Academic Promotion Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to outline the principles for the promotion of academic staff at Macquarie University.

Background

(2) In pursuit of its vision to be recognised nationally and internationally as a high performing university, Macquarie University (the University) aims to foster excellence in all areas of academic endeavour. The University has a holistic approach to recognising academic achievement, supporting staff to progress their academic career on the basis of merit, performance and achievement, relative to opportunity.

(3) The aim of academic promotion is to:

a. recognise and reward academic staff for demonstrated and sustained achievement and high performance in relevant areas of academic endeavour; and
b. provide an identifiable career pathway for all academic staff.

(4) Scholarship is a core value of the University and underpins our academic mission. The criteria for promotion at the University are based on Boyer's four areas of scholarship (Boyer, E. L. (1990) Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching). With this approach, the University recognises the diversity of scholarship and the value of each type of scholarship. It creates flexible career pathways, allowing individual academics to work to their strengths. An additional Citizenship and Leadership criterion allows staff to demonstrate their alignment with the University's values, and broader contribution to the University, community and academe and their leadership.

Scope

(5) This Policy applies to all continuing and fixed-term academic and conjoint academic staff, whether full-time or part-time, who seek promotion to Levels B, C, D or E.

(6) This Policy does not apply to:

a. casual academic staff; or
b. honorary title holders, except Conjoint title holders per the Honorary Academic Titles Policy.

Section 2 - Policy

(7) Academic promotion of academic staff to Levels B, C, D and E will only be offered in accordance with the principles of this Policy and the steps outlined within the accompanying Academic Promotion Procedure.

Principles

Strategic Alignment

(8) Academic promotion is aligned with the strategic goals and priorities of the University. It supports the University's values of scholarship, integrity and empowerment, as outlined in Our University: A Framing of Dynamic Futures, and the University's strategic priorities, including:

a. a culture of transformative learning in a research-enriched environment;
b. excellence and impactful performance in discovery;
c. creating an innovation nexus where Macquarie and our partners contribute to addressing real-world problems and developing lasting relationships; and
d. emboldening Macquarie University's recognition and international presence.

(9) This Policy also supports Macquarie University's Strategic Research Framework and Education Strategy.

Merit Based Selection

(10) Promotion of eligible academic staff is based on merit. It involves the assessment of demonstrated performance against the promotion criteria for each academic level, relative to opportunity. Claims of performance and achievement must be supported by evidence and externally validated, as far as possible. The assessors may take reasonable steps to substantiate the quality of performance and the validity of claims about achievement, which may involve accessing external, publicly available information.

(11) The University recognises that meritorious performance can occur in a range of academic activities and will take into account the diversity of academic performance and output characteristics of different disciplines.

Achievement Relative to Opportunity

(12) The University recognises that academic staff contribute to its strategic goals in diverse ways. The achievements of applicants for promotion are considered relative to:

a. required working arrangements e.g. part-time work or flexible working arrangements;
b. the opportunities that have been available to the applicant relative to the discipline and appointments held;
c. career histories, including late entry to academia or interrupted career trajectories; and
d. relevant personal circumstances e.g. carer responsibilities, disability or ongoing medical condition.

(13) The University recognises that such circumstances do not alter the applicant's capacity to produce high-quality work but may have other impacts, e.g. on the quantum of output. Assessing achievements relative to opportunity gives more weight to the overall quality and impact of achievements. Achievement relative to opportunity is not about expecting a lesser standard of performance.

Equity and Non-discrimination

(14) The University is committed to equal opportunity and fairness in promotion and will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against applicants on discriminatory grounds as specified in anti-discrimination legislation, including:

a. sex or gender;
b. pregnancy;
c. race (including colour, ethnic background or national identity);
d. marital status;
e. disability;
f. sexual orientation;

g. transgender status;
h. religious beliefs;
i. age; and
j. political affiliations.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Fairness

(15) The University will adhere to a consistent, fair, confidential and transparent process as outlined in the Academic Promotion Procedure.

Eligibility

(16) To be eligible for promotion, at a minimum, applicants must have completed:

a. two years of service (or equivalent in broken periods of service) in an academic position at Macquarie University by the closing date of applications, either from the date of first commencement at the University or promotion to their current level; and
b. Development and Performance Review in the preceding year. Applicants who have been employed at the University for only two years must have successfully completed their probation period; and
c. all mandatory compliance training in Workday.

(17) If an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria, exemption provisions may apply per this Policy and Part H of the Academic Promotion Procedure.

(18) An applicant who is unsuccessful in their application is ineligible to apply for promotion in the subsequent year. An exemption to reapply earlier may be granted by their Executive Dean.

(19) Applicants who are on parental leave, long service leave, outside Studies Program or other extended leave are not restricted from applying for promotion during their period of leave or absence, provided they make themselves available for promotion interviews (which may be conducted remotely, e.g. via a video link).

(20) Applicants who are currently the subject of formal proceedings related to performance or conduct may apply for promotion and participate in the process in accordance with the Academic Promotion Procedure. The University may withhold the release of promotion outcomes until the conclusion of the performance or conduct process.

(21) In relation to the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025, the University must take into consideration any substantiated allegation of Gender-based Violence found in the course of an employee's employment in the promotion, recognition and reward of that employee.

Promotion Model and Criteria

(22) There are five categories of criteria for promotion:

a. The scholarship of Discovery;
b. The scholarship of Education;
c. The scholarship of Application;
d. The scholarship of Integration; and
e. The demonstration of Citizenship and Leadership.

(23) Applicants for promotion will be assessed by a promotion committee in each area for which they claim achievement.

(24) Assessment in each category will have four levels of achievement:

a. Not Applicable;
b. Insufficient Evidence;
c. Emerging Evidence;
d. Compelling Evidence; and
e. Outstanding Evidence.

Rating	Points	Definition
Not Applicable	NA	The pillar is not relevant to the applicant's job family or position. No assessment is required.
Insufficient Evidence	0	The applicant has not provided adequate or relevant evidence to demonstrate achievement in this area.
Emerging Evidence	1	The applicant shows early signs of achievement or potential in this area. Evidence is present but is modest, developing, or not yet consistent in scope or impact.
Compelling Evidence	2	The applicant presents clear and relevant evidence of achievement. Contributions demonstrate consistency and alignment with institutional expectations, with indications of meaningful impact.
Outstanding Evidence	3	The applicant demonstrates exceptional achievement, leadership, or innovation in this area. Evidence reflects sustained excellence and significant influence at institutional, national, or international levels

(25) To be promoted to Level B, applicants must achieve:

a. A minimum of 8 points with:
    i. Outstanding Evidence (3) in at least one of the five categories;
    ii. Compelling Evidence (2) in one other category; and
    iii. a minimum of Emerging Evidence (1) in the category of Citizenship and Leadership.

(26) To be promoted to Level C, an applicant must achieve:

a. A minimum of 8 points with:
    i. Outstanding Evidence (3) in at least one of the five categories;
    ii. Compelling Evidence (2) in one other category; and
    iii. a minimum of Compelling Evidence (2) in the category of Citizenship and Leadership.

(27) To be promoted to Level D, an applicant must achieve:

a. A minimum of 9 points with:
    i. Outstanding Evidence (3) in at least one of the five categories;
    ii. Compelling Evidence (2) in one other category; and
    iii. a minimum of Compelling Evidence (2) in the category of Citizenship and Leadership.

(28) To be promoted to Level E, an applicant must achieve:

a. A minimum of 9 points with:
    i. Outstanding Evidence (3) in at least two of the five categories; and
    ii. a minimum of Compelling Evidence (2) in the category of Citizenship and Leadership.

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NB: Second outstanding evidence for promotion to Level E can be claimed in the Citizenship and Leadership pillar.

(29) Consideration will be given to the applicant's workload allocation, with an expectation that evidence of performance will be presented in the areas where an applicant has formal workload allocation, consistent with the relevant job family.

(30) The Academic Promotion Criteria Schedule/Guidelines for Honorary Clinical Academic Appointments provides examples of evidence/indicators for each level to assist applicants with making a case for promotion.

(31) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an essential requirement for Academic Promotion. Applicants are required to clearly address the following components in their submission:

a. a summary of CPD activities undertaken within the past five years or since their most recent promotion;
b. an articulation of how these activities have contributed to their academic growth, teaching and leadership skills, scholarly capability, and/or research trajectory; and
c. a forward-looking plan for sustained CPD, outlining their professional development intentions and how these will support their role if promoted.

(32) The evaluation of CPD will be based on the quality, relevance, and impact of activities rather than volume. CPD completed should demonstrate meaningful alignment with the applicant's discipline, institutional responsibilities, and broader sectoral engagement.

Guidance on Applying Criteria

(33) Applicants do not need to grade themselves across all five categories in their application. The only mandatory category where applicants must grade themselves is Citizenship and Leadership.

(34) The examples of evidence/indicators for each level are indicative only and do not provide a list of expectations. It is not expected that applicants would cover all the examples/indicators in a category to achieve Outstanding Evidence in that category. The focus is on the quality of achievement, not on the number of examples/indicators that are covered by an applicant.

(35) The promotions committee apply a holistic, contextualised approach to assessment, considering applicants' diverse contributions and achievements relative to discipline norms, timeframes, constraints and opportunities.

General Rules and Requirements

(36) As a general rule, applicants cannot:

a. apply for a promotion with less than two years of service at Macquarie University, since commencement or last promotion;
b. apply for a promotion to a level that is more than one level higher than their current level (e.g. seek promotion from Level B to Level D); and
c. apply for promotion to several levels at the same time (e.g. seek promotion from Level B to Level C and Level D in the same round).

(37) In exceptional circumstances, the University may waive these requirements. To do so, an exemption application must be lodged per the Academic Promotion Procedure.

Out-of-round Promotion

(38) The University recognises there may be legitimate circumstances when a promotion needs to occur outside of the scheduled promotion round.

(39) An out-of-round promotion application will be permitted in circumstances of:

a. retention in response to a credible written employment offer at a higher level from another higher education institution; or
b. retention of high-performing academic staff identified as flight risk, regardless of whether there is an employment offer from another higher education institution.

(40) To ensure there is an appropriate assessment and a clear approval process, an out-of-round promotion application will follow the steps outlined in the Academic Promotion Procedure (Part G).

Section 3 - Procedures

(41) Refer to the Academic Promotion Procedure.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(42) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(43) Nil.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Eric Knight Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Operations)
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