

# Faculty Promotions Procedures

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## 1 Introduction

As set out in our strategy, UCD values excellence and understands that excellent performance requires excellent people working in a supportive environment. The strategy states that:

*“UCD will continue to attract excellent and diverse students, Faculty and staff from around Ireland and around the world and will put in place appropriate support measures to develop and retain the members of our community”.*

The strategy commits to working to ensure that the University’s Faculty and staff are enabled to achieve their full potential and are appropriately rewarded for their contribution.

Faculty who are considering applying for promotion should read this document in conjunction with the following documents:

- Faculty Promotions Policy
- Development Framework for Faculty
- Conflict of Interest Guidelines

## 2 Faculty Promotions Committee (FPC)

### 2.1 Membership

Title	No
Chair, Registrar and Deputy President (ex officio)	One
1 Full Professor from each College (excluding College Principals)	Six
President’s Nominees	Three
The FPC will be supported by HR	

The membership term of the FPC is 3 years which may be renewed, in exceptional circumstances, for up to a further 3 years to ensure consistency and continuity. Membership of the FPC is subject to review by the President and approval by the Governing Authority.

Members of the FPC are required to undertake training on Unconscious Bias and Giving Effective Feedback. They are also required to attend Workshops for candidates and Heads of Schools/College Principals, as required on a rota basis.

A meeting of the FPC is quorate when there are at least 7 members (including the Chair), and at least 2 members of each gender in attendance. If only one member of either gender is available for a meeting, the meeting will be re-scheduled. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the meeting is quorate. In exceptional circumstances if the 60/40 gender balance requirement is not met the reason for non compliance should be recorded. If non compliance becomes an ongoing issue steps must be taken to address the issue.

## 2.2 Summary of the Role of the Faculty Promotions Committee

The FPC:

- Assesses all applications, considering the evidence provided, taking impact on performance due to personal or family circumstances into account, in accordance with the Faculty Promotions Policy;
- Selects External Assessors based on the following criteria:
  - The expertise and reputation of the nominee and their institution;
  - The geographical spread of the selected nominees;
  - Appropriate gender representation;
- Is informed by, but not bound by, the Head of School and College Principal commentaries and External Assessor Reports;
- Forwards its recommendations to the President for approval;
- Provides written feedback to all candidates;
- Provides oral feedback to unsuccessful candidates, when requested.
- Considers any observations made by the President and engage in dialogue with the President where necessary to ensure all relevant aspects of each application have been taken into account and addressed in the feedback.

The Order of Business at an FPC meeting is, normally, as follows:

- Review and agree Feedback Reports;
- Reassess applications where the Faculty Promotions Appeals Committee has asked the FPC to review its original decision;
- Full assessment of applications including External Assessor reports;
- Assessment of prima facie cases and, where applicable, selection of external assessors.

## 3 Equality

It is University policy to give equal consideration to promotion applications regardless of whether the candidate is employed on a full-time, part-time, temporary or indefinite basis.

Consideration of equality issues is critical to the effective operation of the University's promotion procedure which is designed to ensure consistency and fairness in decision-making.

The FPC is committed to non-discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity on the 10 University grounds of gender, civil status, family status, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the traveller community. The FPC considers any equality issues in line with the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

The Committee will not raise or discuss any equality issues that are not explicitly referred to by the candidate in their application for promotion. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to freely describe any personal or family circumstances that may relate to equality issues, with the assurance that UCD offers its full support and understanding of the impact that many personal circumstances can have on performance.

In considering applications from candidates undertaking part-time work on an ongoing basis, the FPC recognise that the quantity of work undertaken is affected on a pro rata basis but expect that the quality of the output is comparable to that of full time Faculty.

The FPC should monitor gender statistics and success rates and report to UMT as necessary so that actions may be taken at a local level as appropriate.

## **4 Conflict of Interest**

### **4.1 Faculty Promotions Committee**

The role of the FPC is to ensure that impartial, fair and consistent consideration is given to each application.

At the start of each FPC meeting, members of the Committee must declare any relationship with a candidate that might be perceived as creating a conflict of interest as indicated by the Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Faculty Promotions cases.

Where an application is being considered from a candidate from the same School as a member of the FPC, the member will not be involved in the decision in relation to the candidate.

Where a member of the FPC is conflicted on an application, and as a result, the meeting is not quorate in relation to this specific application, it will not be considered at the meeting but at a subsequent meeting.

Members of the FPC do not represent Colleges/Schools and their advocacy of individual cases is not permitted.

## 4.2 External Assessors

The onus is on External Assessors to declare any conflict of interest in assessing an application. External Assessors are invited to positively express that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest in relation to their acting as an External Assessor to the candidate in question. A copy of the Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Faculty Promotions Cases is provided to External Assessors.

## 5 The Role of the Candidate

Faculty who are considering promotion should have an open and constructive discussion with their line manager on whether:

- Their application is ready for submission and if not, where the gaps appear to be;
- What is needed in general terms for it to be supported and how the candidate may address these issues.

A candidate may apply for promotion without agreement from their Head of School/Unit but should inform the Head of School of their intention to apply. The Head of School/Unit is obliged to provide a commentary as part of the process but can reference that a candidate did not discuss their intention to apply with the Head of School.

Candidates are also encouraged to talk to someone who has recently made a successful application for promotion and understands the process.

Applications for promotion may be submitted at any time during the year to the FPC, via InfoHub.

Promotion is based on the written evidence submitted to the FPC and the importance of the quality of this submission cannot be overstated.

The UCD Development Framework for Faculty (DFF) should be used as a guide for Faculty seeking promotion. Faculty members applying for promotion are expected to demonstrate that they meet the standard for promotion during their period of appointment at UCD. Emphasis is placed on the candidate's performance since their last promotion or since arriving at UCD, whichever is most recent. However, consideration is given to a candidate's entire track record. This framework identifies a number of dimensions under each of the category of achievement and should be used by candidates to reflect both personally and within the context of a development conversation on their strengths and opportunities for growth.:

- **Research, Scholarship and Innovation**
  - Qualifications
  - Publication and Profile
  - Research Funding
  - Research Supervision and Management

- Innovation and Impact
- **Teaching and Learning**
  - Engagement with Student Learning
  - Enhancement of Practice: Personal and Professional Development
  - Module/Programme Design and Enhancement
  - Scholarship Dissemination and Esteem
- **Leadership and Contribution**
  - Administration and Leadership
  - Recruitment and Outreach
  - Building Community
  - Building Support
  - Professional Service

Faculty can assess their current position on the framework across the various dimensions. The framework has been developed on the basis that all Faculty including Lecturers/Assistant Professors are expected to be working, at a minimum, at the level of satisfactory achievement across each of the dimensions<sup>1</sup> listed. The Development Framework for Faculty provides indicative guidance on the evidence that may support the demonstration of meeting a standard of achievement against a particular dimension. It is not intended to be definitive or proscriptive. Taken in the round, with due consideration for discipline differences, Associate Professors are expected to be working at the level of substantial achievement, Professors at the level of outstanding achievement and Full Professors at the level of exceptional achievement. It is not expected that Faculty at higher grades would necessarily be working at levels of substantial, outstanding or exceptional achievement across all dimensions but that activity at a higher level in one area would balance against less activity in another dimension.

## 5.1 External Assessor Nomination

Candidates nominate 3 External Assessors for consideration by the Faculty Promotion Committee.

Candidates should:

- Provide contextual information about their nominees.
- Ensure that nominees:
  - Are at the level of Full Professor (or equivalent) or, in the case of applications for promotion to Associate Professor (or equivalent), at the level of Professor at a minimum;
  - Are geographically spread;
  - Ensure that the proposed external assessors are not all of the same gender;
  - Have no perceived conflict of interest as specified in the Conflict of Interest guidelines.
  - Provide clarification as to why each external assessor has been selected.

For further information, see Sections 8.1 and 13.2 of the Faculty Promotion Policy.

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<sup>1</sup> The professional/clinical service dimension is only applicable to Faculty who provide professional/clinical services that benefit the University.

## 6 The Role of the Head of School

### 6.1 Head of School Commentary

**A commentary by the Head of School should neither be a Reference nor a Recommendation.**

Where a Head of School submits a reference or recommendation the FPC reserves the right to return the application to the Head of School which may result in a delay in assessment.

The development conversations that Heads of Schools, or other senior colleagues, may have with candidates prior to their submission are an important feature of the Faculty Promotions process. Ensuring potential candidates have critically considered their readiness for promotion is a key step in preventing premature applications which are difficult for all involved and have the potential to undermine confidence of the candidate and the process. It is equally important to ensure that those who are ready for promotion are encouraged to apply for promotion. Reporting on the content of these conversations in the Head of School commentary provides appropriate contextual information to the FPC where the Head of School, as the commentator, can report on the agreed strengths and areas of development recognised in these meetings and the actions that the candidate has, or has not, taken in addressing them.

The commentary is an important component of the process and a key element that is used both by the FPC and External Assessors in their consideration. It supports the committee by providing relevant disciplinary and School context in relation to statements made by the applicant and is an opportunity for the Head of School, as commentator, to provide sensible and relevant comparator information in relation to workload, disciplinary norms and expectations and to inform the committee of any information that the applicant has not provided or has under or over stated.

### 6.2 External Assessor Nominations

The selection of appropriate External Assessors is important for the efficient management of applications. The Head of School should:

- Provide contextual information about their nominees and encourage candidates to do the same in relation to their nominees.
- Ensure that the nominated External Assessors:
  - Are a leading academic in their field;
  - Are at the level of Full Professor (or equivalent) or, in the case of applications for promotion to Associate Professor (or equivalent), at the level of Professor at a minimum;
  - Are geographically spread;
  - Are not all of the same gender;
  - Have no conflict of interest as per the Conflict of Interest Guidelines
- Ascertain if an External Assessor has a conflict of interest as part of the selection process.

For further information, see Sections 9 and 13.2 of the Faculty Promotion Policy.

### 6.3 Performance for Growth and Feedback

Faculty should be provided with advice through the Performance for Growth process about their promotion aspirations and the timing of their application and encourage applications from those they consider ready, particularly female candidates, for senior posts.

Heads of Schools may follow up with unsuccessful candidates to address the feedback received following their assessment and support them in addressing this feedback for future applications.

## 7 The Role of the College Principal

**A commentary by the College Principal should neither be a Reference nor a Recommendation.**

Where a College Principal submits a reference or recommendation the FPC reserves the right to return the application to the College Principal which may result in a delay in assessment.

Like the Head of School commentary, the College Principal commentary is a key component of the process that is used both by the FPC and External Assessors in their consideration. The College Principal commentary should:

- Endorse or clarify the commentary of the Head of School;
- Where relevant, provide additional context to that commentary;
- Where applicable, comment on any work undertaken by the candidate within the College.

For further information see sections 10 and 13.2 of the Faculty Promotion Policy.

## 8 The Role of the External Assessor

The External Assessor role contributes significantly to the overall assessment of the candidate.

An External Assessor does not act as a referee but, rather, assesses the overall academic performance of the candidate and provides the FPC with an independent, unbiased assessment of the level of the candidate's achievements in Research, Scholarship and Innovation, Teaching & Learning and Academic Leadership and Contribution, with particular reference to the UCD Development Framework for Faculty, taking into account the norms for the discipline. The

External Assessor should be made aware of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

In addition, an External Assessor comments on:

- Whether there is clear evidence of an upward trajectory;
- Whether the case meets international standards for promotion to the relevant level;
- How the application compares with recent successful applications for promotion to the equivalent level within the External Assessor's own institution.

They are also required to indicate:

- In what capacity they are acquainted with the candidate;
- That a conflict of interest could not be perceived between themselves and the candidate as defined by the conflict of interest guidelines.

## 9 Assessment Process

### 9.1 General Information

- The FPC normally processes applications in the order that they are received. The Assessment process takes on average 8 months to complete. Delays may occur from time to time because of the time taken to receive the requisite number of suitable external assessor reports and at certain times of the year if application numbers are high. (See the HR website for further information).
- Each member of the FPC attending the meeting reads each application prior to the FPC meeting and contributes to the discussion on each application.
- The FPC works by consensus.
- If a member of the FPC is not present at the meeting where a recommendation is made they confirm their agreement or disagreement with the decision at the subsequent FPC meeting when the feedback is reviewed, agreed and signed off by the FPC.<sup>2</sup>

### 9.2 Assessment Meetings

There are 3 stages to the Assessment Process:

#### Stage 1 – Establishing a Prima Facie Case

- Each member of the FPC reviews each application against the Development Framework for Faculty to determine if a prima facie<sup>3</sup> case has been established.
- A prima facie case is not established if the candidate fails to provide evidence, in the round, of meeting the standard required for promotion to the appropriate grade.

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<sup>2</sup> Members of the Committee on research sabbatical or absent due to circumstances such as illness etc. will not be required to contribute to the decision.

<sup>3</sup> A prima facie case will exist, *if following consultation, the FPC decides that the body of evidence across the promotion criteria merits further assessment.*

- The purpose of the prima facie test is to exclude a candidate who, in the view of the FPC, has failed to meet the satisfactory standard in one or more dimension or where it is the view of the FPC that the candidate has not provided evidence in the aggregate of meeting the standard required for promotion to the appropriate grade.
- If a prima facie case is established, a candidate should not assume that satisfactory external assessors reports are all that is required to assure promotion. The FPC may use external assessor reports to receive assurance of particular excellence in one area which would on aggregate bring the candidate above the standard required for promotion to the appropriate grade.
- Following consideration by the full committee, a collective decision is made on whether the candidate provided sufficient evidence in their application to establish a prima facie case.
- Where the FPC determines that a candidate has not established a prima facie case, a member of the FPC prepares a draft feedback report for consideration and approval by the FPC at its next scheduled meeting. This report should include a clear rationale for the decision. Candidates are encouraged to consider this feedback with their Head of School and discuss how they may be supported to further develop their profile.
- When the feedback report is agreed, the report along with the candidate's application and the FPC's recommendation is forwarded to the President for decision.

### **Stage 2 – Applications are forwarded to External Assessors**

Where the FPC is satisfied that a prima facie case for promotion has been established, applications are forwarded to selected External Assessors. The establishment of a prima facie case does not guarantee that an application will be successful.

### **Process for obtaining External Assessor Reports**

In relation to the consideration and selection of external assessors, members of the FPC (in pairs):

- Are assigned a number of applications;
- Review the list of nominated external assessors provided by the candidate and Head of School/College Principal.
- Agree a ranked list of external assessors for recommendation to the full FPC.

The FPC agrees a ranked list of External Assessors from the list of nominees. The FPC reserves the right to exclude External Assessors. External Assessors may not be selected by the FPC e.g. where:

- The External Assessor is not at the correct level i.e. Full Professor or in the case of applications for promotion to Associate Professor, Professor;
- There is little or no geographical spread;
- There is insufficient gender representation;
- Where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest that has not been addressed satisfactorily by the nominator

It is possible that all of a candidate's nominees could be excluded due to a combination of the above reasons.

HR contacts the selected External Assessors in order of ranking by the FPC. Where necessary, HR moves to the next selected external assessor on the list until the requisite number of reports have been received;

The application is forwarded to the FPC for assessment when the requisite number of External Assessor reports is received.

Where an External Assessor indicates a conflict of interest (as outlined in the Conflict of Interest guidelines), the FPC will consider whether the External Assessor's report should be excluded, and additional reports obtained.

Where an External Assessor does not respond to the invitation to act or indicates that they are unable to provide a report, HR contacts the next External Assessor as selected and ranked by the FPC.

If, for any reason, more than the requisite number of reports is submitted to HR, (for example, when an External Assessor does not respond to an invitation to act but subsequently provides a report) HR forwards the external assessor reports to the FPC in the ranked order as agreed by the FPC.

Assessors who do not respond to the invitation to act are advised that their participation is no longer required following the President's decision.

Where the FPC seeks additional assessors' reports, the application will be considered at the first opportunity when the additional reports are available.

### **Stage 3. Assessment of Applications following receipt of the required number of External Assessor reports.**

When the required number of External Assessor reports are received the FPC fully reassesses the evidence provided in each application including the Development Workspace and the external assessors' reports against the Development Framework for Faculty, to determine if, in its opinion, the candidate has provided sufficient evidence for promotion to the required level.

The Chair selects a member of the FPC to initiate the discussion on the assessment of each application. The FPC determines if a candidate has provided sufficient evidence for promotion to the required level.

A member of the FPC prepares a feedback report on a candidate's application for consideration and approval by the FPC at its next scheduled meeting. The report should include a clear rationale for the decision and where appropriate outline any areas of note for special mention.

In the case of unsuccessful applications, the report should also outline what actions the candidate might take to ensure that a subsequent application would have a higher likelihood

of success. The feedback should provide a broadly indicative timeframe for achieving these actions.

When the feedback report is agreed, the FPC will finalise the list of recommendations to be forwarded to the President for approval.

## 10 Conclusion of the Process

Following the conclusion of the process:

- The names of candidates recommended for promotion by the FPC are forwarded to the President for approval.
- The FPC considers any observations made by the President and engages in dialogue with the President where necessary to ensure all relevant aspects of each application have been taken into account and addressed in the feedback. Candidates are informed in writing of the decision in respect of their application and the reason/s for that decision.
- A candidate who requires copies of their External Assessors reports should contact the Freedom of Information Office.
- All other documentation in relation to a candidate's application is available from the Promotions & Grading Office, on request.
- College Principals and Heads of Schools are informed of the outcome of the assessment process and are provided with a copy of the feedback report in relation to candidates from their School/College.
- The HR Leadership Team and the relevant HRP is informed of the outcome but are not provided with the feedback report
- All candidates are given written feedback on their application. In cases where a candidate's application for promotion has been unsuccessful they are given the opportunity for oral feedback by the Chairperson, or nominee, and one other member of the FPC. Normally, the member of the FPC who drafts the feedback report also provides oral feedback to the candidate with the Chair or his nominee.
- Following oral feedback, a short note of the oral feedback is drafted and retained as a record of the meeting. The note is sent to the candidate for their review and agreement following the oral feedback meeting.
- UMT is notified of successful candidates as an item of routine business.
- A list of promoted candidates is forwarded to the Governing Authority and Academic Council, at the final meeting of the calendar for noting.
- External Assessors are advised of the outcome for the candidate for whom they provided a reference.
- External Assessors who were available to give assessments but were not required will be informed that their assessment was not required but will not be informed of the outcome.
- The effective date of promotion is the date when the FPC's recommendation for promotion is approved by the President.

## 11 Notes and records

Each member of the FPC is expected to make notes in relation to their assessment of each application.

Notes should be impersonal, factual and clear as to the comment being made. They should not compare candidates but should reference back to the Development Framework for Faculty or to statements made by the candidate, the Head of School, College Principal, or External Assessors.

. Notes and relevant minutes are available to candidates on request following the conclusion of the process including written and oral feedback.

External assessor's reports are provided in confidence (within the framework of FOI legislation) and as such are retained by HR and candidates may apply for them under FOI.

Individual notes are held by HR for a minimum of 12 months

## 12 Incomplete applications

It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure that a complete application for promotion is submitted to the FPC via InfoHub. The FPC will not assess incomplete applications.

## 13 Reapplications

Repeat applications are assessed and determined on the same basis as first applications. Candidates must ensure that they include evidence of how they have addressed the feedback given following their previous submission.

The Head of School and College Principal commentaries should comment on whether the candidate has addressed the previous feedback.

The Feedback letter(s) provided to the candidate on their previous submission is reviewed by the FPC as part of its consideration.

Where a previously unsuccessful candidate reapplies for promotion the assessor reports from the previous application cannot be resubmitted.

## 14 Appeals Process

Unsuccessful candidates may appeal against a promotion decision an alleged failure by FPC to observe due process, which is defined below, can be demonstrated:

- Failure to follow in due manner University policy and procedures for the consideration of applications for promotion. All University policies and procedures are subject to statutory/anti-discriminatory requirements;
- Denial of natural justice;
- Unfair or unreasonable application of the criteria for the granting of promotions.

An appeal is only considered by the FPAC after the candidate has attended for oral feedback. Appeals must be lodged with the University no later than sixty days following the meeting at which oral feedback is provided.

Procedures for the Appeals process to be further developed.

For information on the Appeals process, see Section 18 of the Faculty Promotion Policy.