

Procedure for Promotion up to Senior Lecturer / Senior Research Fellow (level d1)

1. Purpose

The procedure for Promotion up to Senior Lecturer / Senior Research Fellow (level d1, pay grade L) describes the process for anyone on academic career pathway 1, 2 or 3 at level a (Research or Teaching Associate on pay grade I), level b (Lecturer or Senior Research Associate on pay grade J) and level c (Lecturer or Research Fellow on pay grade K) seeking promotion to the next level.

The process is based on the concept of readiness determined through dialogue with managers and colleagues using the [Academic Promotions Framework](#) (APF) and captures the transition to becoming an established academic at the University of Bristol.

2. Timing and re-applying

There are two three-month promotion rounds in each academic year: one starting on 1 October and one on 1 April. Please refer to the timetable in [Appendix A](#) for full details. The process relies on regular dialogue between potential candidates and their managers to determine readiness (see [Section 4](#)) before preparing a case and applying (see [Section 5](#)). The Head of School and appropriate colleagues will then consider the case and make a recommendation before passing it to the Dean and Head of HR Business Partnering to decide (see [Section 6](#)). Note that regardless of the outcome, only one application can be made in any 12-month period.

3. Scope and eligibility

The process covers these three promotion steps:

- Profile level a (Research or Teaching Associate on Grade I) to level b (Lecturer or Senior Research Associate on pay Grade J)
- Profile level b (Lecturer or Senior Research Associate on pay Grade J) to level c (Lecturer or Research Fellow on pay Grade K)
- Profile level c (Lecturer or Research Fellow on pay Grade K) moving to level d1 (Senior Lecturer or Senior Research Fellow on pay Grade L)

Note that promotion is only possible one step at a time. Please refer to the [Academic Career Pathways](#) and [academic role profiles](#) for more information about the different pathways, profile requirements and pay grades.

While the process is open to anyone working at profile levels a to c, there are differences depending on the contract of employment:

1. For those with a contractual expectation:
 - a. Everyone on Pathway 1 and many level b and c Lecturers on Pathway 3 are expected to be promoted to level d1 (Senior Lecturer)
 - b. Exceptionally, some on Pathway 2 may have a contractual expectation to be promoted to level d1 (Senior Research Fellow)
 - c. Some on Pathways 2 and 3 may have a contractual expectation to achieve promotion from level a (Research or Teaching Associate) to level b (Senior Research Associate or Lecturer) or level b to level c (Research Fellow or Lecturer)
2. For everyone else, including most on Pathway 2 that are grant-funded, the opportunity for promotion is determined by there being work and available funding at a higher level

For the first case above (Point 1) where there is a contractual expectation, there is a maximum of six years at a level before someone must make a successful application for promotion to the next level, i.e. the effective date for a successful application must be before the six year anniversary. Otherwise, the

[Capability Procedure](#) will be initiated. There is no option to defer promotion beyond six years. Note that for those appointed to level b (Lecturer) with a contractual expectation to reach level d1 (Senior Lecturer), they have a maximum of six years at level b and a maximum of six years at level c. As described in [Section 4](#) (Determining readiness), the intention is that promotion will be achieved through regular dialogue with the candidate’s line manager. Please note that the University has deemed Senior Lecturer the career grade for all Pathway 1 staff and so it is not possible to change this on an individual basis. For staff on Pathways 2 and 3, any change to the contractual expectation must be approved by the Dean on the basis of a clear strategic or operational reason and must be agreed with the role holder before HR can make the change. Once at the contracted level, there is no time limit or expectation to be promoted further unless stated otherwise.

For the second case above (Point 2) where there is fixed funding and no contractual expectation, promotion could be enabled at a later date by their line manager securing agreement for a funded-promotion (see [Appendix B](#)). It requires that there is funding and work at the higher level, which could also be established before someone is appointed to enable promotion at a later date, especially for those on Pathway 2 that are grant-funded¹. In all cases, it is the responsibility of the candidate’s line manager to plan and budget for possible promotion if there is work at the higher level. It should also be noted that for those without a contractual expectation for promotion, there will be opportunities for career development.

Table 1 summarises these differences by academic pathway. In all cases, eligibility for making a case for promotion is subject to:

1. Having a contractual expectation and meeting the performance requirements described in this process
2. Completing their one-year [Initial Service Review](#) (ISR)
3. Meeting the expectations set out in the [CREATE policy](#) for those with teaching responsibilities (Pathway 1 and 3), e.g. those seeking promotion to Senior Lecturer should achieve their HEA Fellowship through the University’s [CREATE scheme](#) before applying

It is expected that all will remain within their existing academic career pathway and that equal consideration will be given regardless of whether someone is employed on a full-time, part-time, temporary or open-ended basis. Those working in a job-share will be treated as individuals for promotion purposes. Please also refer to the [APF](#) for more information about any equality-related adjustments.

Table 1: Summary of the contractual differences by academic pathway

Academic Pathway	A contractual expectation*	Dependent on work and available funding
Pathway 1	For all roles	-
Pathway 2	For a few roles	For most roles
Pathway 3	For many roles	For some roles**

* The contract of employment will clearly state this and the profile level to be reached.

** For some on Pathway 3 where promotion is not a contractual expectation, their work is set at level a, b or c.

4. Determining readiness

The process requires everyone that is in scope to be in regular dialogue with their line manager or others that are supporting their career and development to help determine if and when someone is ready, e.g. it could also be part of someone’s [Development Review](#). It is intended to be an ongoing formative process, with the [APF](#) setting the standard for promotion and providing a resource to determine readiness and/or

¹ Please refer to guidance on [Worktribe](#) (our Full Economic Costing tool), the [Principles and guidance for costing, recruiting and developing researchers](#) and completing a [Staffing Request Form](#).

whether there are any development or opportunity gaps well ahead of making an application (at least a year before is recommended to allow time for evidence to be gathered). Note that achievements prior to joining Bristol may form part of someone's case for promotion, but it must include evidence of impact along with how it is being applied at Bristol to demonstrate their onwards trajectory against their chosen criteria.

It should be noted by potential promotion candidates and their managers that if the candidate's performance and/or conduct or behaviour is considered unsatisfactory (after due consideration of any relevant equal opportunity issues), then this will prevent promotion regardless of readiness against the [APF](#).

5. Preparing a case

Human Resources will initiate the procedure through an email to everyone involved. It will confirm the broader expectations of the process, encourage line managers and potential candidates to meet, remind everyone how to make a case and confirm the deadlines for the upcoming round. It will also provide links to the procedure and relevant documents such as the [promotion case-form](#) and the [APF](#).

As part of the formal launch, Human Resources will also contact all Heads of School/Centre. It is expected readiness conversations will be happening routinely between candidates and their line managers, but Heads of School/Centre will receive data on all that are in scope in their area. It will help ensure that everyone using this process is being given the opportunity to apply if they are ready, as well as support workforce planning more generally.

Applications include a case-form to provide evidence against the required criteria described in the [APF](#), along with an up-to-date CV (please refer to the [CV Standards](#)).

For those on fixed funding with no contractual expectation for promotion, their line manager will also need to initiate the process to secure agreement for a funded-promotion. Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for details along with a link to the required form to open up an academic position to being carried out at a higher level, i.e. to change someone's contractual status to enable promotion. Note that this can be done at the same time as someone making a case for promotion.

Candidates holding appointments in different areas should agree in advance with the relevant heads of these areas (primarily schools or centres, but could include some service areas) which school/centre/area will lead on the process. The lead school/centre/area will need to seek input on the candidate's contribution in relation to expectations from the other schools/centres/areas so that the case can be fully considered.

Once the case-form is completed, it must be submitted to the lead Head of School/Centre by the deadline and in the required format. The form includes space for any individual circumstances that have had an impact and should be considered with the case. Note that all information will be treated with an appropriate level of confidentiality in accordance with data-protection legislation.

6. Making a decision

On receiving the application, the Head of School/Centre will consider the case for promotion with other appropriate academic colleagues, which will normally include the applicant's line manager. The number might vary depending on the size of the school, but between three and five people should be sufficient. The approach should follow the [inclusive decision-making guidance](#) and be aware of [unconscious bias](#).

The Head of School/Centre must then complete the appropriate section of the case-form outlining the reason for their recommendation before emailing it to the relevant Employee Services team. The

paperwork will then be organised on the Promotions SharePoint site in readiness for the Dean² and Head of HR Business Partnering to make a final decision.

7. Confirming outcomes and providing feedback

Once the case-form has been finalised, Human Resources will update ERP and write to all applicants to confirm the outcome. For those that are successful, their salary will be increased to the bottom increment of the new grade (where there is an overlap between grades, an additional increment will be considered) and it will be effective as set out in [Appendix A](#).

Alongside the formal confirmation process, providing feedback on the case will be shared between the Dean, Head of School/Centre and line manager, and arrangements made for a discussion with the candidate. For cases where the application was unsuccessful, this will include setting expectations for re-applying.

8. Making an appeal

There is no right to appeal if the eligibility requirements for making a case for promotion are not met.

Appeals may be made on the grounds that either the procedure has not been followed or that, in the light of the evidence presented, the decision made was perverse. Appeals should be submitted to Head of Faculty People Partnering & HR Operations within 14 days of the outcome-letter date. The appeal letter should clearly set out the grounds on which the appeal is based.

The Head of Faculty People Partnering & HR Operations (or a delegated Head of HR Business Partnering) will allocate the appeal to a Pro Vice-Chancellor who may consult colleagues as appropriate before making their decision.

Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor decides that the procedure has not been followed, the case will be reconsidered after the proper procedures have been observed. Where the Pro Vice-Chancellor decides that the decision was perverse, they may allow the promotion to take place.

In either case the decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor will be sent to the candidate and is final.

The Board of Trustees has prescribed the Appeals procedure in relation to appeals against decisions arising from this process, and so there will be no other route of complaint or right of appeal against outcomes.

Appendix A – Timetable for Promotion up to SL / SRF (level d1)

There will be two annual promotion rounds using this procedure as follows:

Promotion round	Launch of process on	Candidate's application to the Head of School by*	School's recommendation to the Dean by	Dean's decision by	Promotion takes effect on
1	1 October	31 October	30 November	31 December	1 February
2	1 April	30 April	31 May	30 June	1 August

* If required, the candidate's manager will also need to submit a change of contract form to enable promotion.

If any of the above dates fall on a weekend or holiday, it will be the first working day after that date.

² Where it has been agreed in the faculty, the Dean may delegate this responsibility to someone else.

Appendix B – Changing contractual status to enable promotion

When there is budget (which could be grant-funding for Pathway 2 or core-funding for Pathway 3) and work at a higher level for someone, and agreement by the Head of School, Head of HR Business Partnering and Dean, the contractual status can be changed to enable promotion under this procedure to the next level. It could also include promotion to level c and then level d1. One example when this might happen includes the award of an independent, externally funded fellowship.

Please complete this form to open up an academic position to being carried out at a higher level:

- [Form for changing contractual status to enable promotion](#)

Only once it is approved can the role-holder be considered for promotion to that level. Note that it is possible to make the case for a change in contract at the same time as making a case for promotion. Where the case for changing the contractual status of a role is made outside of the promotion process, Human Resources will need to notify the individual of their change in contractual status, including the level(s) to which they can apply for promotion and the date by which they must make the move. They would then be subject to promotion under this procedure.

In the situation where there are a number of very similar roles, but there is only agreement for budget and work for fewer than the number of role holders, a selection process will be required. All possible candidates should be informed and allowed to apply for the new role at a higher level.