



Established Professor Promotions Committee (EPPC)

Procedures for Assessing Academic Promotion Applications

Established Professor Scheme

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide further guidance for the Established Professor Promotions Committee (EPPC) in assessing applications for promotion. This document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Promotions Policy.

2. Committee Membership

Membership of the Established Professor Promotions Committee will be proposed by the President and approved by Academic Council. The list of approved names will be published on the HR website.

- Deputy President and Registrar (Chair) (ex officio)
- Vice-President for Research (ex officio)
- A minimum of 1 Established Professor from each College, normally drawn from the College nominees on APC
- 3 external nominees, to include the 2 independent oversight assessors from APC, and one further nominee appointed by the President, who must be full professors.
- The EPPC shall be exactly gender balanced. Consideration shall also be given to the breadth of disciplinary representation. There should be 2 members in disciplines cognate with each of the 4 Colleges of the University.

Apart from the ex officio and external members, the membership term of the EPPC will normally be for three years, which may be renewed, exceptionally, for up to a further three years where consistency and continuity require this. Membership of the EPPC is subject to review by the President, as required.

The Chair of the EPPC will conduct workshops for candidates approximately one month before the closing date for applications.

The Established Professor Promotions Committee will be supported administratively by HR, and the Director of HR or nominee shall be in attendance at all meetings.

3. Attendance at EPPC Meetings

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the meeting is quorate, that is, that there are at least six members of the EPPC present, and that at least 40% of those present are female and 40% male. Where this is not the case, the meeting shall be rescheduled.

Attendance will be monitored on an annual basis and, if necessary, recommendations for changing the composition of the EPPC made to Governing Authority.

4. Conflict of Interest

At the start of each EPPC meeting members must declare any conflicts of interest. The Established Professor Promotions Committee will take into consideration possible conflicts of interest as part of its deliberations having regard to the scheme's Conflict of Interest Guidelines (2 – 6)¹.

Members of EPPC will declare any relationship with a candidate that might be perceived as creating a personal interest or conflict capable of affecting their impartial judgement.

Where an application is being considered from a candidate whose Head of School is a member of the EPPC, the Head of School will not be excluded from the meeting but will be asked to defer commenting on the application until all other members of the committee have done so.

Members of the EPPC do not represent Colleges/Schools and there should be no advocacy of individual cases. The role of the EPPC is to ensure that impartial, fair and consistent consideration is given to each application.

The onus is also put on External Assessors to declare any conflict of interest in assessing an application. The invitation from the EPPC to the External Assessor will include this request and assessors will be asked to provide details of their level of association with the candidate as part of their assessment. A copy of the conflict-of-interest guidelines will be sent to External Assessors.

All members of EPPC and all external assessors will be required to sign a conflict-of-interest declaration.

5. Equality Issues

¹ Academic Promotions scheme COI Guidelines

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/registrar/academicpromotions/files/University-of-Galway-Academic-Promotions-COI-Guidelines.pdf>

Consideration of equality issues is critical to the effective operation of the University's promotion procedure which is designed to ensure consistency and fairness in decision-making.

The Committee must not raise or discuss any equality issues that are not explicitly referred to by the candidate in their application for promotion.

The EPPC is committed to non-discrimination on the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the traveller community. The EPPC will consider any equality issues in line with the University's Equal Opportunities Policies.²

All members of the committee will be required to attend equality and unconscious bias training, as well as training on giving effective feedback.

6. Assessment of applications where leave has been stated (instead of Part-Time Staff, Leave of Absence)

A provision exists to recognise the way in which some selection criteria will exclude statistically more women and carers, and to adapt the assessment criteria accordingly. A staff member who has experienced time out from their job for maternity, adoptive, parental, sick leave, disability-related sick leave and carer's leave, will not be able to produce the same quantity of output as a comparable staff member who has not taken time out.

Where documented leave has been indicated in an application, the Established Professor Promotions Committee will assess output relative to opportunity, i.e. academic output will be counted on a *pro-rata* basis for a staff member who has taken such leave.

7. Assessment Procedures

7.1. Deadlines and Working Principles

The EPPC will consider applications that have been submitted to HR by the appropriate deadline. There shall be two such deadlines annually: 16.00 on the last working day of February and 16.00 on the last working day of August.

- Each member of the EPPC will normally read each application prior to the EPPC meeting and will contribute to the discussion on each application.
- The EPPC will work by consensus.
- If a member of the EPPC is not present at the meeting where a recommendation is

² The University's policies in this regard are at: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/equalityanddiversity/policies-procedures/>

made they will confirm their agreement or disagreement with the decision at the subsequent EPPC meeting.³

- The absent member must normally submit a report on the applications prior to the relevant meeting of the EPPC.

7.2. Working Methods – Prima Facie Case

7.2.1. Prior to the Meeting

- Prior to the EPPC meeting each member of the EPPC will review each application against the criteria of the scheme in order to form an individual view as to whether a prima facie case has been established.⁴⁵
- Each member of the Committee should form a view against each of the main headings for each candidate. These views will be submitted in advance on the appropriate pro-forma in accordance with the following scheme:
 - 3 = Criterion met
 - 2 = Criterion possibly met
 - 1 = Criterion not met
- Members will not take into consideration any other information in relation to the application or the applicant, nor shall they seek additional information from any individual.
- Exceptionally, where the number of applications is high, the Chair may designate two or more members of the EPPC as lead readers on subsets of the applications.

7.2.2. During the Meeting

- The Chair will select a member of the EPPC to lead the assessment of each application, and following consideration by the full committee, a collective decision will be made on whether the candidate has provided sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case.
- Where the EPPC determines that a candidate has demonstrated a prima facie case, the EPPC will agree a ranked list of External Assessors from the candidate's list and, separately, from the Head of School/Executive Dean's list⁵ and select external assessors, as follows:
 - Promotion to Established Professor: 3 external assessors (1 from the candidate and 2 from the HoS/Executive Dean).
- Where the EPPC determines that a candidate has not established a prima facie case, a member of the EPPC will be asked to prepare a draft feedback report for

³ Members of the Committee on research sabbatical or absent due to circumstances such as illness etc. will not be required to contribute to the decision-making process.

⁴ A prima facie case will exist if the consensus view of the EPPC is that, subject to the required assessment by external experts, the body of evidence presented across the promotion criteria is likely to merit promotion under the requirements of the scheme.

⁵ This list should be agreed between the relevant Head of School and Executive Dean. In the event of disagreement, the Dean's decision will be final.

consideration and approval by the EPPC. This report should include a clear rationale for the decision and suggest what actions the candidate might take in order to strengthen a subsequent application.

- When all feedback reports are agreed, the EPPC will finalise the list of candidates who have not established a prima facie case to be forwarded to the President for adoption. This will be sent to the President at the same time as the list of recommendations for promotion.

7.3. External Assessor Reports

7.3.1. Role of EPPC

Where it has been agreed that external assessors must be sought, members of the EPPC, working in pairs, will:

- Be assigned a number of applications;
- Review the list of nominated external assessors provided by the candidate and HOS/Executive Dean;
- Agree a ranked list of external assessors for recommendation to the full Committee.

7.3.2. Role of HR

- HR will contact selected External Assessors in order of ranking by the EPPC. Where necessary, HR will move to the next selected external assessor on the list until the requisite number of reports have been received;
- Assessors will be given 4 weeks to provide a report.
- The reports will be forwarded to the EPPC for consideration when the requisite number of external assessor reports have been received by HR;
- If, for any reason, more than the requisite number of reports is submitted to HR, HR will forward all of the external assessor reports to the EPPC. If the required number of positive reports is among this number, these shall be considered;
- Should an assessor's report be received by HR that was ranked higher than reports previously received and made available to the EPPC, the report will not be used unless required due to another report being excluded due to conflict of interest;
- An additional report will only be forwarded to the EPPC in the event that a report from a higher ranked external assessor is excluded due to a conflict of interest;
- At the end of the process, candidates may access copies of their External Assessor reports by contacting the University's Freedom of Information Office.

7.4. Working Methods – Post-External Assessment

- The Chair will select a member of the EPPC to initiate the discussion on the assessment of each application along with the external assessors' reports, against the criteria of

the scheme;

- Each member of the committee present will be given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion;
- Where an assessor in their assessment communicates a conflict of interest, the EPPC will exclude the assessor's report and an additional report or reports will be obtained. Where the committee seeks additional assessors' reports, the application will be considered at the first opportunity when the additional reports are available;
- The EPPC will then determine if the candidate has provided sufficient evidence for promotion to the required level, as supported by external assessment.
- Where a candidate is being recommended for promotion, a member of the EPPC will be asked to prepare a draft feedback report for consideration and approval by the EPPC at its next scheduled meeting. This report should include a clear rationale for the decision and where appropriate outline any areas of note for special mention.
- Where a candidate is not being recommended for promotion, a member of the EPPC will be asked to prepare a draft feedback report for consideration and approval by the EPPC at its next scheduled meeting. This report should include a clear rationale for the decision and outline what actions the candidate might take to ensure that a subsequent application would have a higher likelihood of success. The feedback should provide an indicative timeframe for achieving these actions.
- When all of the feedback reports have been agreed, the EPPC will finalise the list of recommendations to be forwarded to the President for approval.

8. Conclusion of the Process

Following the conclusion of the process:

- The names of candidates recommended for promotion by the EPPC will be forwarded to the President for adoption.
- The names of candidates not recommended for promotion by the EPPC will also be forwarded to the President by HR.
- Candidates will be informed in writing by the Chair of the Committee of the decision in respect of their application and will be given a feedback report on the reason/s for that decision.
- A candidate who requires copies of her/his External Assessors reports should contact the Freedom of Information Office.
- College Deans and Heads of School will be informed of the outcome of the assessment process and will be provided with a copy of the feedback reports in relation to candidates from their School/College.
- Candidates who are not recommended for promotion will also be offered the opportunity for oral feedback, normally within 30 days of the notification of the outcome of the application. Two members of EPPC will provide the oral feedback (normally the member who drafts the candidate feedback and one other member of the Committee).

- Following oral feedback, a short note of the feedback meeting will be drafted and retained as a record of the meeting. The note will be sent to the candidate for their review and agreement following the oral feedback meeting.
- UMT will be notified of successful candidates as an item of routine business.
- A list of promoted candidates will be forwarded for noting at the first meeting of both the Governing Authority and Academic Council following the conclusion of the process.
- External Assessors may be advised of the outcome for the candidate for whom he/she provided an assessment.
- The effective date of promotion for successful candidates will be the 1st day of the April or October eight months after the application deadline for the round in which the application was made, providing all approvals under this Policy have been obtained.

9. Notes and Records

Each member of the EPPC will be expected to make notes in relation to their assessment of each application. Notes should be impersonal, factual and clear as to the comment being made. Notes should not compare candidates but should reference back to the criteria of the scheme or to statements made by the candidate, the Head of School, Executive Dean, or External Assessors. Individual notes will be passed to the HR administrator and held for a minimum of 12 months. Notes and relevant minutes will be available to candidates on request following the conclusion of the process, including written and oral feedback. External assessor's reports are provided in confidence (within the framework of FOI legislation) and as such will be retained by HR and candidates may apply for them under FOI.

10. Confidentiality

Confidentiality, by all participants, will be maintained throughout the process. All discussion during the assessment process and any data generated will remain confidential to the members of the Established Professor Promotions Committee. The names of promoted candidates will not be released until the President has adopted the recommendations of the EPPC and the candidates have been advised accordingly.

11. Incomplete Applications

The EPPC will not progress incomplete applications. Where an incomplete application is identified by the Committee, this will be referred back to the applicant, who will be invited to address the outstanding issues and re-submit to a subsequent round.

Deputy President & Registrar

18 December 2024