



Academic Promotions Framework

Version for Grade M Movement

January 2024

Foreword



In December 2017, as Chair of the Progression and Promotions Task and Finish Group, I presented a series of recommendations to Senate, which included the development of a new promotions framework. In undertaking this work, we had the opportunity to capture the aspirations of the institution's strategy and reflect its core values, ensuring alignment between both personal and institutional goals. It also needed to be transparent and accessible, and reward and recognise the full range of contributions and achievements that are valued by our institution.

We looked at approaches adopted in many other universities and adapted these to the University of Bristol context. These included categories for research and education, as well as ones that enabled us to highlight the value of multi/inter-disciplinary work and the vital engagement and impact activities that links us with society. We also wanted to include a separate category for leadership and citizenship to capture the demonstration of our shared values and our capacity to work together towards both personal and institutional goals.

After extensive consultation, we honed the framework to four broad categories with a balance of criteria to cover the range of expectations and experiences across all three pathways and the full diversity of work at the University.

It is also worth highlighting that such a framework could be used beyond building and assessing cases for promotion. For example, it could facilitate better career discussions for individuals leading to more focused personal and professional development. It is also felt that this framework promises to inform more flexible and inclusive career progression for all our academic staff.

I hope that the revised framework captures our sense of what is needed in a fair and effective promotions process, and that it will help us to better reward and recognise the full range of talent across the institution.

Professor Judith Squires
Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

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How to use the framework

Introduction

The Academic Promotions Framework describes the full extent of academic contributions that we value and recognise. It comprises four broad categories that describe the work that is part of any academic career at the University of Bristol. Each category includes several criteria to capture the full range of academic practice as shown below:

| Research | Education | Engagement & Impact | Leadership & Citizenship |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Pursuing new knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Adding value to discovery through outcomes, process and commitment</p> | <p>Facilitating active learning</p> <p>Encouraging critical, creative thinking</p> <p>Instilling the ability and passion for learning</p> | <p>Co-producing, translating and applying knowledge</p> <p>Linking the University with society</p> <p>Exchanging knowledge with the broader community</p> | <p>Actively contributing to the University</p> <p>Being a role model to others</p> <p>Fostering an inclusive environment</p> |
| <p>R-1 Research output</p> <p>R-2 Research capacity and recognition</p> <p>R-3 Grant income</p> <p>R-4 Research supervision</p> | <p>E-1 Education practice</p> <p>E-2 Supporting students</p> <p>E-3 Curriculum development</p> <p>E-4 Scholarship of teaching and learning</p> | <p>EI-1 Engagement with external organisations</p> <p>EI-2 Translation and application of knowledge</p> <p>EI-3 Community dialogue</p> | <p>LC-1 Leadership in the University</p> <p>LC-2 Leadership in your discipline</p> <p>LC-3 Collegiality</p> <p>LC-4 Contribution to the University</p> |

There are 15 criteria in the table above (highlighted in *red italics* in the text below). All are essential to the University and are a shared responsibility across the whole academic community. They are also dependent on each other, with many important linkages across the criteria, and so should be seen as working together rather than in isolation. At an individual level, the choice of criteria needs to take into account your role/job profile, academic pathway, academic discipline, career aspirations and personal circumstances.

The **Research** category captures what it takes to build on our position as one of the world's leading research-intensive universities. It includes our *research output (R-1)* but goes beyond publications and other formal ways to present research findings. For example, balancing quality and quantity of output, as well as how we go about our research and research integrity, are equally important.

This category also captures the essential activities that enable research outputs: building *research capacity and recognition (R-2)*. This is about both individual and collective efforts to develop, sustain and build our research capability in a vibrant, inclusive and collaborative research culture, including supporting the career development of researchers within and outside academia. Another fundamental aspect is *grant income (R-3)*, and our shared role in ensuring that Bristol continues to grow and diversify its research portfolio, especially in areas of emerging research excellence and in response to global challenges.

These criteria speak to our efforts as a research community to deliver world-leading research. The final research criterion is about our shared responsibility to help those starting their careers to

progress through *research supervision (R-4)*. It captures what it is to support, challenge and inspire students to be effective researchers and contribute to a collaborative research culture.

The **Education** category captures how we create a distinctive and effective learning environment, one that makes a difference for all. Fundamental to this is our *education practice (E-1)*, which includes how we engage with a diverse range of students and reflect on our practice so that we can sustain and/or improve what we do.

Central to our role as educators and researchers is our contact with students through *supporting students (E-2)*. It goes beyond just tutorials and captures all the personal interactions that help our students to feel part of the wider University community, and to be effective in their studies, develop new skills, and foster their sense of belonging both to your discipline and the University. It is also an opportunity to engage them in the latest research and to prompt them to start thinking about their future role in the world.

Curriculum development (E-3) refers to the collective effort to ensure that our educational approach challenges and changes the way we think and act in the world. Essential to achieving this is our personal investment in the *scholarship of teaching and learning (E-4)*, which captures how we ensure that our teaching is innovative and evidence-led.

The **Engagement & Impact** category describes how we interact with the outside world. It talks about *engagement with external organisations (EI-1)* to be part of or bring together communities – locally, nationally and internationally – to tackle the key issues and challenges facing society. It includes both going out to work with others and bringing others in to work with us.

Fundamental to this is the *translation and application of knowledge (EI-2)*, which is about making a real difference with our research and teaching for the benefit of the wider community. Finally, we need sustained *community dialogue (EI-3)* using different media to create opportunities for discussion. Our reputation and success as a university is also about how we engage with others and work together for mutual benefit.

Finally, the **Leadership & Citizenship** category captures much of the work that enables all of the above to happen, as well as helping to create a positive culture where everyone can thrive.

Leadership in the University (LC-1) recognises our wide-ranging leadership responsibilities at all levels and in all roles, whether this be coordinating and influencing the work of others or taking on a formal role. A vital aspect of this in higher education is *leadership in your discipline (LC-2)*. Here, the focus is on how you ensure that your discipline is visible and relevant to others both within and outside the University.

In terms of citizenship, there is *collegiality (LC-3)* to reflect our shared responsibility to each other. This includes formal processes such as staff review and mentoring, as well as the numerous ways in which we can take an active role in supporting each other to thrive. Finally, we want to recognise your *contribution to the University (LC-4)* as a whole. These are often the small things, such as getting involved in local initiatives, that help create a positive and inclusive working climate to encourage a sense of belonging and pride in where we work.

Context

The context for your work is essential in determining where to focus and prioritise your efforts across the framework. For example, it includes the recent Covid-19 crisis along with any other equality issues or personal circumstances that have impacted your capacity to work. Anyone seeking movement is invited to detail any such impacts in their paperwork, along with any support that has been agreed to mitigate the impact, and these will be taken into account. At a University, faculty and school level, it might mean a change in priorities and a rebalancing of activities across the framework. Your contribution in this context will be recognised and rewarded. To accomplish

this, it is vital that you engage with your line manager and the Development Review process to discuss and agree how best to spend your time.

Making a case

To recognise and reward the wide variety of work undertaken at Bristol, the framework includes examples of typical activities for each criterion for those working on Grade M Ranges 2 and 3. These are indicative and not exhaustive, and no one is expected to meet all of the criteria and examples provided. Rather, they are a guide that should be considered in the context of your discipline, academic pathway and the relevant [level e role profile](#). It is also expected that you will have your own examples and that we will include others over time.

For both movement within and between the Grade M ranges, you will need to provide evidence in two parts using a narrative form and referencing specific criteria in the framework:

1. Bringing others on

There is an expectation that all professors are giving back to others, bringing them on and acting as a multiplier by getting the best from those around them. It is seen as a form of service and a responsibility, with others ranging from students to your professorial colleagues, as well as those without a voice who are often overlooked. It starts with collegiality (LC-3) and enabling others by being there to listen and give feedback, supporting and challenging them as appropriate when needed. In the Research category it includes taking an active role in supporting and managing research colleagues (R-2) and supervising postgraduate researchers (R-4). Under Education, it might be through your teaching (E-1) and supporting students (E-2), as well as supporting colleagues in the development of teaching in your area (E-3). Under Leadership & Citizenship, it might be your motivation to make things better through taking an active leadership role, with or without formal authority (LC-1), as well as demonstrating collegiality through being a mentor (LC-3) and being a role model for others by creating an inclusive working environment (LC-4). **Your evidence should include examples from the Research, Education and Leadership & Citizenship categories, although it is recognised that these might be limited for those on Pathway 2 under Education and those on Pathway 3 under Research.**

2. Making a difference

In this part, we are looking for what distinguishes you as a professor. In becoming a professor, you have a platform to make a difference in terms of your research and/or teaching, as well as through external engagement and being a leader, which does not have to be in a formal leadership role. You have a unique opportunity to influence and shape your environment, taking on things that might be harder (or riskier) for others to achieve and 'to leave things better than you found them'. As you develop as a professor, it is expected that your time and energy in making a difference will be focussed on fewer of the criteria in the framework categories. For example, under Research it might be through the strength and impact of your published research (R-1), the work of your research team (R-2) and the grant income you generate, either directly or through others (R-3). Under Education, it might be the quality and impact of your teaching (E-1) and support for students (E-2) combined with curriculum reform (E-3) and the impact of your scholarship (E-4). **For all, there is an expectation that there will be strong evidence in the Engagement & Impact category (EI-1, EI-2 and EI-3), as well as a significant case under Leadership & Citizenship.** For example, by taking on a major leadership role (LC-1) and leading the thinking in your discipline (LC-2). Your evidence should describe the difference you are making, also including what you have done and how you have gone about it.

When building your case, you should make clear the impact you have made, focusing on the quality of your contribution over the quantity of activity. This is especially important if you want

anything that reduces the time you have available compared to a typical full-time working pattern on your pathway to be taken into consideration. For example, it could be that you work part-time or in a job-share, or that there has been a change in work priorities and a re-balancing of your workload, or that your personal circumstances are a factor. These should be quantified as much as possible, e.g. as fractional changes to your available time to work on specific activities, and be made clear in your application.

Other support is also available. For research, the principles highlighted on the [responsible research evaluation](#) webpage are a useful guide, along with the adoption of [open research](#) practices. The [Division of Research, Enterprise and Innovation](#) (DREI) webpages also contain numerous resources. Likewise for education, the [Education and Student Success](#) webpages provide a full range of support, e.g. [Bristol Institute of Learning and Teaching](#) (BILT) is a source of good practice and of learning and teaching innovation and excellence.

Distinguishing between the Professorial ranges

To become a Range 1 professor

Those promoted or appointed to professor on Range 1 will have demonstrated excellence in many of the framework criteria (please refer to the [version used for Promotion to Professor](#)). Excellence is performance that is qualitatively and decisively superior to satisfactory. Newly promoted professors from August 2021 made their case using this framework, providing evidence against 10 of the 15 criteria. Two of these demonstrated outstanding performance, which means that their evidence stood out from that of their peers.

To become a Range 2 professor

It is expected you will be 'making a difference' by:

- Being recognised as an established leading international authority in your field, e.g. under Research and/or Education
- Making a significant contribution in your field, e.g. under Engagement & Impact
- Demonstrating outstanding leadership in your field (LC-2)
- Demonstrating outstanding leadership in the University (LC-1)

Your evidence under 'Making a difference' needs to satisfy all four statements. The usual expectation is that it will be six years from appointment as a professor before someone is ready for this first move.

To become a Range 3 professor

A professor appointed or moved into this range will have the very highest international distinction or have made the very highest internationally recognised contributions to academic leadership.

It is expected that you will be 'making a difference' by:

- Being a world leader in your field, e.g. under Research and/or Education
- Making a lasting contribution in your field, e.g. under Engagement & Impact
- Demonstrating exceptional leadership in your field (LC-2)
- Demonstrating exceptional leadership in the University (LC-1)

In addition to demonstrating that you continue to meet the requirements of a Range 2 professor above, your evidence under 'Making a difference' needs to satisfy two of these statements.

Note that the term field includes academic disciplines, which could be narrow or broad, but could also be at the intersection of disciplines in a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary sense, as well as other important aspects of academic practice.

Clinical contribution

The assessment for promotion is on academic work done for the University with full regard for the time available for these duties. Clinical duties will be considered only when undertaken for the University and connected to academic work.

Individual circumstances

The application form will give you the opportunity to describe the impact of any individual circumstances that you would like to be taken into consideration. These include anything that impacts your ability to meet the expectations outlined in this framework. For example, prolonged absences, restrictions on travel or networking opportunities, flexible working patterns or reduced working hours, including any equality factors and/or the impact on your work due to Covid-19. Please include any local arrangements that have been made and formally agreed with your line manager, such as a pro-rata reduction in your contribution across your selected criteria if working part-time. Although contributions will be considered within the context of the impact of any individual circumstances, a consistent level of quality in all areas will be required.

Next steps

All applicants and anyone involved in supporting or assessing cases should refer to the [Movement within level e \(Grade M\) website](#) for full details of who does what and when.

Research

| | Definition | Examples of activity |
|-----|---|--|
| R-1 | <p>Research output Delivering original work to make an observable impact on the subject and/or other disciplines.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing a significant portfolio of prestigious scholarly publications and other forms of creative output appropriate to your discipline that, especially at the higher ranges, demonstrates a marked contribution to knowledge • Pursuing new knowledge, including through multi/inter-disciplinary research, and widely publishing work that is considered world-leading and with a frequency appropriate to your discipline • Collaborating in multi-author international publications or across an international network of co-investigators as one of the main contributors • Shifting your field/discipline through your scholarly outputs and having an impact in the international academic community • Setting the standard for open research practices and research integrity |
| R-2 | <p>Research capacity and recognition Building research capacity and reputation to ensure long-term research prospects.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and growing an effective research area, e.g. as a dedicated team and/or a wider collaboration, with an international reputation that can be sustained beyond your own contribution • Taking a holistic view, looking for and creating new opportunities for challenge or discovery-led research, e.g. multi-disciplinary, and also empowering others to do so • Acting as a multiplier by recognising opportunities, aligning objectives and bringing people together, including students, to develop capability and new ideas • Maintaining a research environment where people can push the boundaries • Receiving and accepting invitations from major awarding bodies to act as project assessors • Receiving and accepting invitations to be an external assessor or panel member for professorial appointments at other universities • Receiving and accepting invitations to give plenary talks and lectures, and to chair sessions at major international conferences • Chairing grant panels and providing editorship of journals, e.g. special issues in your discipline |
| R-3 | <p>Grant Income Generating external research income to fund original research.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining a record of developing and winning external research funding and/or obtaining major research contracts aligned to the needs of the University • Leading the work to put together large-grant applications, e.g. major international bids • Bringing together others from within and outside the University, e.g. from other universities, to collaborate on research bids • Securing funding from non-traditional sources, e.g. industry • Acting as a multiplier by creating an environment where everyone can learn and contribute to the generation of research funding whether successful or not |

Range 2 & Range 3 Professor

| | Definition | Examples of activity |
|-----|---|--|
| R-4 | <p>Research supervision Supporting students carrying out research to thrive and become autonomous researchers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and sustaining a vibrant student researcher community from undergraduate to PhD for the dissemination and acquisition of knowledge (a two-way process) • Developing independent researchers and thinkers who are ready for the next step in their career • Being a role model for good supervisory practice • Sustaining the attraction of research students to work with you and others in your area of research • Extending your research network through maintaining connections with your students wherever they go, e.g. as a mentor |

Education

| | Definition | Examples of activity |
|-----|--|---|
| E-1 | <p>Education practice Facilitating active learning and reviewing teaching quality to encourage critical, creative thinking and instil a passion for learning.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining a record of excellence in teaching and continued leadership in the dissemination of knowledge • Supporting colleagues in their teaching, e.g. through moderation, peer observation, etc. • Making a difference to students by adding value, inspiring them to learn, develop skills and acquire knowledge in your discipline • Making your teaching relevant to students in their future careers, e.g. applying it to the real-world • Advancing developments in technology and pedagogy, and continuing to innovate • Engaging in research-rich education, enhancing what and how to teach in your discipline and encouraging students to be researchers • Reflecting on, learning about and developing your practice |
| E-2 | <p>Supporting students Supporting taught students to thrive and get the most from their studies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking responsibility for the broader development of taught students and advancing the next generation • Empowering students to be more effective in their studies • Making a difference for students while they are at the University, e.g. in terms of their learning and career choices • Confidently helping students (and supporting colleagues to do the same) and referring to specialist support when necessary and in accordance with the University procedures |
| E-3 | <p>Curriculum development Developing our educational offer to provide students with an education that is evidence-based, innovative, inclusive and effective.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing and shaping how teaching is carried out and assessed in your discipline • Ensuring the curriculum is relevant to the needs of students and employers • Taking a holistic view across teaching programmes, setting themes and developing or creating new programmes • Leading a significant curriculum review/reform • Creating a community of practice with colleagues to deliver excellence in teaching |
| E-4 | <p>Scholarship of teaching and learning Engaging in scholarship of the theory and practice of education to engender innovative and evidence-led approaches to teaching.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving and accepting invitations to give plenary talks and lectures, and to chair sessions at major international conferences in the theory and practice of education • Driving the exploration, development and sharing of innovative approaches to teaching • Being a role model for others by supporting and developing them in their own scholarship of teaching and learning • Leading the scholarship of teaching and learning in your discipline inside and outside the University • Influencing the educational initiatives of relevant professional societies and bodies |

Engagement and Impact

| | Definition | Examples of activity |
|------|---|--|
| EI-1 | <p>Engagement with external organisations Engaging with relevant external stakeholders to help tackle the key issues and challenges facing society.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising national, governmental or international organisations • Being a member of national or international advisory bodies • Having local, national and international influence through collaborating with and learning from others, e.g. engaging in community-based initiatives or creating a centre of excellence • Connecting academic colleagues and other stakeholders, facilitating positive relationships and the co-production of ideas and initiatives • Reaching out to other universities and creating a dynamic exchange of ideas and resources, possibly linking to national bodies with an interest • Creating an active knowledge exchange program with a range of actors from industry to educational bodies, to the local Council, to national government, to external educational institutions |
| EI-2 | <p>Translation and application of knowledge Translating and applying knowledge to increase participation and effect change for the benefit of the broader community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminating knowledge and sharing good practice within the context of an appreciation of the University's role • Influencing policy makers nationally and internationally, including those within the private and public sectors • Making research accessible and understood by the professional bodies and/or relevant audiences more generally • Identifying exploitation routes early and translating fundamental research into practical applications, e.g. through a spin-out company • Nurturing non-academic partnerships and other diverse routes to research impact with a wide range of stakeholders rather than more conventional routes |
| EI-3 | <p>Community dialogue Communicating externally using different media to create relevant opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with community partners and regional initiatives tackling major social issues • Supporting others, especially those that are marginalised, to have a voice • Influencing others online to promote your discipline and engage with a wider audience • Running specialist events such as discipline-based festivals to bring together colleagues and those outside academia • Creating or supporting a champion network to promote your discipline, bringing together academics, students, teachers and professional bodies |

Leadership and Citizenship

| | Definition | Examples of activity |
|------|---|--|
| LC-1 | <p>Leadership in the University</p> <p>Taking an active role in leading people, with or without formal authority, to facilitate the effective running of the University.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the most of your position by taking opportunities to develop and deliver activity that shapes the future of your school or has a major impact on your field of endeavour, e.g. research environment, curriculum enhancement, etc. • Playing a significant role in, and successfully leading and managing, research or teaching teams/centres • Using your voice in different forums to influence decisions and change attitudes at the highest and broadest levels, including supporting others without a voice and contributing to the wider University strategy • Influencing others across the University on the basis of your knowledge, ability to understand the bigger picture and strength of communications rather than through any formal position • Leading others effectively at different levels as required, from your school to the faculty and University, and then the sector as a whole • Being a role model and demonstrating positive behaviours, e.g. creating a team ethos and taking responsibility for developing an environment that is equitable and where everyone can thrive • Reflecting on and developing your approach to leadership, bringing others on and acting as a multiplier, e.g. through seeking feedback |
| LC-2 | <p>Leadership in your discipline</p> <p>Developing your discipline within and outside the University through working with others to build relationships and enhance its profile.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining a record of effective academic leadership in research or education within and outside the University that is appropriate to the discipline • Holding senior visiting positions at leading institutions • Receiving and accepting invitations to be an external examiner for other institutions for degree programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels • Taking executive responsibility in professional associations, or working with or shaping professional practice • Taking part in any other academic activity that would be seen as a mark of esteem or recognition of achievement in the discipline • Receiving prestigious national or international awards, marks of distinction or prizes • Being proactive by advocating for your discipline and influencing views internally and/or externally at the highest and broadest levels • Anticipating possible risks and looking ahead for new opportunities, taking your discipline in new and different directions if necessary |
| LC-3 | <p>Collegiality</p> <p>Building supportive relationships with colleagues to enable them to perform at their best.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling others by being there to listen and give feedback, supporting and challenging them as appropriate when needed • Being available for people to review manuscripts, job/grant applications, CVs, prepare for interviews, etc. • Supporting colleagues (academic and professional services) at all levels, including other professors, to be successful and progress in their careers • Modelling and dissemination good practice by mentoring others inside and outside the University and acting as a reviewer in the Development Review process • Being a role model for sustainable ways of working |

Range 2 & Range 3 Professor

| | Definition | Examples of activity |
|------|---|--|
| LC-4 | <p>Contribution to the University</p> <p>Taking a meaningful role in University activities and initiatives to improve the working environment and create an inclusive culture.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a collegiate atmosphere, e.g. being there for junior colleagues, professional service colleagues, bringing people together and building networks • Leading work to help ensure that teaching and working environments reflect wider society in terms of gender, ethnicity, etc., e.g. through widening participation schemes and inclusive recruitment practices • Taking responsibility for nurturing a vibrant and positive working environment, including giving and receiving feedback, and challenging unacceptable behaviours • Being a role model by setting high standards and being seen to maintain them |

