

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Promotion to Associate Professor

Policy, Procedures, Criteria and Guidelines – 2025

Section I: Policy

Introduction

The University is committed to rewarding, retaining and attracting staff of outstanding quality who perform in ways that contribute to its reputation, nationally and internationally. High performing academic staff are the cornerstone of the University and a range of strategies are available to recognise, reward and retain such staff appropriately. Promotion, through an effective and rigorous process, is one of these strategies and one of great importance.

Purpose

The University is a very diverse institution and its effective functioning and reputation depend on wide and varied contributions from staff. The **Assistant Professor** grade is the normal academic career grade within the University. The overall purpose of this policy for promotion to the next grade, that of **Associate Professor**, is to enable the University to develop and retain the best talent within the organisation and to provide excellent academic staff with career advancement opportunities.

Call for applications

Where constraints allow, the University shall issue an **annual call**, for applications for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor level. The number of such promotions shall be indicated in the calling notice. The effective date of the promotion for successful applicants shall be based on the top seven ranked promotions will take effect from October 2025 and the next three will take effect from February 2026.

Eligibility to apply for promotion.

Academic staff members at Assistant Professor grade / scale who are required as part of their role to contribute across all three domains at a high level, may apply for promotion to Associate Professor grade.

Applicants

- shall have completed their probationary period (normally one year) at Assistant Professor grade
- shall be employed on a
 - permanent full-time contract, at Assistant Professor grade, OR
 - fixed-term full-time contract, at Assistant Professor grade, that extends at least to the end of the calendar year in which the application is being made
- and shall have already completed a PhD/Professional Doctorate.

In the case of a staff member on a fixed-term full-time contract, at Assistant Professor grade, a promotion approval shall **not** be interpreted as any undertaking by the University that an extension of contract was intended or approved.

In the very exceptional case of an applicant without a Ph.D./ Professional Doctorate, detailed justification for the absence of this qualification must form part of the application along with providing a plan for the completion of this qualification.

Principles

The Associate Professor promotion process is a University-wide, merit-based, competitive process.

Within DCU, core academic activity is classified into 3 broad **domains**:

- **Teaching and Learning**
- **Research and Scholarship, and**
- **Service and Contribution to University and Society**

Applicants should consult the *DCU Academic Development and Promotion Framework* document in full. This outlines the expectations and standards expected for academic grades for each of the three domains and their respective dimensions. It should be read as a broad guideline rather than as an exhaustive list of academic activities.

To be deemed suitable for promotion to Associate Professor, a staff member shall be required to demonstrate that, in these three domains, they have had sustained high achievement at Assistant Professor level and has the valid expectation of future excellence.

The University recognises that members of staff do not have identical opportunities to engage in the full range of academic activities. Thus academic profiles at the same level of appointment may inevitably be constructed in different ways. However the University expects all staff to contribute to its three domains of core activity.

Applicants shall be required to provide **evidence of their capacity and potential to perform at the Associate Professor level** and the case for promotion shall be based on achievement and quality beyond that expected for the satisfactory performance of an Assistant Professor's duties.

While applicants are required to provide information concerning their whole career, it is essential that they provide a clear account of their progress and achievements in the recent past (e.g. in the previous 4 – 6 years, or since their last appointment or promotion), and **evidence of an upward trajectory in performance** that would warrant promotion to the next level, i.e. continuing progress commensurate with the promotion being sought.

Strategic focus

DCU Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028:

It is important that DCU's stated mission and values are fully articulated through its policies for internal promotion so that staff (a) understand the significance of the institutional mission and values, and (b) receive appropriate recognition for working continuously to ensure that our stated mission and values are realized.

In order to ensure that there is coherence between our stated mission and values and our internal promotion policies, the University's **Academic Promotions Committee (APC)**, on behalf of the University, is articulating in this document the type of focus and behaviours that DCU wishes to encourage in its senior academic staff and thus the type of focus and behaviours it wishes to reward, enhance and develop through internal promotion to Associate Professor.

A focus on the following **seven** characteristic dimensions – which reflect individual achievement, innovation and leadership – is deemed to be crucial for both the **Teaching and Learning** and **Research and Scholarship** domains:

- Quality and Productivity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination
- National and International Recognition
- Leadership and Responsibility
- Capacity Development and Mentorship
- Social or Economic Impact or Enterprise Awareness

The domain of **Service and Contribution** to University and Society is deemed to be appropriately addressed by a focus on the following **three** characteristic dimensions:

- Leadership and Responsibility
- Capacity Development and Mentorship
- Social or Economic Impact or Enterprise Awareness

Section II: Procedures

Preparing an application

Applicants shall use the appropriate on-line application form

Promotion to the Grade of Associate Professor 2025: Application Form

and the guidelines in Section IV of this document are provided to assist in its completion. Applications shall be submitted on or before the stipulated deadline of **4pm Tuesday 22 April 2025**. **Late applications shall not, under any circumstances, be accepted for consideration.**

Nominating and contacting an external referee

Applicants are required to submit, with their applications, the names and contact details of **one external referee** – who should be an eminent academic or professional expert in the applicant's field.

Members of an applicant's Faculty Review Panel or of the APC may not be an external referee for any applicant who is to be considered by that panel or committee, unless there are exceptional circumstances approved by the Deputy President, as Chair of APC.

The DCU People Department will write to the referee to request a reference. It is however the applicants' responsibility to confirm the willingness and availability of their external referee to

supply a reference by the stipulated deadline. **Late references shall not normally be pursued by DCU People.**

Taking advice

Applicants are encouraged to take advice when applying for promotion. First time applicants are strongly encouraged to take advice from their Executive Dean. Heads of School have a supportive role to play in advising staff on how they can best advance to the grade of Associate Professor. This may include mentoring both throughout the period leading up to an application for promotion as well as during the making of the application itself. Applicants may, in some cases, prefer to be mentored and advised by a senior colleague, who has been successful in a previous competition, other than the Head of School, and this is acceptable. The Head of School shall be informed of such an arrangement.

The Deputy President, as Chair of the APC and in conjunction with the DCU People Department, shall provide advice on procedural issues, including the requirements in relation to the preparation and completion of applications at an Application Information Session following the formal announcement of a promotion call.

Please note that the applicant's Head of School shall be asked by the Vice President for People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion to provide a reference. The request shall be made of the current Head of School if they have been in post for a minimum of six months. If the current Head of School has been in post for a period of less than six months, applicants may opt to nominate the previous Head of School.

Consideration of the applications

Applications are first considered by the Faculty Review Panel from the applicant's faculty and then by the Academic Promotions Committee.

(a) The Faculty Review Panel (FRP)

This shall comprise:

- the Dean of Faculty (who shall be the Chair of FRP)
- the Deputy Dean of Faculty, where relevant
- the Head of School for each school in the Faculty
- one member of academic staff (Associate Professor grade or above) from each school (elected by the **academic** staff members from that school who are on permanent full-time contracts or fixed-term full-time contracts of 3 or more years duration)
- a Dean from another faculty in the University (nominated by the APC), and
- one external member (normally a professor from another university), nominated by the Dean of Faculty.

Both genders shall be represented on the FRPs.

The FRP shall use the Criteria and Guidelines detailed in **Sections III and IV** below, the external reference and the reference from the Head of School to assist in the assessment of the applications

from within that Faculty. These guidelines are designed for use by the FRPs for assessment and comparative purposes.

The functions of the FRP shall be: to consider and evaluate all applications by applicants from within that Faculty and to assign moderated scores to all those applicants (in accordance with the criteria in Section III below); and on the basis of these scores, to determine which applicants are deemed eligible for promotion. The Chair of the FRP shall submit the names and scores, in rank order, together with a separate **ranked list of those applicants** from within the Faculty to the Chair of the APC. The Chair of the APC will only share the ranking of applicants with the APC members.

(b) The Academic Promotions Committee (APC)

The Academic Promotions Committee (APC) of the University comprises

- the Deputy President (Chair)
- the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (Registrar)
- the Vice-President for Research and Innovation
- the Vice President for People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- the Dean (or a professor nominated by the Dean) from each of the faculties in the University, and
- one Professor/Full Professor from each of the five faculties (normally at least two female and two male), nominated by DCU Academic Council.

The APC sits a number of times (normally four) each year. When, as part of the ‘Promotion to Associate Professor’ procedures, it sits to consider the applications for promotion and the recommendations for promotion from the FRPs, a senior academic from another university is added to the membership.

In order to ensure that there are at least two professors of each gender on the committee, up to two shall be co-opted, either internally or externally, as appropriate.

The functions of the APC (when, as part of the ‘Promotion to Associate Professor’ procedures, it sits to consider the applications for promotion and to receive the written submissions of the FRPs) shall be: to adjudicate on the fairness of the FRP processes; to consider and evaluate in detail the applications of all those applicants deemed eligible for promotion by the FRPs, while normally retaining the ranking order from the FRPs; taking the shared view of the APC members into account, to identify the highest ranking applicants overall and produce an agreed university-wide ranking of those applicants; and to recommend in writing to the President the highest ranked applicants in accordance with the number of promotions indicated in the calling notice.

The APC may seek further clarification on any matter relating to the FRP submissions, prior to forwarding its recommendations to the President.

Notification of outcome

All applicants shall be advised in writing of the outcome of their application as soon as possible after the President has approved the recommendations of the APC.

Equal opportunities

In line with the University's equal opportunities policy, the panels/committees shall be concerned to ensure that only relevant considerations are taken into account in reaching decisions. Care shall be taken to ensure that equal opportunity factors are taken into account when each area of activity is considered.

In this context, when an applicant's record is being reviewed, consideration shall be given to any special circumstances that may have resulted in a lack of opportunity for an applicant to perform to their full potential in any area of activity. For example, time away from work, because of family responsibilities or because of chronic illness, could have delayed career development.

Where an applicant has taken maternity leave, sick leave or other leave for family reasons, the FRPs and the APC shall endeavour to consider these periods on a pro rata basis in order best to reflect the candidate's contributions over actual years worked. The overall approach shall take into consideration quality of work rather than just quantity.

Appeals procedure

Any applicant shall be entitled to make an appeal to the President, but only in respect of an alleged irregularity in procedure. An appeal must be made within 10 working days of the applicant being notified of the outcome of the application.

The President, in the first instance, shall require the relevant Dean and the Vice President for People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion to discuss the matter with the applicant.

If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the President shall nominate an external senior academic to investigate the appeal and to make a determination as to whether any material irregularity (i.e., which could reasonably have influenced the outcome under appeal) took place.

In the event that no material irregularity is found, then the President shall disallow the appeal. In the event that the determination is that there had been a material irregularity, the President shall refer the application to the APC for reconsideration.

Section III: Criteria

Applicants shall be assessed and scored across the three domains of core academic activity within the University:

- Domain 1 Teaching and Learning
- Domain 2 Research and Scholarship
- Domain 3 Service and Contribution: to University and Society

Framework for Assessment of Applications				
		Domains		
		1	2	3
		Teaching and Learning	Research and Scholarship	Service and Contribution to University and Society
Dimensions	1	Quality and Productivity	Assessment	Assessment
	2	Innovation and Creativity		
	3	Knowledge Transfer		
	4	National & International Recognition		
	5	Leadership and Responsibility	Assessment	
	6	Capacity Development and Mentoring		
	7	Social or Economic Impact or Enterprise Awareness		

Domains 1 and 2 (scored out of 100)

In line with the DCU strategic plan and the values we espouse, performance and attainment in these domains shall be assessed across the following 7 dimensions:

- Quality and Productivity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination
- National and International Recognition
- Leadership and Responsibility
- Capacity Development, and Mentorship
- Social or Economic Impact or Enterprise Awareness

Domain 3 (scored out of 50)

Performance and attainment in the Service and Contribution to University and Society domain shall be assessed across the final three dimensions:

- Leadership and Responsibility
- Capacity Development and Mentorship
- Social or Economic Impact or Enterprise Awareness

Scores consistent with the indicative levels of performance as shown below shall be assigned to each applicant.

- Categories of achievement (Satisfactory / Substantial / Outstanding and Exceptional) are as elaborated in the *DCU Academic Development and Promotions Framework*.
- Given the career stage of applicants, most scores (even for strong candidates) will fall into the range 30-69 / 15-34 for a given domain. However, the scale extends to 100/50 to allow for cases of performance far above current grade, and above the grade being applied for.

Indicative level of performance attainment in the core academic activity domains,	<u>Score</u> Domains 1 & 2	<u>Score</u> Domain 3
<p>Satisfactory Performance (Broadly aligned with expectations at Assistant Professor level)</p> <p>a) The minimum level of satisfactory achievement, evidenced across a subset of dimensions of the Domain.</p>	10 - 24	5 - 11
<p>A satisfactory level of achievement evidenced:</p> <p>b) - across the Quality and Productivity dimension (Domain 1 &2) OR the Leadership and Responsibility dimension (Domain 3), but also across several/all other dimensions of the Domain being scored</p>	25 -39	12 -19
<p>Substantial Performance (Broadly aligned with expectations at Associate Professor level)</p> <p>a) Substantial achievement, but evidenced across a limited subset of dimensions of the Domain, and/or relatively recently.</p>	40-54	20-26
<p>b) Sustained substantial achievement evidenced:</p>	55 – 69	27-34

<p>- across the Quality and Productivity dimension (Domain 1 &2) OR the Leadership and Responsibility dimension (Domain 3),</p> <p>but also</p> <p>- across several/all other dimensions of the Domain being scored</p>		
<p>Outstanding Performance</p> <p>Broadly aligned with expectations at Professor level for the Domain being scored)</p> <p>Outstanding achievement, evidenced across the Quality and Productivity dimension (Domain 1 &2) OR the Leadership and Responsibility dimension (Domain 3),</p> <p>but also</p> <p>- across several/all other dimensions of the Domain.</p>	<p>70 - 84</p>	<p>35 – 42</p>
<p>Exceptional Performance</p> <p>(Broadly aligned with expectations at Full Professor level</p> <p>Exceptional Achievement, evidenced across the Quality and Productivity dimension (Domain 1 &2) OR the Leadership and Responsibility dimension (Domain 3),</p> <p>but also</p> <p>- across several/all other dimensions of the Domain.</p>	<p>85-100</p>	<p>42-50</p>

An applicant’s total score shall be the sum of the three domain scores. **The total scores shall therefore be positioned on a scale running from 25 to 250.**

Eligibility for consideration for promotion

To be deemed eligible for consideration for promotion to Associate Professor an applicant must achieve;

- a) a total score equal to or greater than 150
- b) a score equal to or greater than 50 in both domains 1 and 2, and
- c) a score equal to or greater than 25 in domain 3
- d) Please note that at the upper end of Assistant Professor the expectation and minimum score required for promotion to Associate Professor is 150. A minimum score of 50 in Domains 1 & 2 together with a minimum score of 25 in Domain 3 will not be considered to have met the threshold for promotion to Associate Professor.

***Please note, past scores of an applicant will not dictate future scores, i.e. each competition is scored based on the current application submitted for review.**

An applicant who has been deemed not to be eligible for consideration for promotion – not having achieved the minimum standard (as defined above) – shall be required to wait for a **nominal period of 2 years** prior to submitting a further application, i.e. shall be required to wait for the next-plus-one ‘Call for Applications’, essentially skipping one call. Should a situation arise where the University decides not to issue a call the ‘waiting period’ shall take account of that and it shall be assumed that a call has been made.

Section IV: Guidelines – presenting a case for promotion

This section contains information for applicants applying for promotion to the grade of Associate Professor. It provides a **guide** on how to report activities, their quality, the degree of internal and external recognition, and specific issues and requirements relating to each. The guidelines are designed to assist staff in preparing applications for promotion. Applicants are advised to ensure that the information they provide in the application form when making their case for promotion is accurate and specific.

Applicants are advised to refer frequently to the **Framework for Assessment of Applications** in Section III above. The articulation of one’s profile and contribution to the 3 domains in the context of the relevant dimensions (and their descriptors) should greatly assist in the building of a clear and robust application for promotion. **It should be noted that the Leadership and Responsibility dimension is particularly important for the University** and performance along this dimension must be visible in any credible application for promotion to Associate Professor.

Documenting a case

Applicants making a case for promotion should document the work they have undertaken, their progress and their achievements within each domain with particular reference to the relevant dimensions. In this context, applicants should aim to demonstrate that they have a worthy record of achievement, sustained over time. The level of achievement shall be assessed in relation to the expectations of performance at the Associate Professor level. As referred to earlier, applicants are advised to ensure that the information they provide in the application form when making their case for promotion is accurate and specific.

It is strongly advised that applicants should structure their submissions in such a way that assessors (i.e. members of FRP or APC as appropriate) can evaluate an applicant’s case for each domain, using the Framework, mentioned earlier and elaborated upon below.

- The work undertaken (the quality of content or input) and the outcomes of that work (productivity, or results or output).
- The innovation and creativity involved.
- How this work has led to and / or facilitated knowledge transfer and dissemination.
- How the work is evaluated or recognised by peers, or the broader community (recognition).

- The role which the applicant has taken from the perspective of leadership and responsibility.
- Capacity development and mentorship within the University, with students or the broader community. (Direct contribution to building a skill base, knowledge framework, consortium, group, team, programme of effort, collaborative network (internal or external to the University). Effectively, demonstrate an enduring contribution and impact to the University, community and /or the profession).
- An analysis of the contribution of the activity in terms of social or economic impact or enterprise awareness.

As referred to earlier, applicants are strongly advised to consult the *DCU Academic Development and Promotion Framework* document in full.

It is recognised that the mix of achievements may vary across different disciplinary areas. The examples that follow are broadly indicative and applicants may, of course, include achievements not detailed here.

ACHIEVEMENT SHOULD BE LISTED AS EVIDENCE UNDER ONE DOMAIN ONLY. DO NOT REPEAT EVIDENCE IN YOUR APPLICATION.

Domain 1 – Teaching and Learning (total possible score: 100)

Effective teaching can be evidenced by:

- *Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced teaching and learning*
- *Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field*
- *Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning*
- *Respect and support for the development of students as individuals*

Domain 2 – Research and Scholarship (total possible score: 100)

The research and scholarly contribution should represent a body of work, showing sustained development over time, and regarded by peers as original in concept and application. For promotion to Associate Professor an applicant will be expected to demonstrate a high level of achievement in the advancement of the discipline.

Domain 3 – Service and Contribution to University and Society (total possible score: 50)

The University expects each member of academic staff to have acknowledged expertise and to provide that expertise, through various forms of service, to the school, faculty, University, to the discipline, in a profession and / or through community engagement.