Academic Staff Promotions Procedure

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1. **Objective**

The *Academic Staff Promotions Policy* establishes the principles that underpin the University’s approach to promotion to academic Levels B, C, D and E.

This Procedure, which should be read in conjunction with that policy, outlines the promotion process including:
- application requirements
- conflicts of interest and unconscious bias
- committees constituted to assess applications for promotion
- assessment of applications
- recommendations for promotion
- review of recommendations for promotion
- roles and responsibilities associated with academic promotion applications.

2. **Scope**

These are University-wide procedures. They apply to:
- all academic staff who are applying for promotion to academic Levels B, C, D or E
- the applicant’s Executive Dean/ Academic Executive Director/ Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Division, Head of School or equivalent, and Head of Discipline or equivalent
- Independent External Assessors
- members of the committees constituted to assess applications for promotion.

3. **Application requirements**

3.1. **Timetable for promotions**

In June, or as near as practicable, the Chair of the University Academic Promotions Committee will announce the timetable for academic staff promotions applications for the following year. This will include the closing dates for Expressions of Intention to Apply for promotion and for submission of applications, the dates of briefing sessions and formal notice of any changes to the relevant policy and procedure since the previous year.

The timetable for promotions will be published on the University’s Academic Promotions intranet site and be provided to each College and Division.

3.2. **Applying for promotion**

To be eligible to apply for promotion, a staff member must:
- submit an Expression of Intention to Apply by the set date
- have had their appointment at the University of Tasmania confirmed by the closing date for the Expression of Intention to Apply.

Expression of Intention to Apply for promotion forms are available from the University’s Academic Promotions intranet site. Completed forms must be submitted by the due date to Human Resources who will notify the applicant’s Head of School or equivalent and Executive Dean/ Academic Executive Director/ Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Division.
This process is intended to ensure that Schools and Colleges or Divisions have an early opportunity to provide potential applicants with appropriate guidance, support and feedback about applying for promotion.

3.3. Briefing sessions

Prior to the submission of Expressions of Intention to Apply for promotion, potential applicants, Heads of School, and Heads and Professors of Disciplines will have the opportunity to attend a briefing session with the Chairs of the committees of senior academics constituted to assess applications for promotion.

These briefings provide guidance and information to support those involved in the promotions process and include information on respective roles and responsibilities.

3.4. Making an application

Applicants must follow the directions in the guidance information on the University’s Academic Promotions intranet site to ensure their applications have the required format and length and include all mandatory documents. A handy checklist forms the front page of all submitted applications.

Applications provide evidence that the applicant has sustained a high level of performance at their present level of appointment and has the capacity to perform satisfactorily at the level to which they seek promotion.

Applications also provide evidence of the applicant’s excellence, scholarship, leadership, and the demonstrated quality of the significance and impact of their achievements in these four areas of academic activity:

- Teaching
- Research and scholarship
- Leadership and internal engagement
- Community engagement

The promotions committees will generally not accept the same activity as evidence under more than one area of academic activity.

Guidance on the types of evidence that might be used in an application to demonstrate the quality of your activities in these four areas is published on the University’s Academic Promotions intranet site. The examples of evidence are, however, neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. Applicants are not expected to include every evidence type listed and may include other relevant evidence.

Achievement of minimum expectations alone will not justify promotion.

Applicants may update their applications with new evidence about outcomes, achievement and impact up until a date determined by the relevant promotions committees and published by Human Resources as part of the annual promotions timetable.
3.5. **Promotion to Level B**

Promotion to Level B will take place on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School and Head of Discipline or equivalent, confirmed by the relevant Executive Dean and notified to Human Resources and the Provost.

3.6. **Head of School and Discipline written reports for promotion to Levels C, D and E**

The relevant Head of School will provide a written report objectively assessing the applicant’s performance, including progression over time, and evaluating their activities and achievements relative to disciplinary norms. The report will:

- confirm the applicant's workload allocation
- comment on the accuracy and quality of their stated levels of excellence, achievement and impact in the areas of academic activity
- outline the mentoring provided to the applicant to ready themselves for promotion and prepare their application
- discuss to the extent to which the applicant exhibits behaviours consistent with the University’s values (http://www.utas.edu.au/ourvalues)
- gauge their ability to perform at a higher academic level
- include information on the applicant’s contributions to the College/Division, University and School.

Each applicant will also include in their application a report from the relevant Head of Discipline. If the Head of Discipline is not an Associate Professor or Professor, a Discipline-based report will be provided by a Professor of the discipline, or an appropriately adjacent discipline, as determined by the Head of School. If necessary, the Chair of the relevant promotions committee and Head of School will confer on a suitable alternative. The Discipline report will include information on the applicant’s contributions to the discipline, overall and at the University, and provide contextual information on the characteristics of the discipline and its norms.

Equivalent reports for applicants in the University College or Academic and Research Divisions will be written by the Head of the relevant portfolio area and a Professor of an appropriate discipline as determined by the Head of the portfolio area.

Both the Head of School and Discipline, or Head of portfolio area and Professor of an appropriate discipline, should disclose their report to the applicant before the application is submitted. In the rare case it is necessary, applicants may provide written clarification on the reports.

For applications for promotion to Levels D and E only, the Executive Dean will sign the Head of School’s report before submission to attest to the applicant having had appropriate mentoring and support from their School.

If the Head of School is the applicant for promotion, the Executive Dean will provide the written report.

Advice for Heads of School, Heads and Professors of Discipline is contained in the guidance information published on the Academic Promotions intranet site.
3.7. Independent External Assessors

Independent External Assessors (IEAs) provide impartial and objective advice to the relevant promotions committee and provide a balanced view of the applicant’s achievements and worthiness for promotion.

They will be asked to provide the committee with contextual advice to assist in evaluating an applicant’s performance against disciplinary and national and international sector norms.

For applicants for promotion to Level C, the Head of School, in consultation with the Head of Discipline or equivalent, will nominate to Academic.Promotions@utas.edu.au the names of two Independent External Assessors who are not employed at the University of Tasmania and declare that they have no conflict of interest with the applicant.

For applicants for promotion to Levels D and E, the Head of School, in consultation with the Head of Discipline or equivalent, will nominate to Academic.Promotions@utas.edu.au the names of three Independent External Assessors who are not employed by the University of Tasmania and declare that they have no conflicts of interest with the applicant.

For applicants in the University College and Academic and Research Divisions, the Head of the relevant portfolio will nominate Independent External Assessors.

Independent External Assessor nominations should not be discussed or shared with the applicant. The promotions committee will contact Independent External Assessors for reports – Heads of School and applicants must not seek their comments.

Applicants for promotion to Levels C, D and E may indicate where, and why, any specific potential assessor constitutes a conflict of interest, or where, based on specific previous experience, an assessment from them may raise concerns of apprehended bias or undue prejudice. The request of disqualification of any potential assessor must be based only on direct experience.

The Chair of the relevant promotions committee may identify additional nominations, after discussion with senior colleagues in the discipline, if required to better reflect balance (geographical, by institution or discipline) amongst all Independent External Assessors or to ensure the Independent External Assessors do not have a conflict of interest with the applicant.

Advice for Heads of School and Heads of Divisional portfolio areas on selecting and nominating Independent External Assessors is contained in the guidance information published on the Academic Promotions intranet site.

A member of a promotions committee cannot act as an Independent External Assessor for an applicant.

The promotions committees have the right to solicit further written advice from any persons with relevant expertise who may be internal or external to the University.

4. Conflicts of interest and unconscious bias

Members of the committees of senior academics constituted to assess applications for promotion will act fairly and without bias. In accordance with the University
Council’s resolution on gender balance on committees, promotions committees will not meet as single gender committees. Membership should have a minimum 40/60 gender balance.

All members on a promotions committee will have undergone appropriate training within the previous five years as recommended by Human Resources to mitigate any risk of bias or apprehension of bias in their deliberations. Human Resources will arrange both initial and refresher training sessions as required.

Applicants and members of a promotions committee should bring to the attention of the committee Chair any instances where they believe that a conflict of interest, discrimination or bias may affect the assessment of applications, so the Chair may determine the appropriate action.

Where there is a significant conflict of interest, including where a member of a promotions committee is the supervisor/performance manager of an applicant, the relevant member(s) of the promotions committee will absent themselves from the discussion and determination of that application.

5. **Committees constituted to assess applications for promotion**

Applications for promotion to Level C will be assessed by a College level committee.

Applications for promotion to Levels D and E will be assessed by the University Academic Promotions Committee (UAPC).

5.1. **University Academic Promotions Committee**

The University Academic Promotions Committee is responsible for:
- Seeking reports from Independent External Assessors
- Considering all relevant evidence, including written information from any source it deems appropriate
- Making recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor as to who to promote and to what level
- Formulating feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

The University Academic Promotions Committee is comprised of Level E academic staff members and has the following membership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Membership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>Ex officio and Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair of Academic Senate</td>
<td>Ex officio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Executive Director</td>
<td>Ex officio – Deputy Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</td>
<td>Ex officio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Professor from each of the University’s Colleges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who is not the Executive Dean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up to two members co-opted for</td>
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<tr>
<td>periods of up to three years at the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discretion of the Chair, to ensure an appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balance of gender and expertise among members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Vice-Chancellor | May choose to sit as a full member of the committee for consideration of applications for promotion to Level E  
Secretariat | From Human Resources  

The Committee should:  
- Have stable membership across each round of promotions  
- Be comprised of members with expertise in learning and teaching, research, and community engagement  
- Base membership on the organisational units defined in Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure  

Membership of the Committee for those not ex officio will be for three years and renewable. College-based members are nominated by the relevant Executive Dean. To ensure continuity of experience and expertise, half the College-based membership will be considered for renewal in rotation, every eighteen months.

Five members of the University Academic Promotions Committee, including at least one of the Provost, Chair of Academic Senate, Academic Executive Director or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), constitutes a quorum.

5.2. College Promotions Committees

Each of the University’s Colleges will have a promotions committee to consider applications for promotion to Level C.

These committees are responsible for:  
- Considering all relevant evidence, including written evidence from any source it deems appropriate  
- Making recommendations to the Provost as to who to promote and to what level  
- Formulating feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

College promotions committees have the following membership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Dean</th>
<th>Ex officio (Chair)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The College’s Associate Deans</td>
<td>Ex officio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Level D or E academic from outside the college who does not hold a formal management role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>From Human Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Should a College promotions committee be unable to achieve a minimum 40/60 gender balance, additional members may be co-opted from the College in order to achieve that outcome.

Applications for promotion to Level C from the Academic and Research Divisions and University College will be assessed by the most appropriate College committee.
The College committees should:

- Have stable membership across the year’s rounds of promotions
- Be comprised of members with expertise in learning and teaching, research, and leadership and engagement
- Base membership on the organisational units defined in Ordinance 14 – Academic Structure
- Have a term of membership of 3 years for those not ex officio

Three members of a College promotions committee, including at least the Executive Dean, constitutes a quorum.

6. Assessment of applications for promotion

Promotions committees will base their decisions on the evidence provided in the application and the reports of the relevant Head of School and Professor of Discipline or equivalent.

Promotions committees are not constituted as committees of discipline experts. It is the role of the applicant, the relevant Heads and Executive Deans or their equivalents and where required, Independent External Assessors, to provide the committees with sufficient information and evidence on disciplinary norms and expectations to allow the application to be assessed against them.

Submitted workload allocation information will be used by the committees to help them understand the nature of the applicant’s responsibilities. Workload information should reflect the period since appointment, since last promotion or over the last five years, whichever is the shortest.

7. Interviews

Applicants for promotion to academic Level E will be interviewed by the University Academic Promotions Committee. This is an opportunity for applicants to add richness to their case for promotion and demonstrate their capacity to communicate meaningfully about their work and articulate their vision for their role and contribution to the University as a Professor. The interview supplements the written application and is an opportunity for interaction between the committee members and the applicant.

Applicants who will be interviewed will be offered appropriate advice and support to develop the skills required at interview.

The relevant Executive Dean/ Academic Executive Director/ Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Division and Head of School will attend in person while the applicant is being interviewed.

The Committee may choose to interview an applicant for promotion to Level D to clarify or evaluate aspects of their application.

The Chair may, in exceptional circumstances only, elect to conduct interviews via video-conference or similar technology.

8. Recommendations for promotion

The promotions committees recommend to the Vice-Chancellor which applicants should be promoted and to which academic level the staff member should move.
Applicants will receive formal notice of the outcome of their application.

Unsuccessful applicants will be offered an opportunity to receive feedback from the Chair (or delegated member/s) of the relevant promotions committee. The applicant’s Head of School and Head of Discipline or equivalent will be present to ensure a consistent understanding of the committee’s reasons and enable them to support the applicant toward making a future application for promotion. The Secretary of the relevant promotions committee will also attend.

9. Review of recommendations for promotion

Unsuccessful applicants may request that the promotion committee’s recommendation is reconsidered on the basis of procedural error; that is failure to comply with the Academic Staff Promotions Policy or the Academic Staff Promotions Procedure.

Procedural error is the only grounds for review.

Written requests for review must be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor through Human Resources within 14 days of the applicant being formally advised that their application has been unsuccessful. The request must specify clearly the details of the alleged procedural error and provide any available evidence to support the allegation.

The unsuccessful applicant and the Chair of the relevant promotions committee will confer before the applicant seeks a review.

An independent senior academic staff member will be appointed to assess if a procedural error is at question before requesting any further advice from the Chair of the relevant promotions committee or applicant.

- For applications for promotion to Levels D and E this will be an academic leader
- For applications for promotion to Level C this will be a member of the University Academic Promotions Committee.

If there is a procedural error at question a review committee will be constituted. If there is no procedural error at question, the applicant will be notified, and no further action will be taken.

9.1. Academic Staff Promotions Review Committee

Applications under review will be heard by the University Academic Promotions Review Committee (UAPRC). The UAPRC is constituted as follows:

- A chairperson appointed by the Vice-Chancellor;
- A nominee of the Vice-Chancellor; and
- An employee elected by the academic staff of the University.

The Review Committee will seek a written report from the Chair of the relevant promotions committee on matters relevant to the application under review and relating to the alleged procedural error. The Review Committee will also invite the applicant to respond in writing to its summary assessment of the appeal.

Following its review, the Review Committee will provide a written report to the Vice-Chancellor outlining its findings and recommendations, with copies of that
report being provided simultaneously to the applicant and to the Chair of the relevant promotions committee.

In reviewing a recommendation of the relevant promotions committee, it is open to the Review Committee to recommend that the Vice-Chancellor accept or overturn the original recommendation or, alternatively, remit the application for promotion to the relevant promotions committee to address any procedural errors.

The decision of the Vice-Chancellor arising from a review is final.

10. **Out of cycle applications for promotion**

In exceptional circumstances an ‘out of cycle’ application may be considered as a University strategy to retain exceptional staff who have been offered an appointment elsewhere.

A Head of School may request the Chair of the University Academic Promotions Committee urgently consider an out of cycle application. The relevant Executive Dean/ Academic Executive Director/ Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Division must endorse the request.

Further information about the documents required for an out of cycle application is contained in the guidance information published on the Academic Promotions intranet site.

If the Chair is satisfied the exceptional circumstances warrant an out of cycle application, a sub-committee of the University Academic Promotions Committee will be formed to assess the applicant.

The relevant Executive Dean/ Academic Executive Director/ Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Division, Head of School and member of academic staff will be formally advised of the outcome and the promoted staff member listed in the appropriate public acknowledgement by the Vice-Chancellor.

There is no review process for promotions decisions made on out of cycle applications.

11. **Roles and key responsibilities**

11.1. **The Applicant**

- Discuss plans for applying for promotion with the relevant supervisor, Head of Discipline or equivalent and Head of School as early as possible. Those seeking promotion to academic Levels D and E should also discuss plans with the relevant Executive Dean/ Academic Executive Director/ Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Division as early as possible.

- Work with the relevant Heads to establish a mentor to assist you in developing application.

- Seek appropriate advice, guidance, support and feedback in preparing to apply for promotion, including attending a briefing session for potential applicants.
Follow the Academic Staff Promotions Policy and Procedure and the advice published on the Academic Promotions intranet site when writing the application to ensure it complies with all requirements.

11.2. The Head of School or Divisional portfolio head, and Head or Professor of Discipline or equivalent

- Identify qualified staff and encourage them to apply for promotion.
- Provide clear and consistent guidance, information and feedback to staff in relation to their preparedness for promotion and assist them to plan for making an application.
- Ensure applicants are actively mentored and coached in relation to readiness for promotion and preparing their application.
- Consult appropriately with senior colleagues in relation to supporting applicants and providing the written report on their application.
- Attest in the written report to the accuracy of the applicant’s claims and to what extent the applicant satisfies the requirements for promotion.
- Follow the Academic Staff Promotions Policy and Procedure and the advice published on the Academic Promotions intranet site when writing your report.
- Support unsuccessful applicants if they seek feedback from the promotions committee and attend the meeting with them. Provide them with subsequent advice and assistance to overcome the reasons for their lack of success.

11.3. Heads of School or Divisional portfolio head in addition:

- For applicants seeking promotion to Levels C, D and E, nominate Independent External Assessors in accordance with the advice published on the Academic Promotions intranet site.
- Clearly identify any past or present connection between the applicant and the nominated Independent External Assessors.
- Attend promotions committee interviews with College/Division applicants seeking promotion to Level E and any interviews with applicants for promotion to Level D.

11.4. Executive Dean

- Chair the relevant College promotions committee in accordance with the University’s values of equal opportunity, integrity, transparency and procedural fairness.
- Encourage qualified academic staff, from all disciplines of the College to seek promotion.
11.5. Executive Dean/ Academic Executive Director/ Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Division

- Attend promotions committee interviews with College/Division applicants seeking promotion to Level E and any interviews with applicants for promotion to Level D.

12. Supporting Documentation

- Academic Staff Promotions Policy
- Academic Promotions intranet site
- Academic Staff Promotions Application Cover Page
- Expression of Intent to Apply for Academic Promotion
- Independent External Assessor Nomination Form
- Independent External Assessor Report Template

13. Versioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former Version(s)</th>
<th>Version 1 – Academic Promotions Procedure (approved by Council 11/04/2008 resolution no. 08/2/29)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Version 2 – Academic Promotions Procedure (approved by Council 03/04/2009 resolution no. 09/2/29)</td>
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<td>Version 3 – Academic Promotions Procedure (approved by Council 16/04/2010 resolution no. 10/2/35)</td>
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<td>Version 4 – Academic Promotions Procedure (approved by Responsible Officer, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Provost, May 2011</td>
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<td>Version 5 – Academic Promotions Procedure (approved by Responsible Officer, Provost), April 2012</td>
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<td>Version 8 – Academic Staff Promotions Procedure (approved by Responsible Officer, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students and Education), May 2015</td>
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<td>Version 11 – Academic Staff Promotions Procedure (approved by Provost, November 2019)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Version 12 – Academic Staff Promotions Procedure (minor amendment to clarify, approved by Provost, January 2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Version 13 – Academic Staff Promotions Procedure (minor amendment to membership, approved by Provost, May 2020)</td>
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</tbody>
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