



Guide to Academic Promotion

Updated April 2023

Overview and Key References

Academic Promotion is to recognise, and reward sustained excellence assessed on merit, demonstrated across the areas of academic activity relevant to the academic appointment.

Staff members intending to apply for promotion are encouraged to discuss their promotion applications with their supervisor and/or the Dean, People and Resources to seek their input and support for this, however, a staff member may apply for promotion irrespective of advice from the supervisor.

All applicants should be familiar with the key materials required for academic promotion to assist with the preparation of a promotion application and understand some of the tools the committee will be accessing when assessing an application. These include:

- Academic Promotions Policy
- Academic Promotions Procedures
- Academic Profiles Policy
- Academic Profiles
- Service One Academic Promotion Guide and tutorial video

The Academic Promotions Webpage is located at

<https://staff.flinders.edu.au/learning-teaching/academic-promotion>.

Promotions enquiries can be directed to your People and Culture Business Partner or email acadprom@flinders.edu.au.

Flinders Approach to Academic Promotion

Promotions are a peer-evaluation process carried out in accordance with the University Academic Promotions Policy and Procedures.

A case for promotion is assessed, based on evidence and materials submitted in the application and, at Levels D and E, a report submitted by external assessors.

Where appropriate, assessment is made of performance relative to opportunity, meaning an applicant will have *special circumstances* considered that may have interrupted their career progression.

Promotions committees sits in the second half of each year, if the application for promotion is successful, it will take effect on 1 January the following year.

The committee can consider ALL past performance (i.e. not limited to the period since appointment or last promotion), but will place emphasis on the past three years.

Special Circumstances

Flinders University is committed to providing an Equal Opportunity to ensure career growth and promotion is available to all Academics.

The committee will consider an applicant's performance relative to opportunity.

The applicant may include any matters which may have affected the progress of their career, for example:

- Significant career interruptions (*particularly in the 3 years prior to application*)
- Family and caring obligations
- Employment fraction reductions or extended periods of leave without pay
- Illness
- Changes to key responsibilities that have impacted on one or more of the assessment categories etc.

Important to note:

The Committee will not be able to assess how a special circumstance has impacted an applicant's progression, so the applicant should clearly articulate the nature of the special circumstances and the *nature and extent of the impact* on performance against the relevant Academic Profile and/or Position Description *e.g. caring responsibilities interfered with opportunities to travel to conferences resulting in ...*

Where a temporary change to an applicant's primary duties/responsibilities has occurred, for example, a change in work focus, or an external secondment, evidence should be provided on the nature of change(s) and the impact on performance described.

Eligibility

Employees engaged in the following academic employment categories (*full time and part time*) are eligible to apply for promotion:

- Continuing
- Continuing contingent-funded
- Convertible academic staff
- Scholarly Fellow following successful completion of their probationary period
- Fixed-term academic staff (including grant-funded) with a cumulative term of appointment of at least three (3) years**

Sessional fixed-term, Casual staff and Academic Status holders are not eligible to apply.

** If an academic staff member has only completed part of a 3 year contract, they are eligible to apply if the total contract is 3 or more years.

** If an academic staff member has completed successive fixed term contracts (without a break in service), where the cumulative period is greater than 3 years, they are eligible to apply.

Assessment

The three areas of academic activity referred to in the Academic Profiles are:

- Teaching (and Related Duties)
- Research and/or Creative Activity
- University, Professional and Community Service

A case for promotion is assessed based on the application and supporting evidence submitted in the current application.

Details of previous promotion application details or outcomes are not shared with the committee.

Promotion is based on evidence of:

- performance, backed by evidence against the relevant Academic Profile and/or Position Description if applicable;
- contributions made to, and **sustained** high performance across applicant’s current classification level; **and**
- ability to perform at the classification level to which promotion is sought.

Poor performance in teaching or research may provide grounds for not approving promotion, notwithstanding the strength of the case in the other areas of academic activity.

Assessment Period/Relevant Period

Emphasis will be given to the three years prior to submission of the application, however, an applicant may include key relevant information and major achievements in their application which demonstrate sustained performance and career trajectory.

Application Profile and Weightings (Lev B-D only)

- Applicants seeking promotion to Level B-D can indicate where they see their strength to be based on the rating table below.
- Weightings across each area must add up to a total of 10 with minimum and maximum weightings prescribed by the Academic type.
- Note that weightings are an indication only and the committee may adjust them to improve the strength of the application.

Area of academic activity	Weight			
	Teaching and Research	Teaching Specialist	Research-only	Education-focused ¹
Teaching	Minimum 3 Maximum 5	8	Minimum 0 Maximum 2	Minimum 6 Maximum 7
Research and/or Creative Activity	Minimum 3 Maximum 5	0	Minimum 7 Maximum 9	Minimum 1
University, Professional and Community Service	Minimum 2	2	Minimum 1 Maximum 2	Minimum 2
TOTAL	10	10	10	10

Making Your Case

- Refer to Academic Profiles and/or, if applicable, the Position Description for your position and ensure your case reflects the appropriate level of promotion sought.
- Provide clear and concise commentary of activities/achievements in each area relevant to your application (teaching and/or research, and service) against the profiles and your Position Description (if applicable).
- Provide appropriate supporting evidence that confirms any claim you make if the evidence is not available in existing University databases that record teaching and research contributions and outcomes.
- Prepare your case with the audience in mind – they are unlikely to be familiar with your area of expertise.
- Avoid discipline-acronyms and language that may not be well understood.
- Don't get lost in the detail.
- Further information for applications to Professor will be at the end of this document.

Qualifications

Where the qualifications criteria in the relevant Academic Profile specify a higher degree (e.g. PhD), an applicant who has submitted their thesis prior to the closing date for applications may still have their application considered by the Committee.

If the Committee determines that the application meets the criteria for promotion, the promotion will be effective from the date that the higher degree is awarded, if this has not occurred by the nominal promotion effective date of the 1st January.

If an applicant does not hold the formal qualification(s) specified in the Academic Profile, they must make their case of equivalence (if the Academic Profile allows) in their application.

Teaching

The committee will be looking for evidence of:

- Your approach to teaching
- Clear teaching philosophy
- Reflection on and response to feedback from peer reviews and student responses
- Research informed teaching
- Leadership in teaching
- Innovation in teaching and evidence for the impact of your innovation appropriate to the expectations for your current Academic level.

Applicants with Teaching responsibilities must submit independent evidence of teaching effectiveness, this should include student evaluation of teaching (SETs) as well as peer evaluation and/or supervisor evaluation.

Applicants should include in their case, their analysis of both student and peer/supervisor evaluation, their reflection on teaching performance and any proposed changes to their teaching in response to the evaluations.

Teaching Specialists must include evidence of external validation of their outstanding performance in teaching, this may include access in external and/or internal grants and awards, evidence of publications pertaining to the scholarship of teaching, innovation and other indicators of impact.

In addition to addressing the relevant Academic Profile (and Position Description if applicable), applicants who provide **Honours/Post Graduate Supervision** might respond to the following:

- What objectives have been set as a supervisor of honours/postgraduate work?
- Are there any special circumstances affecting honours/postgraduate study in the discipline?
- What steps have been undertaken by the applicant to ascertain the level of honours/postgraduate student satisfaction with the style or quality of their supervision?

Academic research-only applicants who supervise research students and have allocated a weighting of zero to Teaching should include this activity under Research and/or Creative Activity.

Research

As the level of promotion sought increases, committees will be looking for evidence of:

- Increasing levels of leadership in your research
- Increasing supervision and mentorship of Higher Degree Researchers (HDR)
- Increasing numbers and quality of publications
- Success in engaging with external stakeholders and end-users and developing research collaborations with them
- Success in attracting external research funding
- Evidence of innovation and impact of your research at a domestic and international level appropriate to the expectations for your current Academic level.

Applicants with Research responsibilities should summarise all research and/or creative activity undertaken during the relevant period, including:

- Publications Data available through Flinders Intelligence Portal (**FLIP**). Applicants should note that FLIP may record a publication as unverified. In this case applicants should include the letter of acceptance, or invitation to present at conference in their supporting documentation.
- Externally Funded Research Grants/Research Contracts, available through FLIP.
- Internal Grants and Grants from Non-Traditional Sources.

Applicants should include in their case the impact of Research and Creative Activity, this may include:

- Research and experimental development
- Non-traditional research which may include:
 - consultancies (although these may be reported under the “University, Professional and Community Service”);
 - inventions/patents with detailed information on the kind of work involved in these activities.
- Evidence of contribution
- Creative Activity
- Publication details such as:
 - contribution to multi-authored publications
 - Status of publications such accepted books, manuscripts, articles and papers etc (writing under review can be mentioned in a case, but not claimed as a publication)

Academic research-only applicants who supervise research students and have allocated a weighting of 'zero' to Teaching, should include this activity here.

Applicants should provide an outline of their standing in areas of research and/or creative activity as indicated by their contribution to activities specified in the relevant Profile.

Applicants to Level E

Promotion to Professor is the highest level of Academia. For applications to be successful at this level the committee will be looking for evidence of:

- outstanding performance in two areas of academic activity and;
- evidence of outstanding leadership
- scholarly achievement and international eminence or, where appropriate for the discipline, national eminence, and;
- for Teaching Specialists and Research academics:
 - substantial contributions in the other area of academic activity

University Professional and Community Service

The committee will be looking for evidence of service undertaken in your current role at Flinders University, including:

- Contribution to University leadership
- Contributions to your profession/field at a domestic and/or international level and the impact of this
- Consultancy and commissioned work
- Standing as an expert in the field, e.g. through advisory roles to industry or government bodies
- Media presence and impact

- Editorial responsibilities for professional journals appropriate to the expectations for your current Academic level.

Applicants should include in their case, evidence to support University Professional and Community Service, for example:

- Administrative responsibilities in the College/University including how these roles have contributed to the University, noting outcomes and achievements.
- Engagement with the professions and/or community that enhance the University's reputation, strategic directions and/or income, which may include consultancy and commissioned work, where a contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the profession can be demonstrated, as well as continuing involvement in or frequent service to the community, demonstrating how it relates to the applicant's University activities.

The Evidence of Performance for Promotion – Guidelines identify a number of key areas and types of evidence that may be helpful to a staff member seeking to demonstrate the quality, effectiveness and impact of their teaching, research or creative activity.

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Supervisor

Provide guidance to applicant in preparing a case that, most effectively represents performance and, provides evidence of suitability for promotion.

- For applicants in Research, Teaching Specialist or other specialist roles, ensure applicant's Position Description is current so they can submit with the application
- Provide guidance around framing the application so terminology specific to a discipline can be readily understood by the Promotion Committee
- Once the application is submitted, provide supporting information that:
 - confirms that the applicant meets qualifications criteria relevant to the Academic Profile or;
 - comments on applicant's case for eligibility for promotion where applicant does not hold required qualification(s)
 - provides clear statement re norms and expectations for teaching and research output within relevant academic area
 - where appropriate, provides additional contextual information about area in which applicant is currently employed
 - provides overall assessment of applicant's contribution against relevant Academic Profile (or Position Description if applicable)
 - comments on applicant's areas of strength
- **Applications to Level B/C** (*if Supervisor is not the Dean, People and Resources*)
 - Submit the application to flow to the Dean, People and Resources/Portfolio Head

- **Applications to Level D/E**
 - Consults with Vice-President & Executive Dean/Portfolio Head to identify University-nominated assessors (and substitutes) and emails details directly to acadprom@flinders.edu.au
 - Submits application to flow to the Vice President and Executive Dean

Dean, People and Resources/Portfolio Head (if not the Designated Supervisor)

Applications to Level B/C

- Reviews the application and provides comments
- submits the application to flow back to the applicant for final comments and submission

Level D and Level E Only

Vice President and Executive Dean

- Ensures supervisors' reports add value to the process by providing specific and verifiable comments in their reports
- Comment on applicant's case for eligibility for promotion where applicant does not hold required qualification(s)
- Consults with Dean (People & Resources/supervisor to identify University-nominated assessors (and substitutes)
- Provides evaluative comments on applicant's case, including any relevant information not already provided
- Submits application to flow back to the applicant for their final comments and submission.

External Assessors

The Vice-President & Executive Dean (in consultation with the applicant's supervisor) nominates **one external assessor for Level D**, or **two external assessors for Level E**, who are:

- of high international reputation
- independent of the University
- not someone with whom the applicant has collaborated or published at all or, where this is not practicable, not someone with whom the applicant has collaborated or published within the previous five years, and
- able to provide an assessment that provides comments on the applicant's performance across all areas of academic activity.

Confidentiality

Names of nominated assessors, and their reports, are confidential and will only be made available to the members of the relevant Promotions Committee.

Committee

For applications to Level B or to Level C

Promotions Committees for applications to Level B or to Level C have the following membership:

- Vice-President and Executive Dean (Chair)
- Dean (Education), Dean (Research)
- Four (4) academic staff from within the College selected to reflect the diversity of College discipline
- Two (2) academic staff members *external to the College to assist with consistency across the University*
- President of the Flinders Branch of the NTEU or nominee (non-voting, optional)
- One (1) specific discipline/Portfolio member co-opted by the Chair, if the Chair considers it required in the context of applications.

All members are at level C or above.

For applications to Level D or to Level E

Promotions Committees for applications to Level D or to Level E have the following membership:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) nominated by the Vice-Chancellor as Chair
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students)
- 1 Level E academic staff member from each College
- 1 Level E academic staff member from a University Portfolio
- 2 Level E academic staff members nominated by Academic Senate
- President of the Flinders Branch of the NTEU or nominee (non-voting, optional)

All committees must have appropriate gender balance.

A committee member with a conflict of interest will be required to leave the room during the assessment.

Further Information

Promotion committees may seek additional information and/or may contact third parties to provide further information. If so, the applicant will be advised accordingly.

Confidentiality

Committee proceedings are strictly confidential. Applicants will be advised formally of the outcome of their application, and consolidated feedback will be available to unsuccessful applicants to assist with their preparation of future applications.