

## Promotions Q&A

**Q: Is there a definite time in a role before promotion could be anticipated?**

A: It would be unusual for someone to apply for promotion in the first year of post, from two aspects in particular. Firstly, the post into which they have been appointed would have been advertised at the grade that matches the content and requirements of the role and it would be unusual that these would change so soon. Secondly, the individual occupying the post would need to demonstrate their ability, through the post they are occupying, to work at a level that is both higher and required by the school. So there is no definitive time but sooner than one year would be highly unusual.

**Q: How does an individual know he/she is ready for promotion?**

A: The Green Book identifies the assessment standards required for each grade p31, and gives indicative examples at each level, pp 32-35. An individual should first review these and do a self-assessment. If s/he feels ready to apply, sharing the self-assessment with, and seeking the view of, a relevant person such as a mentor, appraiser, associate dean, head of department, etc. would help establish if the time is right or if a later time, having focussed on areas in which the individual is less strong/experienced, would be a better plan.

**Q: What are the different aspects of a more senior role?**

A: The indicative examples in the Green Book, pp 32-35 provide a steer to the different expectations.

**Q: Have you got some advice on how to apply for promotion when you are on a part time academic contract?**

**Q: How should applicants on less than 1.0 FTE indicate this in their application, and how will this be taken into account by the promotions committees?**

A: Part-time status should be taken into account by the Promotions Committee. The principle is that level of performance should remain at the appropriate level, but volume will be taken into account pro-rata to the individual's fte.

Guidance has been circulated to Heads of School so it is available to each of the promotions committees.

A: The academic promotions template has been adjusted for 2015/16 onwards to ask applicants to state whether they are part time, and for part FTE adjustments in the relevant period. This appears as 1.10 in the template and the supporting Guidance. Applicants may also wish to re-iterate this in their supporting statement in 1.12.

**Q: Is it a good idea, for example, to do the maths for the promotion committee members so that it's clear how much one would have achieved, if on a full time contract, or is it enough to mention that you are on part-time contract?**

A key aspect of determining appropriate workload is to have an agreed workload allocation for each member of academic staff, which of itself will provide definitive percentages of time for each activity. Where these do not already exist in a school they are being worked upon.

**Q: Could there be a 'buddying' system put in place for those wishing to apply for promotion?**

A: Yes, schools can work on this. In addition those who have any form of line or supervisory management (e.g. associate deans, mentors, appraisers, department heads) should be able to offer guidance and support.

**Q: The Green Book is not useful at all, are there any plans to update guidance?**

A: The Green Book provides guidance on timing, documentation, process, promotion committee make up and purpose, examples in each of the domains to help individuals identify relevant content, assessment standards, indicative examples of each of the assessment standards in each of the domains, guidance to probationers, etc. It would therefore be surprising if it was not helpful at all, but as this question has been asked the questioner may find it useful to share with his/her relevant HR manager the aspects they find have not been helpful to them, or any specific queries.

**Q: The guidance to completing an application for promotion form is that activities mentioned should be in the past, and not in the future (ie. aspirational). How strictly is this requirement adhered to when evaluating applications?**

A: Pretty strictly. It is recognised that some activities will be ongoing but the assessment is for current attainment and not projected attainment. This is important to ensure reward is given for things already successfully undertaken, and not for things which may not work out as planned, and to avoid 'double counting' if an individual were to receive reward for something already taken into account in a past application.

**Q: How are activities which benefit the organisation but are not related to teaching, research or to E or E (such as serving on promotions, space, IT, library or Athena Swan committees) recognised when applying for promotion?**

**Q: Some school roles do not naturally fall into any of the suggested categories with the Green Book, i.e. Athena SWAN. How will these roles be recognised in the promotions process?**

A: Applicants are encouraged to mention these roles in section 1.12 which provides an overview. Membership itself will not be rewarded, so applicants should detail the part s/he has played in the committee, and in adding value to the outcome of the work of the committee. Thought should also be given to any link to the existing domains of Teaching, Research and E&E, for example E&E may come into effect through internal or external dissemination of work undertaken as part of the individual's committee work.

The current review of the promotions process and Green Book will be reviewing this aspect to ensure applicants feel there is sufficient opportunity to detail aspects which may sit outside the domains of Teaching, Research and E&E.

**Q: Does teaching or assessing on Masters courses for FMH count as 'enterprise'?**

A: Masters courses would be included in the Teaching section of the form, for example the Academic Promotions Template Guidance, available on the HR website, refers directly to Masters courses in sections 4.1.

If as a result of teaching or assessing on Masters Courses you engage in enterprise with the external community this could also be reflected in the enterprise section but cases will vary so it is best to seek guidance from the appropriate Associate Dean.

**Q: Given that the application form is supposed to relate to the previous 5-year period, and that people's teaching activity may vary widely over such a period (e.g. not teaching at all in some years, and teaching a lot on others), how should this be reflected in the table about teaching activity on the application form?**

A: It is recommended that applicants state their current teaching activity on the grid, and if this has changed substantially over the period it is acceptable to duplicate the blank grid and complete it for previous years, clearly marked with the relevant period, along with some text to explain why there is such a difference.

**Q: How should development, updating and delivery of online material be reflected in the teaching activity part of the form, and how is this evaluated relative to 'face to face' teaching?**

A: These aspects are most appropriately placed in sections 4.4 (Evidence of Teaching Quality) and 4.7 (Teaching Portfolio) of the academic promotions template, regardless of contact teaching activity or online teaching activity. Details of information to be included in these sections are provided in the Academic Promotions Template Guidance document available on the HR website.

**Q: With regard to the appeals process, how do you go about ensuring parity across different Schools and Faculties?**

A: The same processes, in line with the Green Book, are applied across each School and Faculty, as follows:

For cases of promotions or awards (incremental or discretionary), when a case is not supported by the School Promotions Committee (SPC) the individual is informed and is then able, should s/he wish, to provide a personal submission to HR which is presented directly to the Faculty Promotions Committee.

For cases of confirmation of appointment, at the start of the fifth and final year of probation the case is considered by the SPC. If it is not supported it is still forwarded for consideration by the Faculty Promotions Committee (FPC) with an explanatory cover letter from the head of school identifying where the case has not met the required levels of attainment. If the case is also not supported by the FPC it is considered by the University Promotions Committee (UPC) where a definitive

decision is made. If the case for confirmation of appointment is not supported and the individual is given notice of termination of employment s/he has a right to appeal the decision and the process is as described in Appendix E of the Green Book.

**Q: How can an applicant optimise the presentation of their achievements within the application form? How are achievements verified?**

A: Including clear information on attainment, progress and added value are key elements of a well presented application. An application that is too wordy and descriptive can detract from this so consider how best to make the point while ensuring relevant information is included. Use of appendices B and C of the Green Book will help in identify examples of work you may undertake relevant to each of the domains of teaching, research and E&E.

Achievements may be verified by inclusion of appropriate supporting documentation in the portfolio (with reference to the document in the appropriate section of the template), or via the appropriate person e.g. Associate Dean/department head at the SPC, or via the Head of School making the case at the FPC.

**Q: How important is the portfolio and what are the most important things to include?**

A: The portfolio is not routinely taken into the committee meetings. However, it is an important reference document for use by the HoS when s/he reviews the cases prior to the SPC, in that it provides additional information should the HoS need to refer to it, and the HoS may choose to take it into the SPC meeting if s/he thinks it will be useful to do so.

Full guidance on the content of the portfolio is provided in the Academic Promotions Template Guidance provided on the HR website, in section 4.7.

**Q: How are decisions made?**

A: By assessing the case presented by the member of academic staff in the form of a completed Academic Promotions Template against the attainment standards required for confirmation of appointment or promotion or awards (accelerated increments or discretionary awards), as stated on p31 of the Green Book.

There are three levels of promotions committees, School (SPC), Faculty (FPC) and University (UPC), at which cases are considered as above.

SPC Consideration:

The SPC assesses the case presented by the member of academic staff in the form of a completed Academic Promotions Template. It is usual for someone to present the case to the SPC, for example the Departmental Head of the individual seeking the award.

Thereafter, *for cases of promotion or awards*, where a case is supported by the SPC the template is sent to HR, accompanied by a Head of School statement, to be considered by the FPC.

When a case is not supported by the SPC the individual is informed and is then able, should s/he wish, to provide a personal submission to HR which is presented directly to the FPC.

*Cases of confirmation of appointment* are considered by the SPC at the start of the final year of probation. If the case is not supported it is still forwarded for consideration by the Faculty Promotions Committee (FPC) with an explanatory cover letter from the Head of School identifying where the case has not met the required levels of attainment.

#### FPC Consideration:

At the FPC the Head of School (or delegate) presents each case from his/her own area, and the committee assesses the template.

Where the FPC supports any case it is reported to the UPC and not considered further unless a member of that committee wishes it to be.

*For cases of confirmation of appointment* if the case is not supported by the FPC it is referred for consideration by the UPC.

*For cases of promotion* if the case is not supported by the FPC it is referred for consideration by the UPC.

*For cases of awards (special increment/discretionary)* the decision of the FPC is final so cases that are not supported do not go on for UPC consideration.

#### UPC Consideration:

Cases passed up for UPC, as stated above, are considered by UPC where a definitive decision is made.

If the *case for confirmation of appointment* is not supported the usual outcome will be for the individual to be given notice of termination of employment.

In exceptional circumstances a decision to defer consideration to a future meeting falling within the probationary period may be taken.

If a *case for promotion* is not supported the UPC decision is final.

**Q: Given that the current MED research strategy involves recruiting a greater number of junior staff to improve the profile of junior staff in the school – what will be the policy for promotion of senior staff to chairs? Will it be worthwhile senior staff applying for promotion to chair if there are so many existing professors in the Medical School?’**

A: Yes, this remains unaffected.