

# Academic Promotions Policy

## Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy informs prospective applicants about how La Trobe recognises and rewards the achievements of academic staff by providing promotion pathways.

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all academic staff employed at La Trobe University whether full time or part time, fixed-term or continuing, and those with joint appointments who seek promotion to:

- a. Level B (Lecturer; Research Fellow)
- b. Level C (Senior Lecturer; Senior Research Fellow)
- c. Level D (Associate Professor; or Principal Research Fellow and Associate Professor)
- d. Level E (Professor)

(3) This Policy does not apply to casual or sessional academic staff or recent professional practice employees.

(4) Applicants for promotion should normally have held a position at La Trobe for a minimum of one year prior to seeking promotion.

(5) Fixed-term staff are eligible to apply for promotion but if promotion is granted, it will not extend a fixed-term appointment.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

### Principles

(6) La Trobe seeks to attract, retain and develop very high quality staff to achieve the University's strategic goals. As part of this commitment, it seeks to encourage, by way of promotion, those members of academic staff who demonstrate outstanding qualities in performing their responsibilities.

(7) The University will recognise and reward sustained academic excellence through a transparent and consistent process of promotion. Promotion will be awarded based on evidence of the quality and impact of contributions to the University's strategic goals in each of the three areas of:

- a. teaching;
- b. research and scholarly activity; and
- c. academic citizenship (including service, leadership and engagement).

(8) Where an academic appointment specifically precludes or constrains contribution to one of these areas (for example, research-only positions), the application will be judged against the relevant areas of contribution.

(9) Academic promotion at La Trobe University will be based on the following principles:

- a. Academic promotion criteria will be consistent with selection criteria, probationary review criteria and the University's [Performance and Development \(Career Success\) Procedure](#), including La Trobe's commitment to its cultural qualities and values.
- b. The University values the diversity in its academic workforce. Equality of opportunity forms the basis of conferring all forms of employment benefits at the University, including promotion.
- c. Academic staff will be provided with appropriate advice and support in the preparation of applications for promotion, and will receive clear and timely feedback on the outcomes.
- d. The academic promotion process will assess applications on the evidence provided about the quality, outcomes and impact of their contribution in each area.
- e. The academic promotion process will be based on demonstrated performance, relative to opportunity, and will actively encourage applications from under-represented groups.
- f. Evidence for promotion will be assessed over an academic staff member's entire career, however more significance will be placed on achievements, outputs and impact in the period since last promotion or appointment to the current academic classification level, taking into account the work that the staff member has been required to undertake by the University.
- g. There are no quotas on the number of academic staff promoted annually. Applications are judged on their merit with reference to the Minimum Standards for Academic Levels (MSALs). In the case of a successful promotion outcome, it is the responsibility of the relevant academic unit to fund the salary costs attributed to promotion. This will also apply in the case of staff holding research-only positions, whose salaries usually are provided by external funding bodies.
- h. All staff involved in promotion processes will uphold the principles of confidentiality and privacy.

## Section 4 - Procedures

### Part A - Fields of Academic Work

(10) Applicants will demonstrate high levels of performance and achievement, appropriate to academic level, disciplinary field, type of appointment and agreed work plan, and relative to opportunity, in the following three areas of academic work:

- a. teaching;
- b. research and scholarly activity; and
- c. academic citizenship (including service, leadership and engagement).

(11) It is expected that performance and achievements are demonstrated at a level commensurate with the MSALs of the level for which they are applying.

(12) For the purposes of this Policy, teaching activity includes but is not limited to:

- a. creating and evaluating innovative teaching, assessment and curriculum design strategies with evidence of outcomes and impact on student learning
- b. developing effective learning environments, student support and guidance
- c. adoption and evaluation of technologies to enhance the student learning experience
- d. assessing and giving feedback to students on their learning and learning support activities
- e. integration of scholarship, discipline research and professional learning activities
- f. demonstrated leadership in teaching and curriculum development

- g. contribution to quality teaching culture
- h. securing internal or external grants to support instructional activities

(13) Research and scholarly activity includes but is not limited to:

- a. production of quality research publications and other outputs, including contract research reports and creative works, with demonstrated indicators of esteem
- b. securing internal and external research funding
- c. demonstrated research impact and/or demonstrated research engagement
- d. research leadership and mentoring
- e. educational research and/or scholarship of teaching including scholarly, evidence-based presentations to peers at seminars and conferences; and/or publishing pedagogic research in peer-reviewed journals
- f. contribution to research culture
- g. honours and graduate research supervision
- h. effective development and management of partnerships with industry, government, business or community groups to support research and/or knowledge transfer

(14) Academic citizenship activity includes but is not limited to:

- a. contribution to academic governance, leadership and University policy, which may include representation on committees/working groups and/or formal leadership positions at Course, Department, Research Centre, School, regional and/or University levels
- b. mentoring and supporting the development of other staff
- c. leadership and contribution to academic activities, including meetings, forums, professional development, seminars, and networks
- d. contributions to the profession/discipline, including professional organisations within the discipline, journal reviewing and editorial functions
- e. engagement with industry, government, business and the broader community that aligns with La Trobe's strategic goals and has demonstrable, sustained impact
- f. consultancy
- g. commercialisation activities
- h. demonstrated high standards of professional behaviour consistent with the University's Cultural Qualities.

## **Part B - Basis for Promotion**

(15) Promotion is based on:

- a. the applicant's qualifications and/or experience;
- b. evidence (see Definitions) of achievement in three areas of academic activity: teaching, research and scholarship, and academic citizenship as appropriate with respect to the applicant's basis of employment;
- c. confirmation from the applicant's Career Success Manager/Academic Reviewer that the applicant has demonstrated a level of achievement and performance that is appropriate to their existing academic level.

(16) In addition to the above, consideration is also given to the following:

- a. the impact of the demands of substantive roles such as Dean, Head of Discipline, Director or equivalent
- b. the appropriate balance of performance and outcomes in disciplines and professions where there is a greater reliance on current professional practice

- c. joint appointments with partner institutions
- d. interrupted careers and fractional appointments due to family commitments (e.g. primary carer for children, elder-care, illness of a partner or dependant), ill health or disability where a case is explicitly made to the Academic Promotions Committee within the application.

(17) Applicants must provide supporting evidence for any claims made in their application, using the application template available on the [Academic Promotions Intranet](#).

### **Qualifications and/or Relevant Experience**

(18) Applicants for promotion must hold a relevant doctorate or possess and demonstrate equivalent qualifications and experience.

(19) The Committee will, in the context of the level for which promotion is applied, consider the appropriateness of levels and types of formal qualifications and/or substantial progress towards such qualifications or, where relevant consider and determine the equivalence of alternative qualifications and/or experience held by applicants.

### **Preparing and Lodging the Application**

(20) Applicants will assess whether they are eligible for promotion and merit promotion with reference to the MSALs and the La Trobe University Guidelines for promotion.

(21) Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek guidance and discuss their application with the following before making an application for promotion:

- a. Career Success Manager/Academic Reviewer/Head of Department
- b. Dean/Director of Centre/Institute
- c. an academic mentor

(22) There will be one promotion application round each year.

(23) The Academic Promotions Committee will convene once per year to consider applications. The dates of Academic Promotions Committees' meetings and the cut-off dates for inclusion in those meetings will be published on the [Academic Promotions Intranet](#) at the start of the calendar year.

(24) Applications not submitted or incomplete by the cut-off date for a meeting of the Academic Promotions Committee will be held over to the next meeting. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Chair.

(25) Applicants must follow the "Instructions for Applicants" and submit applications electronically via the Academic Promotions link that will be available on the Internal Jobs intranet. The submission must include:

- a. completed Academic Promotions Application Form
- b. CV in the standardised format, available on the [Academic Promotions Intranet](#)
- c. all supporting documents as required by the 'Instructions for Applicants'.

(26) Applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgement once their application has been lodged.

## **Part C - Referee and External Assessor Reports**

### **Table 1: Summary of Referee and Assessor Requirements, by Academic Level**

Promotion to level	Applicant's self-nominated Internal and External Referees	Independent External Assessors, nominated by Dean	Sign off on application and nominated assessors
Level B	2 required, at least 1 must be external	Not required	Dean
Level C	3 required, at least 1 must be external	Not required	Dean
Level D	2 required, at least 1 must be external	2 required	Dean
Level E	3 required, at least 2 must be external	3 required	Dean

### Dean (or Equivalent) Report

(27) It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a report from their Dean (or equivalent) prior to submitting their application.

(28) The applicant should provide the Dean with their completed application, at least five weeks prior to the closing date for applications.

(29) If the applicant does not complete the above steps within the required timeframe, it will be at the Dean's discretion as to whether the report:

- a. can be completed by the required deadline; or
- b. whether the applicant will be delayed in lodging an application until the next round.

(30) The Dean will:

- a. consult with the applicant's Head of Department and Career Success Manager and/or Academic Reviewer as appropriate, to confirm the applicant's performance in each area against level, agreed workload allocation and type of appointment;
- b. verify the application and supporting documents;
- c. prepare the Dean Report using the prescribed template. The report should:
  - i. confirm the veracity and merits of the application and supporting documents;
  - ii. indicate whether performance goals have been met;
- d. ensure that comments in the report are evidence based and include input from the Career Success Manager and/or Academic Reviewer;
- e. sign the Dean report and select the appropriate checkbox on the report template ('I do support the application' / 'I do not support the application');
- f. discuss the completed report with the applicant. Applicants may provide up to a response (up to one page) to the Dean report in the form of a rejoinder;
- g. normally complete their report within four weeks from receipt of application to enable the applicant to submit their application, including the Dean report, on time;
- h. provide, in confidence, the names and contact details of Independent External Assessors for applicants to Level D and E only (See Table 1).

(31) For Level B and C applications, the Dean may delegate to the Head of Department or the applicant's Career Success Manager and/or Academic Reviewer as appropriate to complete the Dean report. The Dean is required to sign off on reports prepared by their delegate.

(32) The Dean Report will not be provided to assessors or referees during the promotions process.

## Referee Reports

(33) All applicants will contact each of their academic/professional referees to request a referee report on their suitability for promotion. The referee report provides evidence to augment and support the applicant's case for promotion.

(34) Applicants will send the following documents to referees who have agreed to provide a referee report:

- a. Completed Academic Promotion Application form;
- b. Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- c. Information for Referees (available on the [Academic Promotions Intranet Site](#)); and
- d. Referee Report template (available on the [Academic Promotions Intranet](#)).

(35) The referee report is to be forwarded by the referee via email to: [academic.reference@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:academic.reference@latrobe.edu.au) by the application close date (as noted on the [Academic Promotions Intranet](#)).

(36) All applicants will provide the names and details of their referees with their application for promotion to enable the Executive Officer to identify any outstanding reports.

(37) The Executive Officer will advise the applicant if a referee report has not been received by the application close date. The applicant will need to follow up with their referee to ensure the report is provided.

(38) Applicants must not nominate their Career Success Manager/Academic Reviewer or members of the Academic Promotions Committees as referees, but they are encouraged to seek advice from them regarding referee selection.

(39) Academic referees must be at or above the level for which the applicant is seeking promotion. Professional or industry referees are expected to hold national standing or equivalent in the applicant's field of expertise.

(40) Applicants must declare any personal, familial or ongoing relationship with a referee when they submit their promotion application.

(41) After the outcome of the application is known applicants may be provided with copies of the referee reports if referees have agreed to make them available. Referees may elect not to make their report available to the applicant by indicating this in their report.

### Independent External Assessors for Applications to Level D and E Only

(42) The role of independent external assessors is to provide an objective, expert and confidential assessment of claims of excellence made in the application in relation to teaching, research and scholarship, and academic citizenship.

(43) The Dean may discuss potential external assessors with the applicant but the final selection will be provided by the Dean in confidence.

(44) The Dean is responsible for providing the names and contact details of assessors as per the requirements specified in Table 1 above, and confirming that the assessors have agreed to provide reports.

(45) The Dean will provide the names and contact details of assessors to [academicpromotions@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:academicpromotions@latrobe.edu.au) by the application close date.

(46) In nominating independent external assessors, the Dean will make every attempt to ensure that those persons are independent. As a guideline, for assessors to be considered 'independent of the applicant' they should not have:

- a. co-published with the applicant (Australian Research Council conflict of interest guidelines should be used as a

reference in relation to this issue);

- b. worked on a research grant with the applicant;
- c. supervised the applicant as a PhD student or have been supervised by the applicant;
- d. a close personal relationship or association; or
- e. common business interests or other conflicts of interest.

(47) The nominated external assessors will normally be Level E. They will be experts of national or international standing within the relevant discipline with a significant publication track record, or readily identified as distinguished leaders in their field.

(48) Where applicants do not want the Academic Promotions Committee to approach a particular assessor(s), they may inform the Dean when submitting their application, briefly outlining the reason for their request.

(49) The Executive Officer will contact external assessors by email to request Assessor Reports. Assessors will be sent copies of the Academic Promotion Application form, the applicant's CV and La Trobe's Academic Promotion Policy. Assessors will be requested to provide their report within four weeks of receiving the request to provide a report.

(50) After the outcome of the application is known applicants may be provided with copies of the assessor reports where assessors have agreed to make them available. Assessors may elect not to make their report to available to the applicant by indicating in their report.

## **Part D - Academic Promotions Committees**

(51) The Vice-Chancellor will appoint the Academic Promotions Committees.

(52) The Committees shall meet once per year.

(53) The term of membership shall be for three years and retiring members shall not be eligible for direct re-appointment.

(54) The Office of the Provost will provide administrative support to the Committees.

### **Membership of Academic Promotions Committees**

(55) There will be two Academic Promotions Committees. Committee membership will depend on the academic level for which promotion is being sought.

(56) For Academic Levels B and C, the Academic Promotions Committee will comprise:

- a. the Chair nominated by the Vice-Chancellor
- b. Chair of Academic Board or nominee from the Academic Board membership
- c. five members drawn from the Schools
- d. up to three nominees of the Vice-Chancellor, selected to ensure expertise in teaching and/or community service, research experience, disciplinary balance and gender balance
- e. one senior staff representative from Human Resources as a non-voting observer to provide advice at the request of the Committee.

(57) The Chair and all members of the B and C Committee will be academic staff members of the University who hold the classification of associate professor or professor or equivalent.

(58) For Academic Levels D and E, the Academic Promotions Committee will comprise:

- a. a Deputy Vice-Chancellor nominated by the Vice-Chancellor
- b. Chair of Academic Board or nominee from the Academic Board membership
- c. five members drawn from the Schools
- d. up to three nominees of the Vice-Chancellor, selected to ensure expertise in teaching and/or community service, research experience, disciplinary balance and gender balance
- e. one senior staff representative from Human Resources as a non-voting observer to provide advice at the request of the Committee.

In addition, best endeavours will be made to include one invited external Level E academic drawn from an external pool.

(59) The Chair and all internal members of the Level D and E Academic Promotions Committee will be academic staff members of the University who hold the classification of professor or equivalent.

### **Assessment of Application**

(60) The Academic Promotions Committees will base their decisions on the material provided in the application process and will not take into account information that is known to the Committee, but which is not referred to and supported with evidence in the application. In addition to the views provided by the relevant Dean, referees and external assessors, the Committees will fulfill an important deliberative role in applying their expertise and bringing to bear a University-wide perspective, to determine the outcome of an application. The Academic Promotions Committees reserve the right to seek additional information from assessors, referees or other internal or external advisors to assist them to make a decision about an application.

(61) If an applicant identifies as Aboriginal or as a Torres Strait Islander and the Committee requires additional information and advice from an Indigenous perspective, the Chair may:

- a. seek advice from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) or nominee to assist the Committee in reaching a decision on the application; and/or
- b. ask the Vice-Chancellor to expand membership of the Academic Promotions Committee by the addition of an Indigenous representative for that meeting. The representative may be from La Trobe or another University.

(62) Disciplinary differences will be taken into account and, where possible, the Committees will use disciplinary norms when assessing applications. If there are matters that require clarification, additional information may be sought by the Committees from the Dean or other appropriate senior person with a knowledge of a particular discipline or specialist area.

### **Approval Process**

(63) The Academic Promotions Committees will provide recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor arising from each of their meetings.

(64) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving, or not approving, the recommendations of the Academic Promotions Committees.

(65) The Vice-Chancellor will report promotions to the Academic Board and the wider University community through All Staff communications.

## **Part E - Outcomes**



## **Effective Date of Promotion and Salary Point**

(66) Applicants will be advised in writing of a successful promotion outcome and the date from which the promotion will take effect.

(67) Promotion will be effective from the first of January in the year following the Academic Promotions Committee meeting at which the promotion was recommended.

(68) All promotions will be to the first salary point of the level to which the applicant is promoted, except where the employee is in receipt of a coordination responsibility payment to the promoted level, when they shall be appointed at the increment level required to ensure that they do not suffer any reduction in remuneration.

## **Unsuccessful Applicants**

(69) Following the Vice-Chancellor's approval of the Academic Promotions Committee recommendations, the Executive Officer will advise unsuccessful applicants and the respective Dean in writing. In doing so the Executive Officer will also invite the applicant to seek a meeting with the Chair or nominated member of the Academic Promotions Committee to discuss the outcome of their promotion application.

(70) The Dean (or equivalent) will meet with each unsuccessful applicant to provide information that would be useful for the future guidance of the applicant. Meetings for this purpose will take place as soon as possible after the applicants have been advised of their application outcome.

(71) Unsuccessful applicants must ensure they have updated, new and relevant information and evidence to support a new application before re-applying.

## **Reconsideration**

(72) Unsuccessful applicants may request reconsideration of their application only on the grounds that a procedural irregularity has occurred.

(73) A request for reconsideration will normally only be considered after the applicant has met with the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee to discuss the outcome of their promotion application.

(74) When requesting reconsideration, applicants must provide a written statement to the Chair within 28 days from the date of the letter of outcome, detailing the procedural irregularity, supported by evidence.

(75) Requests for reconsideration will be considered by the Reconsideration Review Group, convened by the Executive Director, Human Resources or nominee, who will advise the Vice-Chancellor whether a procedural irregularity has occurred and if an application should be reconsidered by the original Academic Promotions Committee.

(76) Where a procedural irregularity was determined not to have affected the Academic Promotions Committee outcome, the original decision will stand.

(77) Where a procedural irregularity was determined to have adversely affected the Academic Promotions Committee outcome, the original committee will reconvene and reconsider the application and provide a new recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor.

(78) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving the outcome, based on the recommendations presented by the Academic Promotions Committee.

(79) The applicant will be informed in writing of the final outcome by the Vice-Chancellor.

(80) Unsuccessful applicants have the right to use the University [Grievance Resolution Procedure](#) or the Dispute Resolution Procedure outlined in the [Collective Agreement](#) or consult the University or State Ombudsman

## Part F - Special Cases

### Upgrading a Reversionary Substantive Position

(81) A staff member who holds a continuing substantive position and is appointed as a result of an externally competitive process to a fixed-term academic position at a higher level at La Trobe, may apply for promotion to upgrade their reversionary substantive position.

(82) Provided that the fixed-term appointment and the substantive position are both research-only positions, the staff member may submit their appointment application in place of the narrative section of their promotion application. All other promotion documentation and reports are required as for a standard application.

(83) A current Level C member of staff who has been awarded an ARC Future Fellowship or an NHMRC Investigator Grant at equivalent to Level D may apply for promotion on the basis of excellence in research to upgrade their substantive position. Provided the applicant applies within 18 months of being awarded the Future Fellowship or Investigator Grant, the Committee will accept the reports for the Future Fellowship or Investigator Grant application in place of the usual assessor reports. The applicant should submit a full standard application for promotion together with the relevant reports, including the Dean Report, and also may wish to submit a rejoinder.

### Promotion of Joint Appointments

(84) In the case of joint appointments, the promotion decision by the majority participant (employer) will be recognized by the other participating employer unless otherwise agreed in writing.

(85) In the case where joint appointments are equal (50:50), the employers will agree in writing on which party will take responsibility for the one promotion process of staff and that decision will be accepted by the other partner.

(86) The staff member must provide written confirmation of the promotion from the other partner institution to the Dean, Executive Officer and Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee.

### Out of Cycle Expedited Promotion - Exceptional Circumstances

(87) In exceptional circumstances, and when it is deemed by the Vice-Chancellor to be an appropriate mechanism to support the University's strategic operational goals, an application for promotion may be considered outside of the normal promotions schedule. This may include situations where the University wishes to counter an offer received by a high performing staff member.

(88) The criteria for out-of-cycle expedited applications will be consistent with the standards expected for promotion through the normal promotions round. The Committee also will consider the strategic significance of the staff member's contributions to the Department, School and University.

(89) The Provost may put forward to the Vice-Chancellor a recommendation that a staff member be considered for out-of-cycle promotion. Documentation submitted by the Provost should include:

- a. an up-to date version of the staff member's curriculum vitae and the completed promotions application form
- b. a statement prepared by the staff member providing evidence of their contributions to or achievements in each of the three assessment areas
- c. a statement by the Provost detailing the exceptional circumstances which would warrant out-of-cycle, expedited assessment (including evidence of an offer to the staff member from another University if this is the basis for the case)
- d. the date by which the applicant must respond to an offer from another University

- e. the significance of the staff member's contributions in terms of meeting strategic or operational objectives of the area/University
- f. an assessment of the staff member's profile and contributions against the criteria for promotion to that level
- g. a statement from the Dean supporting the promotion
- h. a list of three assessors nominated by the Provost in consultation with the professor of discipline or other appropriate senior person with a knowledge of a particular discipline or specialist area may be required upon request of the Vice-Chancellor and/or the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee. The Provost should also ascertain before putting forward the names of assessors, whether they would be willing/available to provide reports at short notice if so requested.

(90) The Provost should forward all of the above documentation in electronic form to the Executive Officer, Academic Promotions Committee, at the time the submission is made to the Vice-Chancellor.

(91) The Vice-Chancellor will advise the Executive Officer, Academic Promotions Committee, whether they endorse the application.

(92) The Executive Officer will ensure the application is considered by the Academic Promotions Committee as soon as practicable.

(93) After reviewing the case, the Committee may recommend the payment of a retention allowance as an alternative to promotion.

(94) For applications presented out of cycle and/or in exceptional circumstances, the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving any variations to the academic promotions process and the outcome of the application.

## Section 5 - Definitions

(95) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedures:

- a. External assessor: An academic with national or international standing within the relevant discipline from an institution other than La Trobe University who is able to provide an independent, objective and informed judgement on the quality and impact of the applicant's work in relation to the case for promotion. External assessors will be at or above the academic level for which promotion is being sought. External assessors must be independent of the applicant, they must not have/had a professional or personal relationship with the applicant (eg. current or past colleague, research collaborator, etc.). External Assessors are nominated by the applicant's Dean.
- b. Evidence: externally peer-reviewed outputs, appropriate preparation and staff development, feedback and evaluations from relevant people such as referees, students, supervisors or external partners.
- c. Leadership: leadership in promoting research, developing research training, fostering excellence in teaching and encouraging academic staff development; the willingness and ability to provide leadership in a discipline, program, School within the University and the community at large.
- d. MSALs: Minimum Standards for Academic Levels.
- e. Referee: An academic or professional referee must be at or above the academic level for which the applicant is seeking promotion and be able to provide an informed judgement on the quality of work of the applicant in relation to the case for promotion. Professional or industry referees are expected to hold national standing or equivalent in the applicant's field of expertise. External referees must be from an institution other than La Trobe University.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	15th May 2020
<b>Review Date</b>	13th May 2023
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	13th May 2020
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