



| Version | Approved by | Approval date | Effective date | Next full review |
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| 3.1 | Vice-Chancellor and President | 29 April 2024 | 29 April 2024 | February 2027 |
| Policy Statement | | | | |
| Purpose | | This policy details how academic staff who can demonstrate sustained excellence in contributing to UNSW through research, education, collegiality, engagement and/or leadership may be promoted. | | |
| Scope | | All academic staff eligible to apply for promotion. | | |
| Policy Provisions | | | | |

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The academic promotions system aims to recognise and reward sustained achievements and contributions to the UNSW Strategy, rather than just to recognise the talent of individual staff. Appointments made on the basis of talent and the level of appointments should align with the standards set in promotions. The titles associated with each promotion also serves to indicate staff who have the right stature and experience to be able to serve effectively in leadership and mentoring roles of increasing importance and complexity.
- 1.2. As academic staff progress through the promotion levels there is an expectation that:
 - there will be an increase in the quality and impact of their core research outputs and/or core educational practices
 - their contributions and service within the UNSW community will further enhance collegiality
 - their engagement with, and contribution to, their discipline will increase
 - they will demonstrate increasing leadership within the University, nationally and internationally
 - their engagement with the social justice, thought leadership, knowledge transfer, partnership and global impact agendas of the UNSW strategy will expand and
 - they will contribute to society via: the generation and dissemination of knowledge; and through partnerships and activities, that might include innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation, support for industry, companies, non-profit organisations, and others who are capable of transforming society for the better.

2. Principles

2.1. The *Academic Promotions Policy* is designed to align with the vision and priorities set out in UNSW's Strategy. In pursuing these objectives, all staff are expected to demonstrate the following values:

- Excellence – integrity, professionalism, transparency and ethical decision making, inspiring openness, courage and trust
- Respect – listening to and engaging with each other and with our communities
- Embracing Diversity – promoting inclusion and valuing the contribution of all people
- Collaboration – working in teams and collaborating to best serve our communities and
- Innovations – creativity and implementing improvements.

Further information on the values and behaviours we expect in our staff can be found at:

<https://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/services/peopleandculture/UNSWBehaviours.html>.

2.2. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Quality (for promotions up to the level of Associate Professor) and the Vice-Chancellor (for promotion to the level of Professor) will ensure that all applicants recommended for promotion have worked in a way that is consistent with the values of the University and that they have adhered at all times to the University's *Code of Conduct*.

2.3. Academic promotion is based solely on the merit of the case presented.

2.4. Assessment of applications for promotion is made by a committee of peers through a process designed to enable a fair and consistent application of standards. Important documents including Faculty specific guidelines and guidelines for Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants for Promotion can be found on the [HR Hub](#).

2.5. The University is committed to the principles of equity and a process conducted in a manner that upholds the principles of fairness and is free from direct and indirect discrimination.

3. Eligibility

3.1. A promotion round will normally be conducted every year for all four promotion levels (Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor).

3.2. The Chief Human Resources Officer will submit an annual Academic Promotion Timetable to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Quality for approval. The timetable for academic promotion will be available on the HR Hub at:

- 3.3. Applicants should refer to the section on Approvals and Effective Dates of Promotion in the *Academic Promotions Procedure* for details regarding the effective dates of promotion. Applicants have a responsibility to be aware of the eligibility criteria before submitting an application.
- 3.4. For a promotion committee to be able to assess an applicant's case for sustained performance the applicant would need to have served at least two years at their current level since the effective date of their last promotion or appointment at UNSW. This means in effect that an applicant will be in their third year of their current level before being eligible to submit an application for promotion to the next level.
- 3.5. An exemption to this two year rule may under special circumstances be granted by the University's Out of Rounds Promotion Committee. The dean of the relevant faculty will be required to submit a case to the Out of Rounds Promotion Committee as to why an exemption should be granted. A case for an exemption should be submitted to the University's Out of Rounds Committee before the official submission date for applications (refer to the Out of Rounds Policy on the [HR Hub](#)).
- 3.6. Unsuccessful applicants may not re-apply in the year following an unsuccessful application but may re-apply in the subsequent year.
- 3.7. Each application for promotion is considered on its own merits – the outcome of any previous applications for promotion has no relevance in a current promotion round. Section 4 of the [Academic Promotions Procedure](#) provides guidance regarding content to submit in your application.
- 3.8. Any academic staff member who has provided notice of their resignation, retirement or has entered into a pre-retirement contract or whose position has been made redundant by UNSW, including by voluntary redundancy, will be ineligible to apply for promotion.
- 3.9. Late academic promotion applications (after the published deadlines) will not be accepted.

4. Definitions

Three performance category definitions apply for the purpose of this policy and the Academic Promotions Procedure:

- 4.1. **Acceptable performance** – performance at a standard that is expected at the current level of appointment.
- 4.2. **Superior performance** – performance clearly within the standard expected at the level above the current level of appointment.
- 4.3. **Excellent performance** – performance well above the midpoint of the standard expected at the level above current level of appointment.

For each of these categories, performance at a particular level will be assessed by consideration of:

- (a) comparison of the performance of the applicant with that expected of a member of the academic staff in like disciplines in universities matching the strategic aspiration of UNSW; and
- (b) overall performance sustained over a number of years and recent trajectory.

4.4. Relative to Opportunity Performance Evaluation

In line with UNSW's commitment to providing opportunities for all staff irrespective of their personal circumstances and recognising that a pattern of full-time work and uninterrupted linear careers does not match the profile of many staff, the principle of performance relative to opportunity will be taken into consideration in the promotion procedure. Such an approach acknowledges what has been achieved by an applicant, given the opportunities that have been available to them. It is important to note that candidates are assessed individually and not on a head-to-head comparative basis with other individuals.

In making their assessment, promotion committees will take into account any information provided on the circumstances related to a staff member's achievements. Nevertheless, it is also acknowledged that the promotion committee has a responsibility to ensure that globally relevant academic performance standards have been met by all applicants who are awarded promotion to a particular level.

Circumstances where the principle of performance relative to opportunity may be relevant include:

- ill health, disability or misadventure
- caring responsibilities
- part-time or flexible working arrangements
- parental leave and
- the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters.

However, specific career strategies such as different balances of research, teaching and engagement are considered separately and not under Relative to Opportunity Performance Evaluation (ROPE).

5. Criteria for academic promotion

- 5.1. The application will be assessed on a portfolio of evidence presented by the applicant describing their performance in each of up to three pillars of academic performance:

- Research
- Education and
- Collegiality, Engagement and Leadership.

- 5.2. In many instances, applicants will have made some contribution under each of the three pillars of academic performance. However, applicants may also be promoted on the basis of an impressive contribution in any two of the three pillars of academic performance.
- 5.3. In terms of research performance there is an expectation that the applicant's research performance in their discipline will be consistent with that expected amongst the top universities in Australia.
- 5.4. In terms of contributions to Collegiality, Engagement and Leadership the applicant must demonstrate how their contributions have added value to the institution, to the discipline, sector or community in the context of UNSW's Strategy.
- 5.5. Applicants for promotion at all levels should highlight any leadership contributions they have made. Particularly for the higher levels of promotion (Level D and Level E), there is a requirement for increasing external recognition and demonstrated leadership in the discipline extending beyond UNSW.
- 5.6. In assessing a case for promotion, promotion committees will focus first on the achievements since the applicant's last promotion or current appointment at UNSW. Total career performance (including at other institutions) is also taken into account.
- 5.7. Where appropriate, present quantifiable evidence to support their claims for promotion, for example, a graphical representation of research productivity or some measure of research quality over time.
- 5.8. Evidence should be provided to substantiate claims of the quality and impact of the contributions made.
- 5.9. In all three areas, applicants are encouraged to focus on two or three characteristic examples that best illustrate what they have achieved and its impact rather than catalogue every possible example.
- 5.10. Contributions to Honours supervision, the supervision of Masters coursework student projects, guest lectures, and contributions to tutorials or practical classes for coursework students should be listed as teaching achievements. But the supervision of Higher Degree Research (HDR) students and Post-doctoral trainee supervision (which is a key determinant of the quality of 'research focussed' and 'research and teaching' staff achievements but not 'education focussed' staff) should be listed among the research achievements.
- 5.11. Applicants should appropriately cross-reference linkages in the application rather than repeat evidence.
- 5.12. **Specific Standards of Contribution**

Applicants should refer to Schedule 3 of the [UNSW \(Academic Staff\) Enterprise Agreement \(2023\)](#) which specifies position classification standards.

The Academic Expectations Framework may also be helpful for an understanding of performance expectations for each level of promotion.

6. Principles of assessment against each of the pillars of academic performance

- 6.1. The University acknowledges that academic staff make important and valuable contributions across the three key pillars of academic performance, namely Research, Education and Collegiality, Engagement and Leadership.
- 6.2. The process of promotion is fundamentally based upon peer review of performance. The peers include the Head of School, the Referees, the Faculty Promotion Committee and, for promotion to Associate Professor and Professor, the University Promotion Committee.
- 6.3. The process is designed to allow a holistic judgement as to whether the portfolio of performance justifies promotion within UNSW. Performance with respect to the three pillars of Education, Research, Collegiality, Engagement and Leadership will be considered against expectations of both the academic level and the balance of the individual's responsibilities.
- 6.4. The University recognises that there are academic staff members who specialise in one of these academic performance pillars and make excellent contributions in this specific area along with other valuable contributions in some of the other key areas while there are also other academic staff members who make superior contributions across all three key areas of academic performance.
- 6.5. The University's academic promotions policy provides a pathway for all academic staff to be able to apply for promotion with consideration to the contributions that they have made in the relevant pillars within the context of their current academic position.
- 6.6. In each of the 3 areas for assessment (Education, Research, Collegiality, Engagement and Leadership), performance will be assessed as "acceptable", "superior" or "excellent".

6.7. Academic Promotion Pathways

An applicant can be recommended for promotion to a higher academic level by meeting eligibility, University values and behaviours via any of the pathways outlined below;

- Demonstration of a sustained Excellent level of performance in any one of the academic pillars along with a sustained Superior level of performance in either of the other two academic pillars
- Demonstration of a sustained Excellent level of performance in any one of the academic pillars along with a sustained Acceptable level of performance in the other two academic pillars
- Demonstration of a sustained Superior level of performance across all three pillars of academic performance.

| Accountabilities | | | | |
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| Responsible Officer | | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality | | |
| Contact Officer | | Manager, Academic Promotions | | |
| Supporting Information | | | | |
| Legislative Compliance | | This Policy supports the University's compliance with the following legislation: Nil | | |
| Supporting Documents | | Academic Promotions Procedure Promotion Forms Academic Promotion Toolkit Academic Performance Expectations Application of achievement relative to opportunity and performance evidence in academic promotions. | | |
| Related Documents | | Code of Conduct | | |
| Superseded Documents | | Academic Promotions Policy, v2.4 | | |
| File Number | | 2017/21852 | | |
| Definitions and Acronyms | | | | |
| Refer to Section 4 | | | | |
| Revision History | | | | |
| Version | Approved by | Approval date | Effective date | Sections modified |
| 1.0 | President and Vice-Chancellor | 13 April 2017 | 13 April 2017 | Full review for 2017 |
| 1.1 | Administrative update by the Director of Governance | 20 April 2017 | 20 April 2017 | Update to Faculty Specific Guidelines section |
| 1.2 | Administrative update by the Director of Governance | 8 August 2017 | 15 August 2017 | Updated to remove Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor |
| 2.0 | President and Vice-Chancellor | 2 February 2018 | 2 February 2018 | Full review and separation of policy from procedure. |
| 2.1 | President and Vice-Chancellor | 13 March 2018 | 13 March 2018 | Updated Level D and Level E promotion criteria to include very strong Superior performance |
| 2.2 | President and Vice-Chancellor | 18 February 2020 | 18 February 2020 | Amendment to Section 2 to 6. |
| 2.3 | President and Vice-Chancellor | 8 February 2021 | 8 February 2021 | Updated the section on the Eligibility criteria. Clarification of the two year rule, exemptions to be approved by the university's Out of Rounds Promotion Committee and included a new clause which specified that academic staff who have entered into a pre-retirement contract or a redundancy arrangement are not eligible to apply for promotion. |

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| 2.4 | Vice-Chancellor | 23 February 2022 | 23 February 2022 | <p>Further clarification provided in the Eligibility criteria regarding the two year rule.</p> <p>Additional clause added in respect to the issue of exemptions from the two year rule, namely that an application for exemption should be submitted to the Out of Rounds Promotion Committee before the official submission date for applications</p> |
| 3.0 | Vice-Chancellor and President | 9 November 2023 | 1 January 2024 | <p>Inclusion of a statement of purpose.</p> <p>Removed duplication of content.</p> <p>Revision of third pillar including term 'collegiality' to emphasise the importance of contributions to colleagues at UNSW.</p> <p>Principles of assessment have been amended including the use of terminology rather than points.</p> <p>Updated references to UNSW's Strategy and the <i>UNSW (Academic Staff) Enterprise Agreement (2023)</i>.</p> <p>Revised logical ordering of eligibility clauses.</p> |
| 3.1 | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality | 29 April 2024 | 29 April 2024 | <p>Minor change including reference to guidelines for Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants for Promotion in section 2.4.</p> |