

To: Chairs and Secretaries of Faculty Promotions  
Committees

cc: Academic Secretary  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional Affairs)  
Chairs and Secretaries of Sub-Committees  
HR Business Managers/Advisers

19 August 2015

## Senior Academic Promotions: 1 October 2016 Exercise

This letter launches the 1 October 2016 Senior Academic Promotions exercise. The guidance has been revised to incorporate feedback received on the 2015 round where it is in the interests of clarity and the efficient operation of the scheme, including feedback on the Contribution Reward Scheme for Senior Lecturers (Section 13).

Your attention is drawn to the changes listed in the appendix to this letter. These include further guidance on scoring and banding teaching and general contribution, updating information on the content to be included in the Departmental/Faculty case for promotion, revising the information requested from referees and moving the Contribution Reward Scheme for Senior Lecturers to a self-application process only. In addition, although no particular changes have been made to the guidance, further consideration will be given over the year to improving the feedback process, including providing more support to heads of institution in their discussion with unsuccessful applicants about how to increase their chances of success in a future exercise.

Heads of Institution have been asked to refer all eligible members of staff in their institutions to this letter and the guidance on the web <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/senior-academic-promotions-procedure-and-guidance-2016> as soon as possible. Hard copies of the guidance for the 1 October 2016 exercise are being distributed to Committee members. A hard copy of the guidance will not be supplied to applicants, but can be provided on request.

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The deadline for the submission of applications is **19 October 2015**. It would be helpful if, as soon as possible after that date, you could provide the relevant HR Business Manager with the following information by e-mail:

- names of applicants
- institutions of applicants
- current office/post
- office applied for
- funding of office/post (e.g. UEF/other)

The timeframes have been adjusted to give applicants time to seek advice from their Head of Institution or an appropriate senior academic colleague, and to receive guidance through the CV mentoring scheme before submitting their application. The amended timescales also give Faculty Promotions Committees a longer timeframe to hold their meetings and collect documentation (the first meeting is to be held by the end of November and the second meeting by the end of January). Full details of timeframes are set out in Section 4 of the guidance.

The annual briefing meetings with Chairs and Secretaries of Faculty Promotions Committees have been arranged for 6 October at 2.00 pm and 15 October at 10.30 am respectively. Meetings will be held at The Old Schools. Existing Chairs and Secretaries of Sub-Committees are also invited to the relevant meeting; they are asked to brief other Sub-Committee members accordingly. Invitations to these meetings will be sent out shortly.

Yours sincerely



Sheila Gupta  
Director of Human Resources

Enc – Appendix

## **Appendix 1 –Changes to the Guidance for the 2016 SAP Process**

Your attention is drawn to the following aspects or changes to the guidance:

### **1. Amendments further to changes introduced in the 2015 exercise:**

#### ***Teaching and General Contribution assessment***

- Changes whereby more detail was provided last year about how to score teaching and general contribution appropriately using the full score range have been retained (introducing **paras 5.28 and 5.29** respectively). However, the guidance relating to the referee's assessment has been amended, as set out below.
- The guidance to FPCs about their choice of referees now asks them to include a referee who can comment authoritatively or in detail on the quantity of the applicant's general contribution. In relation to teaching, the referee (who need not be external to the University) will be asked to comment on this only for those applying Senior Lectureship (**paras 7.44 and 7.48**).
- Referees are asked in their letter to complete the coversheet introduced last year summarising their assessment of the applicant's contribution using the relevant performance descriptors. However, more information has been provided about the appropriate banding to be used in the light of the revised scoring guidance (**Documents 3A and 3B enclosure and coversheet**).

#### ***Research/Scholarship Record***

- To address concerns that a small number of applicants were providing too much detail in their record of publications and to encourage provision of a list only, the requirement for applicants to make clear their role and contribution in large multi-author publications has been moved to the personal statement section (**removal of para 7.6 and inclusion in Document 2, new para 7.28**).
- The requirement introduced last year that applicants provide more detail of their role and contribution in large, multi-author grants has been placed in bold type as it was clear that not all FPCs and applicants had noted this change (**para 7.11 (i)**).

#### ***Faculty/Departmental Case for Promotion***

- Provision for the FPC Chair (or Secretary) to review promotions documents as they are received including Document 4 and to return it to the Head of Institution for revision to amplify the case, for example if it provides insufficient detail/explanation, has been retained, to assist FPCs in prioritising cases (**para 8.13 iii**).
- In response to concerns that the Head of Department/Faculty did not always clearly distinguish in the case for promotion between stellar candidates and those who met the criteria, nor provide evidence of excellence in the three assessment criteria (R/S, T and GC), the guidance and coversheet to Document 4 have been revised (**paras 7.53 to 7.55 inclusive, Document 4 (Coversheet) and Document 4**).
- The Annex to Document 4 has also been removed as it was felt that it did not provide any useful additional information.
- To encourage applicants to seek advice from their Head of Institution (or a senior academic colleague) and Heads of Institution to have earlier conversations concerning readiness for promotion, applicants have been asked to confirm that they have sought this advice and Heads of Institution to confirm in their statement when the applicant was last reviewed under the University's staff review and development scheme (**Documents 2 and 4**).

### ***Contribution Reward Scheme for Senior Lecturers***

- Further to the introduction of this Scheme in the 2014 exercise, a further revision has been introduced to provide for applications to be made by the candidate only, and not by their Head of Department/Faculty on their behalf as an alternative option. It was noted that this change would be in line with that for senior promotions, which is a self-application process, and would not prevent the Head of Department/Faculty encouraging worthy academics to apply (**paras 13.21 and 13.22 and Document 10**).

### ***Use of Electronic Documentation:***

- This year, Moodle will replace CAMTools for applicant documentation. The use of electronic documentation continues to be encouraged. As for last year, a downloadable zip file of all applications will also be provided.
- Work will be taken forward to provide an on-line application system for future exercises, in line with proposals to revise the senior promotions process. Stakeholders will be consulted about these changes.

## **2. Other Changes made to this year's guidance:**

### ***References***

- To address concerns about referees being asked to complete a couple of forms as well as providing a reference statement, and to update the information requested of referees so that it is more in line with current practice, the reference release coversheet has been removed and appropriate reference to the data protection act and personal subject access requests is included in the letter to referees instead (**Documents 3A and 3B**).

## **3. Additional Information**

### ***Feedback***

- It is clear that more thought needs to be given to the process for giving feedback to unsuccessful applicants to ensure that the Heads of Department/Faculty are supported in their discussion with them about how to increase their chances of success in a future exercise. Therefore, although the guidance has not been changed, further consideration of how to improve this process, including discussion with Chairs of promotions committees and Heads of Institution, will take place before next year's feedback process (Section 10).

August 2015