

Academic Advancement Board Procedure

1. Introduction

This policy describes the promotion process for all academics up to and including to grade 8. It therefore covers the following categories of academic staff and grades:

- a) University Teacher (grade 6) to Assistant Professor (grade 7)
- b) Assistant Professor (grade 7) to Assistant Professor (grade 8)
- c) Research Assistant (grade 6) to Research Associate (grade 7)
- d) Research Associate (grade 7) to Research Fellow (grade 8)

NB any move from grade 6 to a grade 7, Assistant Professor is treated as a new academic appointment. The exception is for those DEP Tutors who have been recruited following ordinance F2.

The criteria for such promotions are set out in Academic Advancement – [Criteria for Assessment grades 6-8](https://heriotwatt.sharepoint.com/sites/hr-yourcareeranddevelopment/SitePages/Level-Descriptors,-Academic-and-Professional-Services-Staff.aspx). These are based on role descriptions derived from the nationally recognised Role Profiles recommended by JNCHEs. All the level descriptors are available at <https://heriotwatt.sharepoint.com/sites/hr-yourcareeranddevelopment/SitePages/Level-Descriptors,-Academic-and-Professional-Services-Staff.aspx>

2. The Academic Advancement Board

2.1 Composition of the Board

The composition of the Board will be as follows. This membership can be varied at the discretion of the Principal.

Vice Principal and Provost, Convener
Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation)
Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
The Deans of the University
Executive Dean of School or an academic member of the School Management team who was involved in the School Promotion Panel
Provost (or Deputy) from Malaysia and Dubai

Reward and Wellbeing Consultant, Clerk

All members of the Board should have an awareness of HERA job evaluation.

3. Promotions Nomination Process

As part of the PDR process all academic staff should discuss their career path and progression with their Reviewer, including the opportunities for developing their career and promotion prospects. Executive Deans shall, in consultation with the Management Team of the School, ensure that all academic staff, as far as possible, have access to development opportunities to allow them to achieve their career ambitions.

HR will write to Executive Deans in February of each year, inviting them to submit cases for promotion of academic and research staff within their School. In preparation for that, it is recommended that following the PDR "round", the School Management Team (or a subset thereof) should consider all staff eligible for promotion and agree on which cases should be put forward to the Board.

HR will provide Executive Deans a list of all academic and research staff on grades 6 or 7 in their School. If someone is at the top of the scale and not being put forward for promotion the reason for this should be entered on the list and returned to HR.

3.1 Nominations from Head of School

The cases for promotion must include:

A. From the candidate

- The individual's case for promotion, on no more than 2 sides of A4, which should be written with reference to the criteria for assessment and in particular how they match the relevant role profile.
- Full Curriculum Vitae in the standard format and publications list in the standard template.
- If appropriate, [Special Circumstances Form](#)

B. From the School

- An Academic Promotion Board form reviewing the case for promotion and including an assessment of the candidate's achievements and contribution against the guidance document [Criteria for Assessment grades 6-8](#).
- For Dubai and Malaysia the Vice Principal of the Campus must also comment on any case.

Templates can be found on the [HR Hub](#).

3.2 Self Nomination

Academic staff may enquire of their Executive Dean whether or not they have been recommended for promotion. If they have not, they then have the option of making an additional statement for promotion.

Personal cases for promotion must include the same information and documentation as listed at 3.1 A above.

HR will pass a copy of the self-nomination papers to the Executive Dean and where relevant, the Vice Principal of the Campus, with a request for a positive or negative recommendation, supported by reasons. HR will provide the member of staff with a copy of this recommendation.

3.3 Standard Documentation

In all submission cases, it is important, for consistency purposes, that submissions of CVs and publication lists are fully completed in the standard formats, as shown on the [HR Hub](#). Incomplete submissions may be rejected.

3.4 Normal expectations

It will be the normal expectation that an Assistant Professor who has completed probation and has reached the maximum of grade 7 (excluding contribution points) should be advanced to grade 8. Where an Assistant Professor has reached the top of grade 7 and has completed probation (or is being recommended to have completed probation) the School should submit a case for promotion to grade 8 on the relevant form. Where such a recommendation cannot be made, reasons should be provided to the Board.

It will be the normal expectation that a Research Assistant reaching the maximum of grade 6 (excluding contribution points) and who has completed a PhD should be advanced to grade 7. The School should submit a case for promotions from grade 6 to grade 7, or grade 7 to grade 8 on the relevant form. The case must be based on the job the researcher is carrying out and the published Role Profiles for Research Staff. Where Research Staff are appointed to grade 6, pending transfer to grade 7 on completion of a PhD, this should be clearly specified in their contract.

3.5 Deliberations of the Board

Promotion

The Board will meet to review the submitted promotion papers for each nominee, using the guidance document Academic Promotions – [Criteria for Assessment grades 6-8](#). The Board will review all promotion recommendations and approve or reject them, on the basis of the evidence provided.

4. Outcomes

Recommendations regarding promotion requests will be reported to the University Executive annually in a summary paper from the Global Director of Human Resources.

4.1 Feedback to candidates

All unsuccessful applicants for promotion (whether nominated by their Executive Dean or self-nominated) shall be given reason(s) in writing why they were not promoted and what further development would be expected for a successful application. **Delivery of feedback, actions and recommendations relating to successful and unsuccessful applicants are the responsibility of the School Representative on the Board.**

5. Exceptional promotions

In exceptional circumstances (such as retaining essential staff in key strategic areas), it may be necessary to implement emergency procedures. Cases for consideration under an Exceptional Promotions procedure must be put forward by the relevant Executive Dean to the Vice Principal in the same format as outlined above.

If a prima facie case is accepted by the Vice Principal, an ad hoc interview panel will be convened according to the requirements of the Ordinance F2.

Cases which are confirmed will be reported to the next University Executive as under 4 above.

6. Equality of Opportunity

We value and encourage each unique and positive contribution, acknowledging that our diversity enriches us. The University welcomes and supports applications for career progression from all members of the University Community.

To help us to ensure that our processes are fair, accessible and free from discrimination we will collect and use equality data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. This information will be held in accordance with Data Protection requirements.

7. Appeals Process

The appeals process against being held at grade 6 or 7 is set out in a separate document.

To be read in conjunction with the following documents

Academic Promotions – [Criteria for Assessment grades 6-8](#)

Academic Probation and Promotion Appeals Procedure.