduction and purpose

This document provides additional Guidance for members of School/Institute Promotions Group and Faculty and University Promotion Panels, including for Chairs.

All those involved with the promotions process in Groups and Panels must familiarise themselves with the Queen Mary Academic Framework, which lays out expectations at different career stages for different academic career paths, and is available online, and the description of the Academic Promotion Process and Governance, which is available online. Having read this Guidance for group and panel members, you may also wish to refer to the Guidance for Applicants which will help you understand how applicants have been advised to prepare their submissions.

[All relevant guidance and documentation can be found here.](#)

2. Guidance for Heads of School/Institute Directors

Heads of School/Institute Directors play an important quadruple role in the promotion process. Throughout these, they are expected to exercise their best judgement, based on available evidence and ensure the promotion process and all recommendations and decisions are fair and consistent in approach.

a) As line managers they play an active role in developing and supporting staff:

- i) through the maintenance of effective and sustained systems for probation, appraisal and mentoring in their Schools, in line with university guidance and policy;
- ii) by ensuring that information about Academic Career development is made available regularly, accessibly and equally to all academic staff;
- iii) by ensuring that opportunities and resource for academic career development are offered equitably and inclusively.

b) Within the promotion round, Heads/Directors are responsible for:

- i) Reviewing materials relating to promotion eligibility provided by Rewards and Benefits at the start of the Appraisal Round each year, in order to identify and contact colleagues who should be encouraged to apply for promotion and to review and if necessary revise the support provided within the School/Institute for those preparing and/or applying for promotion;
- ii) Ensuring that the opening of and deadlines for the Academic Promotion Round are publicised to colleagues across the School/Institute equitably, inclusively and transparently;
- iii) Meeting with colleagues applying for promotion, where this is requested, to advise on their eligibility and suitability for application, giving honest and constructive feedback based on evidence;
- iv) Ensuring that colleagues identified as eligible and ready to apply for promotion who have not otherwise contacted the Head/Director are given the opportunity to arrange a meeting to discuss potential application if they so wish;
- v) Holding, or arranging for their delegates to hold 'Readiness for Promotion' reviews with all staff at the end of their probationary period, or with those who have not been promoted in the last five years;
- v) Ensuring that where colleagues tell them in good time that they are applying for promotion, support from mentors and/or appraisers to applicants is provided equitably and inclusively throughout the School/Institute.

c) As Chairs of the School Promotion Group, Heads/Directors are responsible for:

- i) convening the School/Institute Promotion Group, including ensuring appropriate membership and composition as outlined in the Academic Promotions – Process and Governance document
- ii) reminding group members to complete all required training and attend annual briefings
- iii) completing the Promotion Group Proforma
- iv) chairing the Promotion Group, including ensuring consideration of all application materials and any statement of Personal Circumstances from the Personal Circumstances Panel; enabling a full discussion by Group members of each applicant; ensuring that a fair and evidenced decision is taken by the Group about whether or not to recommend supporting the application;
- v) completing the Head of School/Director of Institute Statement and submitting this to Rewards and Benefits by the deadline advised at the start of the Promotions Round.
- vi) Following the University Academic Promotions Group, providing constructive and evidenced feedback to all unsuccessful applicants.

d) As members of the Faculty Promotions Panel, Heads/Directors are responsible for:

- i) presenting the recommendations of their School/Institute Promotion Group to the panel;
- ii) reviewing the recommendations of other School/Institute Promotion Groups in the Faculty
- iii) supporting the Chair of the Faculty Promotions Panel to ensure that decisions about promotion are taken fairly, equitably, and following the same process across the Faculty.

It may help Heads/Directors to recognise that they will need to prioritise their responsibilities differently in these different roles.

Head of School/Institute Director Statement

Details of this Statement are given in the Academic Promotions, Process and Governance document. Additional guidance for Heads/Directors is provided below.

All decisions on whether or not to recommend an applicant for promotion should be formulated during the School/Institute Promotion Group meeting. The outcome for each Area of Contribution should be discussed and a final collective decision made.

Heads'/Directors' statements are a summary of the basis for this recommendation. They must:

- provide a short commentary against the relevant Areas of Contribution
- assess for each Area of Contribution whether Excellence in Delivery, Development and Leadership is assessed as “met” or “not met”
- provide a clear explanation with reference to the Academic Careers Framework of the basis on which the Group has reached this judgement.

It is the responsibility of the Group as a whole to have agreed a recommendation on each application. The Statement must record this agreed collective view. Where the Group has been unable to agree, and the application therefore not supported, the disagreement and its basis should be recorded, but views should not be ascribed to individual Group members.

The statement will be shared with the applicant once submitted to the Reward and Benefits team, and the Head/Director should write it with this in mind.

It is important that Head/Director's statements should align with any of their earlier discussions with the applicant to ensure consistency and fairness.

The recommendations of the School/Institute Promotion Group will have significant influence with the Faculty Panel. The statement should therefore provide appropriate subject-specific knowledge and context including the norms for publication (e.g. types of publication rated highly, norms expected in terms of quality/numbers, the place of joint research, the availability of research funds,

etc in order to assist Faculty and Academic Promotion panel groups, who may not be familiar with the expectations at the promotional level/subject area.

Heads of School/Institute Directors should carefully collate and forward to the Reward and Benefits team for sending to the Faculty Panel:

- ❖ all completed applications
- ❖ the Head of School/Institute Director Statements for each applicant
- ❖ the completed School/Institute Group Meeting pro forma

Heads should not give feedback to unsuccessful applicants at this stage: the outcome of the application is still awaiting the decision of the Faculty panel.

3. Guidance for School/Institute Promotion Group members

[All relevant guidance and documentation can be found here.](#)

School Promotion Group members are responsible for ensuring that they have completed or refreshed their Introducing Inclusion training and attended relevant briefings for each annual cycle. At the start of the School/Institute Promotion Group meeting, the Chair will check that all members are up-to-date with training and briefings.

School/Institute Promotion Group members also have the shared responsibility to read all the submitted Application Statements and CVs from all applicants in the School/Institute, assess them against the Academic Careers Framework and any specific standards/norms in their own discipline, and support the Group to make the best judgement possible on the basis of the submitted evidence only, in ways that are fair and consistent. Panel members must help each other to maintain the fairness and consistency of the promotions process, by holding each other accountable on their judgement of applications solely on the basis of the evidence provided and against the standards set out in the Academic Career Framework.

4. Guidance for Faculty Panel Chairs and Members

[All relevant guidance and documentation can be found here.](#)

Details of the composition and business of the Faculty Panel can be found in the Academic Promotions – process and governance document

The Faculty Panel is chaired by the Vice-President or their Deputy. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that the panel is convened, and its business conducted, in line with the membership laid out in the Process and Governance document.

Faculty Panel members are responsible for ensuring that they have completed or refreshed their Introducing Inclusion training and attended all relevant briefings for the current promotion cycle. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will check that all members have up-to-date training and have attended briefings.

Chairs and Faculty Deans are responsible for reviewing all applications, with the recommendations made by School/Institute Promotion Groups, and ensuring that the Faculty Panel makes fair and consistent judgements, based on the evidence presented, on whether to support or overturn the School/Institute recommendation. Heads/Directors' responsibilities as Faculty Panel members are covered above.

The Dean representing another Faculty is responsible for helping to ensure consistency across Faculties in terms of judgement and decision making. They are not involved in making decisions on applications. They should offer observations in the course of discussion of specific cases where this will support consistency, and they may be asked by the Chair to offer advice about

how matters would be addressed in another Faculty. At the end of the meeting, they are asked to summarise their observations and to comment on the conduct of the Panel as a whole.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion representative is responsible for providing the Panel with additional accountability in ensuring equity, inclusion, fairness and consistency. They are not involved in making decisions on applications. The Chair should note their role at the start of the Panel meeting and empower them to offer commentary and advice on any issue they notice either in the materials provided to the Panel or in its discussion. Any issues raised should be documented and any immediate actions needed to mitigate or resolve these should be implemented as far as possible during the meeting. At the end of the meeting, they are asked to summarise their observations and to comment on the conduct of the Panel as a whole.

The Faculty Strategic HR Partner and member(s) of the Reward and Benefits team will normally attend, to provide advice and support to the process. The Reward and Benefits Administrator (or other administrator) will take minutes.

It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the decision and rationale are clearly articulated so that they can be captured for the record.

It is the responsibility of the Rewards and Benefits Administrator (or other Administrator) to circulate the summary statements as soon after the Panel as possible, in order to gain confirmation from panel members on the rationale for each decision.

It is the responsibility of the Chair, Deans and Heads to review the summary statements promptly. The Chair must check that the statement reflects accurately the judgement made on the application. Heads/Directors must check that they understand the statement, which will be shared with unsuccessful applicants and thus must align with any feedback offered by the Head/Director.

Outcome of Faculty Panel

The outcomes of Faculty Panels should not be shared with applicants until they have been confirmed by the University Academic Promotions Group.

5. Guidance for Academic Promotions Group

[All relevant guidance and documentation can be found here.](#)

Details of the composition of the Academic Promotions Group can be found in the Academic Promotions – process and governance document.

Once all external expert opinions have been received and collated, the Academic Promotions Group will convene to consider all remaining applications.

The Chair of the Academic Promotions Group is responsible for ensuring that the meeting is convened in good time and for ensuring that its business is conducted so as to achieve its objectives.

As members of the Academic Promotions Group, Faculty VPs are responsible for presenting an overview of the promotions process and outcomes in their Faculty to the Group.

Having overviewed each Faculty, the Group will discuss year-to-year consistency across the Faculties in order to support fair judgement, consistency and coherence across the University. The Academic Promotions Group as a whole is responsible for reviewing outcomes for protected equality groups across the University using summary statistics of applicants and success rates. It may also discuss other matters arising from the annual promotions round, implementing any actions either in the current or for future rounds. The Group may seek and obtain further written external confidential assessments if necessary.

6. Outcomes and feedback

After the University Academic Promotions Group has met, all applicants will be contacted by the Reward and Benefits team on behalf of the Faculty Vice President and the Head of School/Institute Director to confirm the status of their application.

A written statement will be provided to unsuccessful applicants by the Reward and Benefits team on behalf of the Faculty Panel, which sets out why the application was not supported by the Faculty Panel.

The relevant Head of School/Institute Director should discuss with these applicants why they have been unsuccessful and advise on career development as appropriate. Applicants should be provided with specific evidence-based feedback by the Head of School/Institute Director or delegate, based on the standards of excellence in the Academic Careers Framework.

After receipt of the written statement and feedback from the Head of School/Institute Director or delegate, the applicant may wish to seek a further meeting(s) to discuss career development with their Faculty Vice President and/or School Head/Institute Director and/or Line Manager.

7. Appeals

Appeals are only permitted where there has been a procedural error that may have affected the decision. Appeals must be submitted within 4 weeks of the date of the outcome letter and the Appeal Panel's decision is final. Details of the Appeals Panel, its composition and responsibilities can be found in the guidance below.

[All relevant guidance and documentation can be found here.](#)