

## Academic Progression Policy

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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The People and Culture Strategy, People First, is committed to “Empowering Excellence...Building Commitment”. In response to feedback from staff we have developed a new Academic Progression Policy. This simpler and more streamlined process, integrating Academic Promotion and Professorial Salary Review into one annual cycle, will make it easier for staff to achieve their career aspirations.
- 1.2 Personal Development Review (PDR) provides the framework for an ongoing conversation between Reviewer and Reviewee to co-create Priorities and Development Goals, and to discuss career aspirations. Alongside PDR, this Policy offers a pathway for academic staff to build their career. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the PDR Policy.
- 1.3 There are two main academic career pathways at Queen’s Research and Education, and Education only, both of which are of equal value. The Academic Profiles set out the key areas of academic activity (Research/Scholarship, Teaching and Learning and Citizenship), and the criteria which defines the standards expected at each level of the relevant academic career pathway.
- 1.4 Academic Progression integrates all progression processes including Academic Promotion and Professorial Salary Review into one annual cycle.

### 2. Eligibility

This policy applies to permanent Academic staff up to and including Professors, fixed-term contract academic staff, and Clinical Academics who have been confirmed in post or for fixed-term contract staff who have completed their review period.

For those applying for progression to Senior Lecturer, they will have obtained the QUB PGCHET course, or a recognised Higher Education Academy (HEA) qualification, or equivalent.

### 3. Principles

In addition to those outlined in the PDR policy, the following principles apply to Academic Progression:

- 3.1 To integrate the PDR and connected Academic Progression processes: Academic Promotion and Professorial Salary Review, to become one annual integrated process for Academics at all levels, This will be underpinned by Academic career pathways and Academic Profiles.
- 3.2 To provide greater clarity and transparency for academic career progression, recognising the two main career pathways, Research and Education and Education only.

- 3.3 To ensure that our criteria for progression, Academic Profiles, are applied holistically, thereby allowing for the most effective development of academic talent at the University, as well as recognising and rewarding all the elements of an academic role.
- 3.4 To recognise and give due consideration to individual circumstances which may have impacted on an individual's contribution as judged against the Academic Progression criteria.
- 3.5 To build on the career and development conversations between Reviewer and Reviewee in the PDR process and to provide support to all employees, in line with the University's Priorities, to take ownership of their own personal development and career aspirations.
- 3.6 To simplify and streamline our Academic Progression processes, removing unnecessary bureaucracy.
- 3.7 To ensure that all Academic Progression applicants are treated fairly and consistently.

#### **4. Progression Cycle**

The timetable for Academic Progression will be published on the [Academic Progression](#) website. Normally applications are due for submission annually. The applications will be considered by the relevant committees and the outcomes shared with staff after each Committee meets. The salary award will be implemented from 1 August.

#### **5. Progression Process**

##### **5.1 Application**

Those wishing to progress to Senior Lecturer, Reader, and Professorial Ranges 1 – 4 (including incremental progression) will need to submit an application consisting of a Cover Letter (maximum two A4 pages, font 11) and their Academic CV (through Queen's Core Systems). The Cover Letter may be supplemented with appendices, which are capped at:

- two (one page each) for those on the Research and Education pathway
- four (one page each) for those on the Education only pathway

References will be requested to support applications for progression to Professor Range 1, with the employee and Head of School nominating two external referees each.

##### **5.2 Academic Progression Committees**

There are a number of Academic Progression Committees (School, Faculty and Central) responsible for making progression decisions. Each Committee will meet annually to review applications in line with the relevant Academic Profiles. Appendix 1 sets out the composition of each Committee and their decision making responsibilities. The Chair may also include persons from other Schools/Faculties to ensure that the composition of the committee complies with the requirements of the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Committee members are personally responsible for disclosing potential conflicts of interest to the Committee Chair and HR Business Partner.

### 5.3 Appeals

Where an employee wishes to appeal the outcome of an Academic Progression Committee, believing a procedural defect exists or can offer some other substantive reason, they should set out in writing the grounds of their appeal and submit it within twenty working days of receipt of written notification of the Committee decision.

Information not provided in the original submission will not be considered and it is the responsibility, therefore, of every member of staff to ensure that their original submission is complete.

The decision of an Academic Progression Appeal Panel shall be final and will be communicated in writing to the member of staff within ten working days.

### 5.4 Career Pathways and Academic Profiles

There are two main academic career pathways at Queen's; Research and Education, and Education only. The Academic Profiles set out the key areas of academic activity (Research/Scholarship, Teaching and Learning, and Citizenship) at Queen's. For the purposes of progression, staff are expected to meet the Profile for their current grade and demonstrate readiness to progress to the next grade. It is therefore not expected that staff will be performing across all areas for the higher grade. They should, however, demonstrate evidence of a clear and continuing trajectory against the core criteria identified in the Academic Profile for which they are applying.

### 5.5 Compensation and holistic evaluation

Applications will be evaluated holistically, with overall contributions across and within the three domains of Research/Scholarship, Teaching and Learning, and Citizenship being taken into account. Compensation across and within domains will continue to be applied, for example, outstanding contribution in one domain may compensate for lower levels of contribution in another domain. In addition, there may be individual circumstances such as maternity leave, long-term sickness absence, career break etc., and these should be taken into account when assessing contribution for progression.

## 6. Roles & Responsibilities

### 6.1 Academic Staff (PDR Reviewee)

Academic staff are responsible for engaging with the PDR process and preparing in advance for their PDR meetings. Through this process, they should discuss their career aspirations and their readiness for progression with their Reviewer. They should identify any skills gaps and plan how to address these gaps through their Development Goals. The Reviewee is responsible for taking ownership of their own career and development, with support from their Reviewer. The Reviewee can initiate a PDR conversation as and when required, in addition to those agreed with their PDR Reviewer.

### 6.2 PDR Reviewer

The primary role of the Reviewer is to ensure PDR meetings are scheduled and conducted in a way that enables the Reviewer and Reviewee to maximise the impact and benefits of the process. The Reviewer is responsible for ensuring that all employees have the opportunity for regular, meaningful and constructive conversations. The Reviewer will discuss the Reviewee's career aspirations and their

readiness for progression, providing feedback, identifying any gaps in the Reviewee's profile and agreeing the support required to enable the Reviewee to achieve their career goals and Institutional Priorities.

### 6.3 Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for identifying appropriate Reviewers within their School and ensuring that they are aware of the Faculty/School Priorities. Heads of Schools may need to delegate responsibility for PDR to other members of staff, for example, Discipline Leads who are better placed to support the aspirations of the Reviewee.

The Head of School is the Chair of the School Academic Progression Committee. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the Committee meets, reaches consensus on progression decisions and documents the outcomes appropriately. It is the Head of School and Reviewer's responsibility to discuss feedback for those Reviewees who have applied for Academic Progression and to discuss this feedback during the Committee meetings.

## 7. Monitoring

The application of the policy will be monitored annually, to ensure it is being applied effectively and consistently.

## 8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. It is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Queen's University seeks to provide equality to all, irrespective of gender, including gender re-assignment; marital or civil partnership status; having or not having dependants; religious belief or political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, including Irish Travellers); disability; sexual orientation and age. Please click [here](#) to view a copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

8.2 The University recognises that there may be individual circumstances which have impacted on an individual's contribution as judged against the progression criteria. The committees will give due consideration to any individual circumstances when making their evaluation of an individual progression application.

8.3 Specific issues that might have an impact on the application could include:

- Covid-19 reasons, for example, school closures, elderly parents, illness etc;
- maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave;
- part-time working;
- periods of absence arising from ill-health, including disability or long term condition, mental health, or injury;
- periods of absence arising from gender reassignment;
- career breaks;
- personal, family (for example caring responsibilities) or other non-academic circumstances that have impacted on work for a sustained period; or
- secondments and previous employment.

8.4 Whilst all staff are expected to meet the Profile for their current grade and demonstrate readiness to progress to the next grade, the relevant Committee will review the impact

specific issues may have had on staff's ability to perform across all domains, on a case by case basis.

- 8.5 The University recognises that females are under-represented at Professor and Reader grade and through the PDR process, Reviewers will encourage and support all employees to take ownership of their own personal development and career aspirations.

**9. Section 75 Statement**

This policy has been screened out with mitigation as per Equality Commission's guidance on screening with no adverse impact with regard to equality of opportunity and/or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

**10. Personal Data**

In accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 the University will retain each application, and associated correspondence, in an individual's personal file, including references sought for successful applicants. References sought for unsuccessful applicants will be held for 12 months.

**Academic Progression Committee Decision Making Responsibility**

**Appendix 1**

Level	Recommendation	Decision	Committee Membership	Appeal to	Appeal Decision
Senior Lecturer	-	School Academic Progression Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of School (Chair)</li> <li>• Director of Education</li> <li>• Director of Research</li> <li>• Swan representative</li> <li>• Faculty PVC appointed senior colleague from another School within the same Faculty</li> <li>• Discipline lead (relevant Discipline only)</li> </ul> (HR Business Partner in attendance)	Director of People and Culture	Central Academic Progression Appeal Panel
Reader	School Committee	Faculty Academic Progression Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Chair)</li> <li>• Faculty Deans of Research and Education</li> <li>• Faculty Heads of School</li> </ul> (HR Business Partner in attendance)		
Professor	Faculty Committee	Central Academic Progression Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice-Chancellor (Chair)</li> <li>• Registrar and Chief Operating Officer</li> <li>• PVC Research, Enterprise and Postgraduate Affairs</li> <li>• PVC Education and Students</li> <li>• Lay member of Senate</li> <li>• P&amp;C representative</li> </ul> (Faculty PVC in attendance)		
Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor Appeals	-	Central Academic Progression Appeal Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation and Engagement (Chair)</li> <li>• P&amp;C representative</li> <li>• Director of QGI</li> <li>• Member of the Professoriate</li> <li>• iRise/BAME representative</li> <li>• Lay member of Senate</li> </ul> (Head of School/Faculty PVC in attendance)	-	-