



Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Next full review
2.3	President and Vice-Chancellor	8 February 2021	8 February 2021	
Policy Statement				
Purpose	This policy details how academic staff who can demonstrate sustained excellence in contributing to UNSW through research, education, social engagement, global impact and leadership may be promoted.			
Scope	All academic staff eligible to apply for promotion			
Policy Provisions				

1. Introduction

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 engagement with, and contribution to, their discipline will increase;
- they will demonstrate increasing leadership within the University, nationally and internationally; and
- their engagement with the social justice, thought leadership, knowledge transfer, partnership and global impact agendas of the UNSW strategy will expand.

2. Principles

The *Academic Promotions Policy* is designed to align with the vision and priorities set out in the UNSW 2025 Strategy. In pursuing these objectives, all staff are expected to demonstrate the following values:

- 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; and
- Collaboration – working in teams and collaborating to best serve our communities
- 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>.

The values underpin EXCELLENCE which is the main driver for all that we do.

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic & Student Life (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*. This assessment will normally be based on advice from the Head of School and Dean.
- Academic promotion is based solely on the merit of the case presented.
- 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.
- 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.

- At all levels of promotion, the University may take into consideration performance and disciplinary matters before approving a promotion.

3. Eligibility

- A promotion round will normally be conducted every year for all four promotion levels (Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor).
- 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.
- 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.
- An exemption to this two year rule may 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.
- Unsuccessful applicants are required to wait for two years before submitting a further application.
- An exemption to this two year rule for an unsuccessful applicant may 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.
- 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.
- Any academic staff member who has provided notice of their resignation, retirement or has entered into a pre-retirement contract or has accepted redundancy from UNSW, including voluntary redundancy, will be ineligible to apply for promotion.
- The Chief Human Resources Officer will submit an annual Academic Promotion Timetable to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic & Student Life for approval. The timetable for academic promotion will be available on the HR Hub at: <https://unsw.sharepoint.com/sites/unsw-capability-development/SitePages/AcademicPromotion.aspx>.
- Late academic promotion applications (after the published deadlines) will not be accepted.
- Academic staff may, under special circumstances, be promoted via the Out-of-Rounds promotion mechanism (refer to the Out-of-Rounds web link).

4. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy.

There are 3 categories of performance referred to in the documentation:

1. **Current performance (C)** – performance at a standard that is expected at the current level of appointment (1 point).
2. **Superior performance (S u p)** – performance clearly within the standard expected at the level above the current level of appointment (2 points).
3. **Outstanding performance (O u t)** – performance well above the midpoint of the standard expected at the level above current level of appointment (3 points).

For each of these categories, performance at a particular level will reflect:

- (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.

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 the tradition of full-time work and uninterrupted linear careers no longer matches 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 assessments 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; and
- parental leave
- 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

- 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
 - Social Engagement and Leadership.
- 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.
- 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.
- In terms of contributions to Social 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 the UNSW 2025 Strategy.
- 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.
- 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). The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate a case of sustained performance to the level of promotion applied for.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to 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.
- Evidence should be provided to substantiate claims of the quality and impact of the contributions made.
- 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.

- Contributions to Honours supervision, the supervision of Masters coursework student projects, and 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 & teaching staff achievements but not education focussed staff) should be listed among the research achievements.
- Applicants should appropriately cross-reference linkages in the application rather than repeat evidence.

Specific Standards of Contribution

Applicants should refer to Schedule 3 of the *UNSW (Academic Staff) Enterprise Agreement (2018)* which specifies position classification standards.

The Academic Expectations Framework may also be helpful:

<https://unsw.sharepoint.com/sites/academic-excellence-exec/SitePages/Academic-Expectations-Framework-Tool.aspx>

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

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.

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, Social Engagement & Leadership will be considered against expectations of both the academic level and the balance of the individual's responsibilities.

The promotion process should neither favour nor disadvantage individuals who have a balanced Education, Research, Social Engagement & Leadership portfolio compared with those who are primarily focused in one or two areas. The process will assess performance in each of the three pillars and make a determination adjusted for academic level for Education, Research, Social Engagement & Leadership and assign one of 3 determinations:

- In each of the 3 areas for assessment (Education, Research, Social Engagement & Leadership), performance will be assessed as "outstanding", "superior" "current" or "less than current".
- **Below current performance** – performing at a standard that is less than expected at the current level of appointment (0 points).
- **Current performance** – performance at a standard that is expected at the current level of appointment sustained over a number of years (1 point).
- **Superior performance** – sustained performance clearly within the standard expected at the level above the current level of appointment (2 points).
- **Outstanding performance** – sustained performance well above the midpoint of the standard expected at the level above current level of appointment (3 points).

Applicants may also be promoted on the basis of an outstanding contribution in any two of the three pillars of academic performance. Applications will be considered as a whole and outstanding performance in one pillar can be balanced against a lower performance in another.

Expected levels of performance reflect both performance over a number of years and recent trajectory.

For a promotion to both Level B and Level C to be successful, an applicant must amass at least 6 points. This can be achieved by a combination of the following:

1. by achieving at least a superior rating in all three areas (2+2+2=6);
2. by achieving an outstanding rating in at least two areas (3+3=6);
3. by achieving an outstanding rating in one area, a superior rating in one area and a current rating in

the third area (3+2+1=6).

For promotion to leadership levels at UNSW (Level D and Level E), an applicant must have visibly demonstrated excellence at a local, national or international level. This will typically be achieved by obtaining an **Outstanding** rating for performance (3 points) in at least one of the three pillars and a total of 6 or more points. It should, however, be noted that promotion involves an holistic judgement, so that some candidates who are able to demonstrate unequivocal excellence by a very strong **Superior** performance across all three pillars may also be promoted. Such cases must be carefully documented.

Accountabilities				
Responsible Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic & Student Life			
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, v2.2			
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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