

## ACADEMIC PROBATION COVER LETTER GUIDANCE

Your progress will be reviewed continually during your probationary period, and at key stages, you will be asked to submit a Cover Letter along with an Academic CV, which will be reviewed by the School Academic Probation Committee. The Cover Letter should cover the period from your date of appointment to the role, drawing attention to the key points in your profile. Your full Academic CV will further support your application, providing additional information as required.

When drawing out the key points in the Cover Letter, you will need to show how you meet the criteria for your current academic profile.

The Academic CV and Cover Letter should complement each other, and you should use the Cover Letter to provide more context and highlight your key achievements. You should focus on demonstrating the quality of your outputs.

### Key points

- Use headings to clearly lay out your Cover Letter, ensuring the three domains included in the Academic Profile are listed: Research or Scholarship, Teaching and Learning and Citizenship.
- Present strongest evidence first.
- Focus on achievements in your current role rather than merely your responsibilities (leadership roles, publications, new courses developed, funding awards won and so on). Quantify these wherever possible.
- Illustrate your achievements with brief but specific examples, explaining why these are relevant, referring the Committee to the appropriate section in the Academic CV.
- Ensure the format is appropriate: short paragraphs, clear typeface (size 11), and no longer than two pages.
- Appendices will be limited to:
  - two (1 page each), for those on the Research and Education pathway
  - four (1 page each), for those on the Education only pathway
- An **additional appendix** may be included should you wish to highlight any mitigating circumstances, Covid-19 related or otherwise, that have affected your progress.
- Consider the structure of the letter to enable the Committee to easily process and assess the content.

### RESEARCH / SCHOLARSHIP

You may wish to include an overview of research publications, drawing attention to information that most strongly evidences your readiness to progress, for example:

- A general statement regarding your contribution to the work (for example, the fact that most of your outputs are single-author, or are led by your research assistant or PhD student).
- For published outputs: indicate if output is peer-reviewed; provide information on the quality of, for example, the journal or monograph series in which you publish (such as international reputation or impact factor).
- For artistic output: indicate whether the work was commissioned and/or give an indication of the importance of the festival/conference/venue in which it was presented/performed.
- Provide an indication of the recognition of your work, for example, your citation rates, if relevant to your subject field; the fact that a conference paper was awarded the best paper prize, or that an artistic work was given a distinction.
- Evidence of engaged research activity including collaborative partnerships and societal impact.

- For those on the Education pathway, it is important to demonstrate the impact on your pedagogy, rather than being research which addresses/analyses pedagogy itself.

If you are providing more information in your Cover Letter on research awards (not held on the Research Grants Database and already included in your Academic CV), or on research project income which is recorded in Qfis, you must include the following details:

- Confirming if this information is for a research award or research project income<sup>1</sup>
- List of award or research project holders, with the Principal Investigator identified
- Title of proposal
- Award reference number (from funding body) and QUB account code (as per Research Grants Database or Qfis)
- Source of funding (i.e. the funding body)
- Awarded amount
- Project period

If appropriate, please also provide the following details of your RCUK facility income:

- Name of PI
- Percentage of award credited to you
- Reference number
- Facility used
- Amount of facility time awarded
- Unit cost of facility
- Total facility income
- Grant period

The Academic CV will only present Postgraduate Research Student Supervision data sourced from Qsis, however, if there is relevant historic PhD Supervision or if you supervise research assistants, you may wish to include this information as an appendix to your Cover Letter. Please provide, if you wish, details of your supervision of research assistants, with dates, names of people supervised, and your role in their supervision (i.e. Principal or Co-Supervisor). Please include this information as an appendix to your Cover Letter. You may wish to provide this information in the following format:

| <b>Year</b> | <b>No. of UG projects supervised</b> | <b>No. of taught projects supervised</b> | <b>No. of PhD students supervised</b> | <b>No. of other projects supervised (please specify)</b> | <b>Supervisory Role (Principal/Co-Supervisor)</b> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 2020/21     |                                      |  |                                       |  |   |
| 2019/20     |                                      |  |                                       |  |   |
| 2018/19     |                                      |  |                                       |  |   |

You may wish to provide further information and context in your Cover Letter e.g. if many of your students are externally funded, if they have won prizes or if they have obtained major posts on completion of their studies.

You may wish to include an overview of your scholarly/pedagogic achievements in support of your case, for example:

- Details of any of your publications (e.g. text books) that have been recommended and employed for UG and PG modules and courses, indicating if they used extensively at other HEIs, especially comparable research-intensive universities.
- Information about publications that have been referenced in the development of new teaching methodologies.

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<sup>1</sup> Research awards are the funding awarded or promised and research project income is the actual money drawn from the funder and spent.

- A summary of your outreach, marketing and recruitment activities. It may be helpful to indicate the frequency of the activity (e.g. 5 schools talks per year) and provide specific examples where appropriate.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

You must provide a numerical summary of your personal Teaching Evaluation Questionnaires (TEQ) from students. This summary should refer to you only and should not relate to the work of other colleagues teaching on a module, and should cover the current year and previous three years. This information may be presented in an appendix to the Cover Letter.

Suggested presentation of this information is shown in the example below:

| <b>Year of Module</b> | <b>Modules</b><br><i>(input UG &amp; PT Title &amp; level, including the courses where you have been Module Coordinator, highlighting these courses)</i> | <b>Number of Students</b> | <b>Lectures</b><br><i>(input the number of lectures hours taught per year)</i> | <b>Tutorials</b><br><i>(input contact time, hours, of Tutorials/Seminars taught and/or Practicals supervised)</i> | <b>Teaching Score</b>        |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|
| 2019/20               | UG PHY 1012  | 70                        | 12   | 12  | TEQ 4.40                     |
| 2018/19               | UG PHY 1022  | 60                        | -  | 40  | TEQ for tutorials given 4.75 |
| 2017/18               | UG PHY 1024  | 65                        | 12   | 12  | TEQ 4.10                     |
| 2017/18               | UG PHY 3013  | 40                        | 16   | -   | TEQ 3.50                     |

You should provide any additional information you feel is relevant, other supporting evidence can include the disciplinary/module norm TEQ, reports of external examiners, peer assessment and module review as appropriate. You may also wish to include information on the development of new models, innovations in your teaching, recruitment to your modules, pass rates, retention, etc.

If you are unable to provide a numerical summary, please provide a reason for this in your Cover Letter.

To help demonstrate the quality of your teaching you may wish to provide an overview of:

- Development of new modules
- Innovations in your teaching
- Module convening
- Recruitment to your modules
- Pass rates
- Retention
- Any other relevant comments - for example the course was a supply course for non-specialists

## CITIZENSHIP

The University recognises that academic citizenship is the cornerstone to making Queen's a success, and covers any activities that contribute to promoting positive collegial behaviour across a School or Faculty; as well as contributing to the effective running of the administration and governance of the University.

You should demonstrate your professional development in terms of academic leadership. A common mistake is to merely note the role, however it is crucial that you also illustrate what you delivered in the role and the impact.

You may also wish to include information on your:

- engagement, collegiality and participation in the full life of the School / Faculty / University;
- active contribution towards the strategic goals of the University; and
- collaboration with academic colleagues in matters relating to research, learning & teaching;
- activities that raise the profile of the University.

This may include contribution to staff development, involvement in mentoring colleagues, sitting on University Committees or working groups, contributing to policy/procedure development, and University-wide managerial responsibilities. This may also include membership of editorial boards for journals or book series; conference programme committees; and panel, council or advisory board membership for funding bodies.

## **REMEMBER**

- You should attach your TEQ scores and any supervision activities not covered in your Academic CV.
- Use the [Academic Profiles](#) as a guide to completing your Cover Letter.