



# Academic Promotions 2011

## Procedures for Local and Central Promotion Committees

*This document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Promotions Policy, Guidelines for Applicants and the University's Code of Conduct*

All Local Promotions Committees and Central Promotions Committees are required to adhere to the procedures set out in this document. Failure to follow the required procedures may provide a basis for appeal.

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## **1. EEO requirements**

The University is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity for all staff. In order to meet this commitment, the University must ensure that it does not discriminate against employees (including in promotion) on the grounds of sex, pregnancy, race (including colour, ethnic background or national identity), marital status, disability, sexual preference, transgender status, political or religious belief or age. Discrimination against any employee on these grounds is a breach of University policy and, in most circumstances, is unlawful.

Accordingly, members of promotion committees must ensure that they apply only the relevant promotion criteria in assessing an application, and must not discriminate against any applicant on any of the grounds mentioned above.

*All involved in the promotions process should maintain an awareness of due process and equity. Failure to do so may result in unfairness and appeals action.*

## **2. Privacy and confidentiality**

The names of applicants, information contained in applications, electronic applications, referees' / assessors' reports, and the content of interviews and discussions within promotion committees shall be confidential subject to any requirement of disclosure by law, including under the NSW Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. Any committee member who breaches confidentiality will be required to withdraw from the committee and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **3. LPC requests for information (Levels B-D)**

Applicant interviews are not held for Levels B – D. However the chair of an LPC for Level B, C or D may communicate in writing with an applicant via the Academic Promotions Unit. The preliminary meeting (which may be conducted either by circulation or face-to-face) is solely for the purpose of determining any questions to an applicant to explore elements of an application that require clarification. The LPC's questions to applicants should then be forwarded to the APU within 7 days of the scheduled preliminary LPC meeting.

The APU will give the applicant (7) calendar days in which to respond in writing to any questions from the LPC. The responses will be directed to the APU, who will collate the responses and forward on to the LPC chair for distribution to all core committee members and appropriate additional members, at least 7 days prior to the scheduled final LPC meeting.

## **4. Interviews by the LPC (Level E only)**

Interviews will be held for Level E only and will be scheduled for up to 40 minutes. Although standardised questioning is not required, it is important to have a consistency of approach and outcome, in terms of the completeness of information upon which the LPC's judgements are to be made. Questions to applicants should generally be directed to exploring elements of the application that other sources of information have not addressed or that require clarification. A committee may wish to raise with an applicant any

specific concerns it may have about the application should they believe this would assist in their deliberations.

## **5. LPC request for additional information (All levels)**

In some special circumstances, the LPC may request further relevant information, documentation or advice from applicants, the head of school/discipline, faculty nominees, referees, etc. in addition to that provided under Section 3. Any such additional information is to be attached to the LPC report.

## **6. Assessment of applications by the LPC**

The LPC should take into account the whole academic career of the applicant, but particular attention must be given to achievement and publications since the last appointment or promotion at this University. It should look for evidence of an upward trajectory in performance that would warrant promotion to the next level.

Promotion committees should ensure that each applicant's achievements are assessed relative to opportunity. Factors which may affect opportunity include part-time/fractional employment, significant parenting or other caring responsibilities, or clinical responsibilities.

Each core LPC member must rate each applicant in terms of the Evaluation Standards in 8.1 below, the Minimum Standards required for promotion outlined in 8.2 below, and taking into account the Normative Criteria for each Level of Appointment set out in the *Academic Promotions Policy*.

## **7. LPC Meetings**

### **7.1 The preliminary LPC meeting (Levels B – D)**

This can be done either by circulation or face-to-face. The preliminary meeting is to establish whether the LPC feels they need any further clarification of an issue(s) in regards to any of the applications. No voting should be conducted at the preliminary meeting. Any questions the LPC has for the applicant should be forwarded to the Academic Promotions Unit (within 7 days of the scheduled preliminary meeting) who will correspond with the applicant on the committee's behalf. Questions to applicants should generally be directed to exploring elements of the application that other sources of information have not addressed or that require clarification. Applicants must be given 7 days in which to submit a written response (via the APU) to any questions they have received. (see section 3 above).

All responses are returned to the APU, who will collate the responses and send these to the LPC chair for distribution to all core committee members and appropriate additional members, at least 7 days prior to the scheduled final LPC meeting.

### **7.2 The final LPC meeting (Levels B – D)**

The final LPC meeting must be held face-to-face and it is expected that all members be present, however the chair may give permission for an additional member in some circumstances e.g. if the additional member is interstate or

overseas, to participate in the final meeting via teleconference, videoconference or Skype.

The LPC should engage in a full and meaningful discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each application taking into consideration any responses received from the applicant. It is expected that all members of the LPC will contribute to this discussion and that members who have formed the view that the applicant should not be promoted should state their reasons clearly so as to assist the LPC chair in preparation of the LPC's report. The preliminary voting table contained in the Guidelines for LPC Meeting document should be used for this purpose. **A secret ballot must not be conducted.**

At the conclusion of the discussion of each application, all LPC core members will vote for or against promotion in each case. The LPC should make a clear decision in relation to the standards of evaluation either to recommend or not recommend promotion for each applicant. If an LPC member's rating of an applicant does not meet the minimum standards required for promotion, the LPC member cannot vote in favour of promoting that applicant. Preliminary voting sheets are available for committee members and should be used to determine whether an applicant has met the minimum standards for promotion. Applicants who receive at least two-thirds positive votes are supported for promotion.

The votes will be recorded in a table, which shows each committee member's vote for each applicant and identifies those applicants **recommended** for promotion.

### 7.3 The LPC meeting (Level E)

For Level E all applicants must be interviewed, and it is expected that all committee members be present, however the chair may give permission for an additional member in some circumstances e.g. if the additional member is interstate or overseas, to participate in the final meeting via teleconference, videoconference or Skype. The applicant must be informed of this prior to the meeting.

At the conclusion of each interview the LPC should engage in a full and meaningful discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the application. It is expected that all members of the LPC will contribute to this discussion and that members who have formed the view that the applicant should not be promoted should state their reasons clearly so as to assist the LPC chair in preparation of the LPC's report. The preliminary voting table contained in the Guidelines for LPC Meeting document should be used for this purpose. **A secret ballot must not be conducted.**

All LPC core members will vote for or against promotion in each case. The LPC should make a clear decision in relation to the standards of evaluation either to recommend or not recommend promotion for each applicant. If an LPC member's rating of an applicant does not meet the minimum standards required for promotion, the LPC member cannot vote in favour of promoting that applicant. Preliminary voting sheets are available for committee members and should be used to determine whether an applicant has met the minimum standards for promotion. Applicants who receive at least two-thirds positive votes are supported for promotion.

The votes will be recorded in a table, which shows each committee member's vote for each applicant and identifies those applicants **recommended** for promotion.

## 8. Evaluation standards

### 8.1 Evaluation

Evaluation will focus on the achievements and publications since the date of the last promotion or appointment at this University, but will also take into account the applicant's whole career to date. As mentioned in 6.1 above, committees need to assess achievements relative to the individual's opportunity.

Evaluation of academic performance at the University is based, at each level of appointment, on three categories of activity:

- Teaching
- Research / scholarship / creative / professional work
- Service to the University, discipline and community

The University recognises that members of staff do not have identical opportunities to engage in the full range of academic activities. Thus academic roles at the same level of appointment will be constructed in different ways. However, the University considers teaching and research as its core activities and also expects that all staff contribute to the overall work of their School.

While all members of academic staff are expected to make contributions to these areas, it is recognised that the weighting of these contributions may vary over the course of a career. Accordingly the University of Sydney recognises that academic careers may fall along a spectrum of roles ranging from education-focused at one end, through to research-focused at the other, and including the traditional teaching and research role in the middle.

Each academic staff member will be appointed to a position at a particular academic level (from A-E). While appointed to this position the roles undertaken by an individual member of staff may vary over time and there may be movement between different roles, either while the staff member is within one career level, or across different levels in the course of a career.

The University has four standards for evaluation relating to promotion, which are understood as follows:

- Exceptional – An applicant whose achievements are Exceptional should demonstrate highly significant achievements and contributions in relation to the criteria at the level for which the applicant is applying. This evaluation standard should be applied 'only' to those applicants who have applied for promotion through the Education or Research-focused stream.
- Outstanding – An applicant whose achievements are Outstanding should demonstrate achievements and contributions which clearly meet the criteria at the level for which the applicant is applying.
- Superior – An applicant whose achievements are Superior should demonstrate highly significant achievements and contributions in relation to the criteria at the applicant's current level.
- Satisfactory – An applicant whose achievements are Satisfactory should demonstrate achievements and contributions which meet the criteria at the applicant's current level.

## 8.2 Promotion streams and minimum standards required for promotion

The University of Sydney recognises three streams for promotion:

- (i) teaching and research;
- (ii) education-focused; and
- (iii) research-focused.

A staff member may apply for promotion in any stream, regardless of their current role or appointment. However, promotion in a particular stream does not change a staff member's underlying appointment nor the role that they may be expected to fulfil in relation to that appointment.

The promotion stream in which an applicant applies for promotion is not binding on the LPC and CPC and can be changed where a committee considers another stream to be more appropriate, and only where the application would not otherwise have been supported. Should a committee recommend promotion in a stream different to that selected by the applicant, this should be documented in the LPC or CPC report, clearly stating the reasons.

### Teaching and Research Staff

Promotion from – to	Teaching	Research/etc	Service	Total
Teaching & Research: A-B, B-C, C-D	Superior/ outstanding	Superior/ outstanding	Superior	1 outstanding (which must be either teaching or research), 2 superior
Teaching & Research: D-E	Outstanding	Outstanding	Superior	2 outstanding, 1 superior

### Education-Focused Staff

Promotion from – to	Teaching	Research/etc	Service	Total
Education-Focused: A-B, B-C, C-D; D-E	Exceptional	Superior/ Satisfactory	Superior/ Satisfactory	1 exceptional (which must be in teaching), at least 1 superior

### Research-Focused Staff

Promotion from – to	Teaching	Research/etc	Service	Total
Teaching & Research: A-B, B-C, C-D; D-E	Superior/ Satisfactory	Exceptional	Superior/ Satisfactory	1 exceptional (which must be in research), at least 1 superior

## 9. Format of the LPC Report

**The LPC Report must be completed on the *LPC Report Form*.**

Where the committee is unanimous in voting to promote an applicant to Levels B or C, the LPC report does not need to provide detail, but should state that the decision was agreed to by all committee members. In all other cases the Report must include sufficient detail to explain how the LPC reached its decision regarding its recommendation for or against promotion for each applicant.

For Levels D and E a commentary must be written for all applicants regardless of the outcome.

Details regarding the breakdown of voting (eg 4 members voted the candidate superior, 3 satisfactory, etc) should not be included in the report as this is confidential. While the LPC report should reflect the view of the committee including any divergent views, these views should not be specifically attributed to individual committee members, referees or assessors.

Unsuccessful applicants receive an edited version of the commentary section of the report, which relates to their application; therefore it is important that the report contains constructive feedback. All sections must be completed.

The chair should ensure that additional members have had an opportunity to review the appropriate parts of the finalised report and provide comment. All core members must approve the report.

NOTE: The process of confirming that committee procedures have been followed may be carried out by email provided that the committee member clearly states in the email that "he/she has read the report of the Local Promotions Committee and confirms that the procedures of the Committee were in accordance with the procedures and guidelines for the Local Promotions Committee".

Applicants can expect to be promoted to step 1 of the new level of appointment however in exceptional circumstances a higher step may be appropriate, for example if a staff member is already receiving remuneration in excess of step 1 (e.g. salary loadings) or where special circumstances exist. Recommendation of a higher step must be approved by the relevant delegated officer (the Dean for Levels B – D). Where the LPC c is not the delegated officer, the approval from the relevant Dean for a higher step must accompany the LPC report.

## 10. Forwarding the LPC report

The LPC Report should be sent electronically to the Academic Promotions Unit, who will review the report immediately and bring any concerns to the attention of the LPC chair. In addition to the report, the preliminary voting sheets of the individual committee members (used in the final LPC meeting) should be forwarded to the Academic Promotions Unit for verification.

## 11. Forwarding the CPC recommendations

The CPC recommendations for promotion for Levels C (where an LPC has been established to consider candidates from only one faculty) and D should be forwarded to the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor for approval.

For Level E, recommendations for promotion, accompanied by a brief statement on each recommended applicant prepared by the Academic Promotions Unit, should be forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor, who will refer these to the Senate Chair Appointments Committee for approval.

**Note: Chairs of LPC committees for Levels D and E need to make themselves available for the relevant CPC meeting date, see Important Dates - <http://sydney.edu.au/provost/promotions.shtml>.**