Academic Staff Promotions Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University's ('the University', 'CDU') Academic Staff Promotions Policy and Academic Staff Promotions Procedure furthers the University's goal to recruit, retain and develop high performing academic staff by offering achievable career pathways. When coupled with convincing evidence of capability to meet the University's standards, expectations and qualifications for the level to which promotion is sought, promotion of academic staff recognises and rewards sustained achievement and leadership that supports and contributes to the attainment of the University's strategic priorities.

(2) Assessments are made on the basis of evidence of performance in relevant area/s and consideration of merit relative to opportunity.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This document defines the policy covering academic promotion at the University for higher education (HE) and vocational education and training (VET) academic staff members. It should be read in conjunction with the Academic Staff Promotions Procedure, the Code of Conduct - Employees, and the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to all academic Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) staff members employed at the University, whether full-time, part-time, fixed-term or continuing, who seek promotion to:

a. Level B;
b. Level C;
c. Level D; and
d. Level E.

Section 4 - Policy

(5) Applicants for promotion should normally have held a position at the University for a minimum of eighteen months, prior to seeking promotion.

(6) Academic staff members employed on fixed-term contracts are eligible to apply for promotion, but a successful promotion application will not have the effect of altering or extending the term of the fixed term contract, nor will it constitute an offer of a new contract of employment.

(7) Staff members employed on casual/sessional contracts of employment are not eligible to apply for promotion.

Criteria for Promotion

(8) The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Academic staff members may be considered for promotion if they have conducted themselves with academic, research, and professional integrity in their work over the prior 12 months. The promotions process will take into consideration past conduct, including but not limited to any substantiated allegations of gender-based violence in the course of the applicant's employment with the University.

(9) The University will recognise and reward demonstrated leadership and/or sustained academic contribution in two or more of the Academic Work areas through a transparent and consistent process of promotion. Promotion will be awarded on the basis of the quality and impact of contributions to the University's goals in these areas.

(10) Research Active Academics should address three Academic Work areas in their application for promotion, of which Teaching and Learning and Research and Scholarship are mandatory.

(11) Teaching Focused Academics and Research Focused Academics should address two Academic Work areas in their application for promotion. For Teaching Focused Academics, including VET and HE applicants, Teaching and Learning is mandatory, and for Research Focused Academics, Research and Scholarship is mandatory.

(12) In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee may approve the submission of an application for promotion based on achievement outside of the mandatory areas.

(13) Evaluation of the case for promotion will be based on evidence of performance, relative to level, in the areas of Learning and Teaching; Research and Scholarship; Engagement; and Academic Management and Leadership in keeping with the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the specific expectations outlined in the Academic Classifications.

(14) For the purposes of this policy, Teaching and Learning includes:

a. HE or VET course/unit design, development and teaching;
b. workplace assessment;
c. laboratory, studio-based or workshop teaching;
d. supervision of individual students in work placements, clinical placements, or undertaking honours level programs; and
e. supervision of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students.

(15) Research and Scholarship includes:

a. discovery of new knowledge and associated innovation;
b. scholarly development of creative works;
c. scholarship of teaching and learning;
d. scholarly integration or synthesis; and
e. knowledge transfer or its application in innovative contexts.

(16) Engagement includes:

a. significant and valued contributions to a profession, industry partner or to government;
b. significant and valued contribution to communities, especially remote, regional and First Nations communities;
c. significant and valued contribution to the University's Equity goals;
d. entrepreneurial activity of benefit to the University;
e. industry research and consultancy; and
f. development of revenue generating educational programs.

(17) Academic Management and Leadership includes administration, service and leadership in the University.

(18) In each of these areas of activity, claims about and descriptions of achievement must be supported by evidence. The types of evidence that may be employed are outlined in the Academic Performance Expectations for Higher Education and VET, including:

a. external validation of the products or results of this work;
b. documentation about the professional preparation and development undertaken; and
c. feedback and evaluations from relevant people such as referees, students, supervisors or external partners.

(19) Where an academic appointment specifically precludes or constrains contribution to one of these areas, for example, some funded research positions prohibit management roles, the application will be judged against the relevant areas of contribution.

(20) Applicants for promotion at all levels are expected to provide evidence of contribution and leadership, appropriate for that level, whether of a formal or informal kind, to honouring Australian First Nations knowledges and cultures or promoting First National achievement in ways which enhance teaching and/or research, engagement and/or management and leadership.

(21) Applicants for promotion to Level E will be expected to provide evidence of excellence in Research and Scholarship and/or Teaching and Learning that is recognised internationally.

(22) At Level E applicants will also be expected to provide evidence of significant leadership such as:

a. fostering excellence in teaching and encouraging academic staff development;
b. leadership in promoting research and developing research training; and
c. leadership in a discipline, program, or Faculty within the University and within the wider community.

(23) The University will recognise and reward academics whose teaching and research is interdisciplinary or innovative in ways that may challenge existing disciplinary conventions.

(24) The University will also recognise excellence and leadership in clinical or professional practice as being part of the role of an academic in a professional focused program within a relevant Faculty of the University.

Principles of Academic Promotion

(25) Academic staff members are appointed on the basis of evidence that they have the potential to develop a successful and rewarding career at the University if they make sustained, high-level contributions as a teacher and/or a researcher, appropriate to their disciplinary, vocational or professional field, and as required by their particular Faculty and the University's strategic priorities.

(26) The University will annually provide an opportunity for eligible academic staff members to seek promotion.

(27) Expectations of academic staff members at each level will be clearly articulated by the University, demonstrating the opportunities for long-term career development.

(28) Academic staff members will be provided with opportunities for staff development to enable them to meet expectations of academic preparation for teaching, research, engagement, management and leadership according to level and sector.

(29) Academic staff members 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.

(30) The Academic Promotions Committee will focus on contribution at Charles Darwin University based on evidence of progress and achievement subsequent to the date of appointment or the date of last promotion. However, this contribution will be assessed in the context of a 'whole of career' approach when evaluating an application, taking into account the work that the staff member has been required to undertake by the University.

(31) The academic promotion process will be based on performance evidence, consideration of merit relative to opportunity, and will actively encourage applications from under-represented groups.

(32) Promotion is a merit-based process based upon evaluation of a cumulative body of evidence of sustained achievement in the applicant's current role and of capability to meet the standards and expectations of the higher level. When a staff member is promoted, it will be the responsibility of the relevant Faculty to fund the additional salary costs resulting from the promotion. This will also apply in the case of a staff member holding a Research Focused position whose salary is provided by external funding bodies.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(33) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(34) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(35) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	17th February 2026
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Approval Authority	Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
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Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Fiona Coulson Vice-Chancellor
Implementation Officer	Peta Preo Director People and Culture
Enquiries Contact	Peta Preo Director People and Culture

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Faculty" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.

"Gender-based violence" - Gender-based violence means any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy. Gender-based violence includes many acts of violence that are based on gender, and might include physical violence or abuse; sexual violence, abuse or harassment; sex-based harassment; emotional or psychological abuse; verbal abuse or threats; economic or financial abuse; stalking or monitoring; intimate partner violence; family and domestic violence; technology-facilitated abuse; coercive control; sexual trafficking; reproductive coercion; female genital mutilation; forced medical interventions; forced marriage; and/or a pattern or patterns of abusive behaviour. Intimate relationships where one person has supervisory, oversight, academic, or other decision-making responsibilities in relation to the other person can amplify or give rise to gender-based violence, including relationships that are or appear to be consensual.