

# Academic Promotion Criteria

**School/ Directorate**

School of Education and Social Work

**Person Responsible**

Tim Kelly

**Created**

15th October, 2019

**Last Review**

2nd March, 2020

**Status**

Complete

**Next Review**

31st March, 2021

## Screening Data

What is the name/title of the policy/activity?

Academic Promotion Framework

Describe the aim, objective and intended consequences of the policy/activity.

The aim of the document is to provide guidance on the promotion process for academics, providing advice on the process, the criteria and the requirements of applicants in terms of the types of activity they will need to evidence to succeed.

Who is responsible for the policy/activity and who implements it?

The Framework is being developed by the Deans Group and is the responsibility of the VP for Academic Planning and Performance

Who is effected by this policy?

The Framework will benefit all academics who wish to apply for promotion and those who participate in the decisions taken to promote individuals, or otherwise.

Is there any indication that this policy is relevant to equality and the protected characteristics or that those with any of the protected characteristics will have a different experience in relation to the intended outcomes of the policy?

There is relevance to equality, diversity and inclusion because currently there is an indication of gaps in the numbers of individuals applying for promotion from the protected groups and succeeding in the process. In addition there are regularly comments from academic staff about lack of clarity in what is required for the process. Coming from the review process and the local joint committee with trade unions, there is a collective sense of lack of clarity in the current criteria.

Shortage of applicants from some of the protected groups is reflected in application for promotion data, as are the success rates. The feedback on lack of understanding of the promotion process is evidenced from the staff survey and also from feedback provided to staff networks (BME) and to individual School management teams.

## Recommend this EA for Full Analysis?

Yes

## Comments

The Framework is developed to provide clarity for academic staff in the promotion process. It is relevant to E, D & I, because data already shows low success rates in the existing process amongst BME staff and low levels of applications from women generally. It also touches every academic and has relevance to the individual perceptions about the transparency of the process. This is particularly relevant to those from under represented groups because of the expectation of discrimination as a societal norm.

## Rate this EA

High

## Impact Assessment Data

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Age?

- Yes

In relation to age there is an expectation of an academic having attained certain requirements ahead of the promotion application. This would imply indirectly a requirement of reaching a certain age before promotion is expected. This is acceptable in the career trajectory of academics provided the criteria is legitimate and adequately shows the ability to meet the requirements of each role. In relation to research and scholarship there is a requirement for at least three outputs over six years. This is a direct requirement of the Research Excellence Framework.

In the introduction, the word 'sustained' is used for each of the levels on the 4 point scale. This term implies a period of time, however it is not defined and would have to be justified in order to not result in unlawful age discrimination

In this instance, 'sustained' is defined as , 'To keep or maintain at the proper level standard or rate, to maintain or continue with .... or to keep up without intermission' - OED definition of 'sustained'.

It is important for equity that this is not reviewed simply through a looking glass of age equating to knowledge or suitability.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Disability?

- Yes

It is relevant in so far as there will be those who require reasonable adjustments throughout their employment to overcome barriers because of a disability. However it is not specifically mentioned in this set of criteria because it is taken account of in the wider policy (The Academic and Research Promotion Procedure - A&RPP) and in particular in the area concerning mitigating circumstances.

The criteria in themselves are not detrimental.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Gender Reassignment?

- Yes

This would be relevant where an individual has had research publications in a previous name. There are matters about privacy that may have to be addressed in relation to this.

In addition there is evidence of health and wellbeing issues affecting staff who undergo, have undergone or are about to undergo transition. This may be affected positively or negatively, depending on the cultural environment in which the individual is working. These are also matters that need to be taken into account by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee and similar associated privacy rights.

If an individual has undergone surgical intervention for gender re-assignment, that may well be a legitimate mitigating circumstance, given the nature and impact of such surgeries.

To mitigate these issues, we should have the A&R Promotion Procedure , Section 2.6, updated to reflect a broader range of potential circumstances, including gender re-assignment.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership?

- Yes

The relevance is minor and only in terms of name changes and publication of papers, research etc. where there has been a name change due to marriage or civil partnership, or divorce. This is usually easily addressed and does not tend to pose any detriment to individuals.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Pregnancy and Maternity?

- Yes

One of the greatest areas of discrimination in employment and promotion is related to pregnancy and maternity. A recent Equality and Human Rights Commission Report highlighted the continued fear of women disclosing pregnancy to a prospective employer or when applying for promotion.

The University has a comprehensive set of employment policies relating to pregnancy and maternity which promote equality of opportunity.

The A&R Promotions Policy and guidance are explicit about supporting staff who are pregnant or caring for a young child during the statutory maternity period. Alerting staff to promotion rounds, training related to promotion, pregnancy keeping in touch days etc. would ensure the equality of opportunity around promotion.

The criteria in themselves are not detrimental and pregnancy and maternity is recognized in the guidance for mitigating circumstances.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Race?

- Yes

It is relevant to race. BME staff make up around 9.4% of the total staff of the university, with around 20% BME academics. In 2017/2018 around 9% of BME staff who applied were awarded their promotion. This is a 50% drop in the promotions in 2016/2017.

Around 8% of BME academics are in Grade 10 and this figure has remained static between 2015 and 2018.

Issues relating to the time it takes for BME academic staff to achieve promotion is raised regularly by the BME Staff Network and similarly the levels of fixed term, full time contracts are high within that group.

The promotion criteria must be clear in terms of the requirements and also the assessments of suitability for promotion, with balanced panels in terms of diversity, including from the BME community. This criteria is only one part of the A&R Promotions Policy and offers clarity of what is needed. Other areas of the policy cover aspects of the procedures for promotion.

The criteria also provides a wider range of indicators of excellence. This will help to overcome the potential bias or perceived bias of some of the indicators.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Religion and Belief?

- No

There should be no barriers based in the criteria that are detrimental to an individual because of their religion or belief.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sex?

- Yes

Yes - there is empirical evidence of women participating in more community and engagement related work, adding to their workload. Recent workshops and data has shown that women are less likely to automatically apply for promotion than men (7.8% applications from women by comparison to 11.6% men to promotion for Reader; 3.2% women compared to 6.2% men to Chair). Concern has long been expressed about the gender balance on Promotion Committees. The reality is that the Committees are all gender balanced and the challenge is the shortage of women Professors means they have a greater burden of commitment to the Promotion Panels. Evidence also shows women more likely to wait for longer before applying. The contract type in the University also leads to disparity. Until recently Teaching and Research contracts applied more widely to men and the promotion criteria appeared to favour more research based contribution, while Teaching and Scholarship contracts applied more widely to women, creating an automatic unintended difference of experience for women. A recent change in the contract types will help to resolve this.

Workshop responses have also indicated that women would like to be encouraged or advised by a line manager when they feel the women are ready for promotion. This is not happening widely across the University and leads to a disparity in applications.

The Criteria is clear about requirements and allows for evaluation of excellence across a wider range of activities,

including teaching and is not detrimental on the basis of gender. This is a positive step.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sexual Orientation?

- Yes

There is evidence of barriers facing LGBT staff and this is perceived to come through in the promotions process. In general the career progression for LGBT people is not as good as that for non LGBT people, but there is no current specific research in HE to understand this. The LGBT Staff Network has had approaches from members of staff who expressed concern about coming out in the workplace and this might imply a concern about the culture of the organization. The Stonewall Report LGBT Universities in Britain Report highlight that 20% of students in HE were encouraged by staff not to disclose their sexuality. This would appear to confirm cultural challenges for LGBT people in Universities and this is likely to apply to all aspects of the organization, including promotion. This Criteria makes clear to all the requirements of anyone applying for promotion and also removes any ambiguity in evaluating excellence and readiness for promotion. It is not influenced by sexual orientation, however a culture that is detrimental to LGBT people will undoubtedly impact on the decisions people take. The process and structures of the promotion process and committees is under the wider A&RPP. Tasks have been raised to review those.

Taking account of the findings so far, is there a possibility that the implementation of this policy would result in a different experience or a detriment for those with protected characteristics?

- Yes

Yes there would be a positive difference. It provides clarity of the criteria and does not link those criteria to specific characteristics, rather to the achievements of an individual. It is part of the wider Academic and Research Promotion Policy and there are elements of that wider policy that may need to be improved. However this criteria overall will have a positive impact on the University efforts to achieve equity in the promotion system.

Based on your findings so far, what recommendations or changes (if any) would you make in relation to the policy and how it is implemented?

Based on the assessment, this specific criteria does not require to be changed, however other parts of the A&R Promotion Policy may need to be enhanced, such as the Mitigating Circumstances guidance and Q & A

There are no further recommendations in relation to the criteria, however the wider policy should be reviewed for any change needed.

Where you have recommended actions/changes to the policy, what are the timescales for completion of these

10-02-2020

What monitoring arrangements do you have in place to identify changes in any impact or relevance?

The criteria should be monitored for any change in the numbers of applications across the protected groups. In addition, retrospective feedback could be obtained from those applying, to identify any concerns about the criteria specifically.

## Comments

The criteria is important for the protected groups. Feedback has been provided through staff networks and focus groups that there is a lack of clarity on the decisions around promotion. Having clear criteria removes some of the confusion and uncertainty about what is required.

It is recommended that the wider A & R Promotion Policy also be reviewed to ensure that there is clarity in the procedures for promotion and in particular the use of Mitigating Circumstances.

## Organisation Sign-off Data

Having read the EIA, do you approve its findings and recommendations?

Yes.

What are your reasons for approving/not approving the EIA?

The policy widens out the options for evidencing academic excellence beyond the narrow criteria previously used. It provides clarity to all.

If you have approved the EIA, do you agree with the monitoring arrangements in place?

- Yes

The monitoring will include the numbers of applications , broken down by protected groups and the successes from the applications. It will also look at complaints/compliments of the revised policy and use this to inform any potential need for change.

Where you have not approved the monitoring process, what other steps do you require to be taken?

The only further requirement would be to align the 2016 Mitigating Circumstances form on the HR web pages .

## **Comments**

The new criteria appear to remove potential barriers in previous criteria as the criteria acknowledge the various academic career routes staff may take and the types of evidence required to demonstrate excellence in those areas.

## **Next Review Date**

2021-03-31

## **Outstanding Actions**

No outstanding actions