

1. Policy Summary

The purpose of the policy is to outline the practical steps which should be taken, subject to the jurisdiction of the Statute, for the nomination of an individual to act as Head of School.

2. Policy & Procedures

UCD Head of School appointment process

The Statutory basis for the appointment of Heads of School in UCD is to be found in Statute 6, Chapter 17.

The Statute envisages five broad stages in the process as follows:

- (1) Consultation by the Head of College within the relevant School to achieve consensus, where possible, in identifying a recommended candidate;
- (2) Determination by the Head of College, following this consultation, of whether or not an advertised (internal and / or external) process should be undertaken;
- (3) Recommendation to the President by the Head of College of a suitable candidate emerging from either (1) or (2) above;
- (4) Consultation by the President with the Academic Council with regard to the recommendation emerging from (3) above;
- (5) Appointment by the President.

In addition, careful consideration needs to be given to a new appointment and his/her induction and this is dealt with as Stage 6.

Stage 1: Consultation

Fifteen to eighteen months prior to the formal initiation of the process envisaged by the Statute, it is recommended that the College Principal would consult with the incumbent Head of School to discuss the broad issue of succession planning in the light of the challenges and opportunities facing the School. Potential internal candidates should be identified and a broad analysis of their strengths and weaknesses undertaken. At the discretion of the College Principal, a decision should be made as to the level of preliminary consultation he / she should undertake with any potential candidates identified at this preliminary stage.

It is recommended that the formal elements of the first stage would be handled directly by the College Principal and consultation would include School Executive involvement and one-to-one meetings as appropriate. It is proposed that these meetings would consider the School's Strategic Plan as a background to the identification of the key qualities, attributes and experience required of the Head of School over the upcoming three year period.

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The consultations should try to establish, in the first instance, as much consensus as possible, prior to the identification of potential specific candidates. The process should encourage any appropriate form of feedback to the College Principal, either in open meetings or on an individual and confidential basis, from members of staff, including an invitation to propose names of individuals (including one's self) who would match the desired criteria. The consultation process should also actively probe the views of the School staff as to the relative merits of an internal versus an international search and selection process.

Stage 2: Determination by College Principal of an appropriate selection process

Following the data gathered in Stage 1, it will be for the College Principal to form a judgement as to the desirability of an advertised selection process or not. If the Principal is satisfied that the consultations undertaken at Stage 1 yield a clear consensus with regard to a suitable appointee, then it is open to the Principal to recommend that individual to the President without further process. It is also open to the College Principal to request any other form of event (for example, a seminar to be given to the School) to help him /her form that judgement. Any other forms of representation made to the College Principal in support of any candidate are valid (but not conclusive) forms of input to the Principal in helping him / her form the relevant judgement.

If the Principal forms the view that an advertised process should occur, then the normal procedures governing such processes should apply. These include the preparation of a person specification, appropriate advertising (internal and / or external), invitation of expressions of interest, normal assessment processes (including the possibility of presentations to the School). In general, the assessment panel to be selected for the process should be composed in the same way as the composition of a panel for any analogous appointment. In particular, the provision of Chapter 17 of Statute 6 that "the School shall be represented on any search, selection or interview panel." (Part 7) must be applied.

Stage 3: Recommendation to President

The Statute requires the College Principal to make a recommendation of a suitable candidate to the President. This recommendation may emerge either from Stage 1 or Stage 2 above. While the Statute is silent on the situation which would result from the failure to identify an appointable candidate from Stage 2, it seems clear that its intention is to afford the College Principal the discretion to engage in whatever form of search process is considered necessary or to repeat the consultation process with whatever modified criteria appear reasonable.

Stages 4 and 5: Academic Council and President approval

The appointment is made by the President, following consultation with the Academic Council. It should be noted that the Statute makes provision, in Part 9 of Chapter 17, "in special circumstances", for the appointment by the

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President of any candidate to the role for a period “not exceeding twelve months as the Governing Authority may determine.” In this scenario, the President must inform the Academic Council of his decision. This confers discretion on the President for an appointment for a lesser period than the norm. For the avoidance of doubt, it is proposed that the President would seek the approval of the Governing Authority for the period of the appointment.

Stage 6: Handover Phase and Induction

- Once announced, the appointee should commence a handover from the current Head of School under a mentoring arrangement.
- The College Principal should also be involved in this process to ensure the alignment of the School with the overall strategy of the College.
- UCD HR should be involved in drawing up the guidelines for this period.
- The newly established Head of School Induction programme will be brought forward in line with this handover phase so that Heads of School have the necessary information and contacts prior to taking on the role.
- During the handover year, the successor should also be encouraged (under the PMDS process) to attend any additional relevant courses which will support him/her in the Head of School role.