Academic Staff Promotions Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University's ('the University', 'CDU') Academic Staff Promotions Policy and Academic Staff Promotions Procedure further the University's goal to recruit, retain and develop high performing academic staff by offering achievable career pathways. Promotion of academic staff recognises and rewards sustained achievement and leadership that supports and contributes to the attainment of the University's strategic priorities. Assessments are made on the basis of evidence of performance in the relevant area(s) of Academic Work. To be successful applicants for promotion must provide convincing evidence of meeting the University's standards, expectations and qualifications for the level to which promotion is sought.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) To inform academic staff of the rules, responsibilities and timelines associated with the Academic Staff Promotions Policy.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This procedure applies to all academic staff of the University, and to all staff members responsible for managing academic staff promotions, including all members of Academic Promotions Committees.

Section 4 - Procedure

Criteria for Promotion

(4) In the 12 months prior to being considered for promotion, applicants must have conducted themselves with academic, research, and professional integrity. 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.

(5) Where an applicant has been found to have committed a serious breach of academic, research, or professional integrity between one and three years prior to applying for promotion, the Vice-Chancellor may decide to exclude them from consideration for promotion.

(6) The University will recognise high levels of performance and achievement, appropriate to Level, discipline field, type of appointment and agreed Development and Career Plan (DCP) work plan, and relative to opportunity, in the following four areas of Academic Work:

a. Learning and Teaching;
b. Research and scholarship;
c. Engagement; and
d. Academic Management and Leadership.

(7) Applicants must meet the threshold requirements (Academic Classifications) for appointment at the Level to which they seek promotion.

Academic Workload Allocation

(8) In consultation with their Pro Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent), applicants assign a percentage weight to each area of their current work profile. The weighting percentage should total 100. Normally no single area should be more than 80 percent. The weighting assigned should reflect the applicant's academic classification (Research Active, Teaching Focused or Research Focused) and their current work profile. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will be asked to confirm the weighting. Where there has been a substantial change in work profile, during the period relevant to the promotion application, this should be clarified in the body of the application.

When to Apply

(9) Normally a call for applications will be made from April each year with information sessions following this. All staff will be informed about the closing date and given a minimum of six (6) weeks within which to submit their application.

(10) Academic staff who have applied unsuccessfully for promotion are ineligible to apply the year following an unsuccessful application. Applicants are encouraged to carefully consider, in conjunction with their Pro Vice-Chancellor, whether their claim for promotion has significantly improved before discussing the timing of promotion plans. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee may approve an application from a staff member, supported by the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor, the year following an unsuccessful application.

How to Apply

(11) Applicants must discuss their intent to apply with their Pro Vice-Chancellor before applying for promotion.

(12) Applications must be made using the appropriate application form and follow the instructions on the form.

(13) The applicant should forward the completed application electronically to the Pro Vice-Chancellor so that they may provide the required written commentary. The applicant should also forward the application electronically to the Secretary to the Academic Promotions Committees.

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Referee and Assessor reports to be provided

(14) Each application requires one referee report and one Pro Vice-Chancellor report.

(15) The Chair may request an external Assessor report for level D and E applications, if required.

(16) Applicants must provide a copy of their completed application (sections A - C) to the Pro Vice-Chancellor. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will evaluate the application and complete an appraisal of the information presented regarding Academic Work areas and Classifications. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will provide a recommendation for the case of promotion with supporting reasons.

(17) Referees normally should be at least at the level to which the applicant is applying, and preferably higher. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure their referee is an individual of standing in the relevant academic and professional field who can address the applicant's claims across the relevant Academic Work areas.

(18) The reports from the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and Referee must be provided to the Secretary to the Academic Staff Promotions Committee by the applicant. The applicant may respond to the comments made in the report by the Pro Vice-Chancellor within the application form.

(19) If required, assessors should be external to the University. The Pro Vice-Chancellor is required to provide the names of potential Assessors for promotion to Level D and Level E. For applications to Level E, one of the potential

Assessors should be of international standing.

(20) The Assessor does not act as a Referee but, rather, as an expert in the field able to offer the Academic Promotions Committee a balanced and confidential assessment of the merits of the particular application according to the stated criteria. Assessors will also provide, if possible, an indication of the applicant's standing in the field or area of activity. Assessors should preferably be persons of eminence who may or may not be known personally to the applicant but who are aware of the applicant's activities in the areas on which the application is based and, normally, with whom the applicant has not collaborated or published.

(21) While the Committee will use the Pro Vice-Chancellor's list for guidance, it may take advice from elsewhere when selecting its Assessors. The Committee will make the final decision regarding the choice of assessors and applicants will not be informed of their names.

(22) Applicants may advise of any potential Assessors that they do not wish the University to approach for independent assessment of their application for promotion. Applicants should identify any potential Assessors in their application form, together with a brief justification of the request to exclude them from the promotions process.

(23) Where there may be a conflict of interest, the nature of the relationship and potential conflict of interest must be declared. Reports provided will then be assessed taking into account the context.

(24) The Pro Vice-Chancellor and Referee reports will not be provided to the Assessors during the promotions process.

Submission of application for Promotion

(25) One electronic copy of the application and relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and Referee reports must be provided to the Secretary to the Academic Promotions Committees.

(26) Receipt of applications will be acknowledged in writing.

(27) In cases where the application is not complete a request for further material from applicants may be made.

(28) In exceptional circumstances, with the staff member’s consent and approval of the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee, a Pro Vice-Chancellor may submit an application on behalf of a staff member.

(29) The Secretary of the Academic Promotions Committees will provide a list of applicants to the Director People and Culture. The Director People and Culture will review applicants’ staff records and advise the Provost of any relevant conduct-related issues.

Evidence to Support an Application for Promotion

(30) Applicants provide evidence of achievement in each area that forms part of their specific case for promotion. The Committee will make an assessment based on the overall case.

(31) Indicative levels of performance, achievement and preparation appropriate at each Level of appointment in each of the four areas are provided in the Academic Performance Expectations Framework for Higher Education staff and VET staff. Applicants may cite other examples to demonstrate their performance and achievement.

(32) Applicants should take care to elaborate their achievements in each relevant area, and must provide supporting evidence for any claims made in their application. The Committee will not consider claims that are not supported by clearly identified evidence in the application.

University Training Requirements for Applicants

(33) Satisfactory completion of any staff development or training programs required by the University as preparation

for teaching, research supervision, management and leadership roles. Relevant programs will be aligned to roles but would normally reflect provisions in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and/or staff Development and Career Plan (DCP).

Equal Opportunity and Conflict of Interest

(34) Applicants and Academic Promotions Committee members should bring to the attention of the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee any instances where they believe that a conflict of interest, discrimination or bias may affect the assessment of applications.

Confidentiality of Applications

(35) All staff involved in academic promotions will maintain complete confidentiality regarding committee deliberations and outcomes during the application round. Feedback will be provided, as appropriate, to applicants at the conclusion of each round. Successful applicants will be announced by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor at the conclusion each round.

Assessment of Application

(36) The Academic Promotions Committee will base its decisions on the material provided in the application and relevant, evidenced information about past conduct. The Committee will not take into consideration other information that is known to the Committee, but which is not referred to and supported with evidence in the application.

(37) Staff on fractional or joint appointments, and those whose career paths have been interrupted or delayed due to significant periods of leave for caring responsibilities, illness or other non-work related reasons, should advise the Committee of these circumstances so that their applications may be assessed in terms of what they have achieved, and in particular the quality of that achievement, in relation to the opportunities available.

(38) Disciplinary differences will be taken into account and, wherever possible, the Committee will use disciplinary norms when assessing applications. If there are matters that require clarification, additional information may be sought from the Pro Vice-Chancellor or other appropriate senior person with knowledge of that particular discipline or specialist area.

(39) Where clarification is required this may be requested in writing, or the applicant, referee, or Pro Vice-Chancellor may be invited to speak with members of the Committee.

Membership of Academic Promotions Committees

(40) For promotion to Level B and Level C for Higher Education academic staff the Academic Promotions Committee has the following membership:

a. Provost (Chair);
b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership;
c. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection;
d. three members of academic staff, at least at academic level C, selected by the Chair from staff nominated by the Head of School or Discipline Chair; and
e. a senior staff representative from People and Culture as a non-voting observer to provide advice at the request of the Committee.

(41) For promotion to Level B and Level C for VET academic staff the Academic Promotions Committee has the following membership:

a. Provost (Chair);
b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership;
c. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection;
d. three members of VET staff, at least at academic level C or equivalent leadership position, selected by the Chair from staff nominated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor CDU TAFE; and
e. a senior staff representative from People and Culture as a non-voting observer to provide advice at the request of the Committee.

(42) For promotion to Level D and E for higher education and VET academic staff the Academic Promotions Committee has the following membership:

a. Provost (Chair);
b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership;
c. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection;
d. One or two additional senior internal or external persons with relevant experience and qualifications, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor; and
e. a senior staff representative from People and Culture as a non-voting observer to provide advice at the request of the Committee.

Terms of Reference of Academic Promotions Committees

(43) The Vice-Chancellor will appoint the Academic Promotions Committees.

(44) Where exigencies so require, the Vice-Chancellor is entitled to co-opt to either Committee other appropriately qualified persons in lieu of or in addition to designated members. Relevant exigencies may include absence or illness of a designated member; change of position titles; unresolvable conflict of interest; the desirability of ensuring sufficient Committee familiarity with University Core Business areas; the desirability of ensuring adequate gender representation on the Committee etc.

(45) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving, or not approving, the recommendations of the Academic Promotions Committee.

(46) Feedback will be provided where the Committee believes that the Assessor's reports and the Committee's deliberations (whether positive or negative) could be useful for the further development of the applicant's career.

(47) The aggregate outcomes of promotion rounds and quality improvement initiatives of Academic Promotions Committee will be reported to Academic Board and to Council following approval by the Vice-Chancellor.

Effective Date of Promotion

(48) Applicants will be advised in writing of a successful promotion outcome and the date from which the promotion will take effect.

(49) Promotion will be effective from the first full pay period commencing on or after the date of the approval of Academic Promotions Committee recommendations by the Vice-Chancellor.

Salary Point

(50) All promotions will be to the first salary point of the level to which the applicant is promoted.

Unsuccessful Applicants

(51) Following the Vice-Chancellor's approval of the Academic Promotions Committee recommendations, the Committee Secretary will advise unsuccessful applicants in writing. In doing so, the Secretary will also advise the applicant that they may seek a meeting with the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee to discuss the outcome of their promotion application.

(52) The Pro Vice-Chancellor will also meet with each unsuccessful applicant to provide information that would be useful for the future guidance of the applicant. Meetings for this purpose will take place as soon as possible after the Vice-Chancellor has accepted the Committee's recommendations.

(53) In meeting with unsuccessful applicants Pro Vice-Chancellors should consider strategies to support and encourage unsuccessful applicants, including such things as:

a. identifying an academic mentor who can assist the staff member to improve their promotion prospects;
b. identifying staff development or training opportunities that will address weaknesses in the application;
c. ensuring that allocated workloads create adequate opportunities for the staff member to develop excellence in their area/s of focus; and
d. where appropriate, encouraging and providing support for additional research and/or professional opportunities.

(54) The Academic Promotions Committee will prepare brief comments that may be used for the purpose of counselling and the further development of the applicant's career.

(55) These may include part or all of Assessor's reports if explicitly agreed by the Assessor and the Committee's deliberations.

(56) Unsuccessful applicants must ensure they have new and relevant information and evidence to support a new application before re-applying.

(57) Applicants not recommended for promotion may seek a meeting with the Chair (or nominee) of the Academic Promotions Committee to discuss the outcome of their promotion applications. The Chair may request the member of the Academic Promotions Committee with the closest disciplinary background to participate in such a meeting.

Grounds for Appeal

(58) An unsuccessful applicant for promotion may appeal the decision on the grounds that there is evidence that there was a serious procedural irregularity in the promotion assessment process that had a material effect on the decision.

(59) Disagreement with the promotion outcome is not grounds for appeal.

Process for Appeal

(60) Applicants must appeal in writing to the Committee Secretary within twenty (20) working days from the date of receiving written notice of the outcome of their promotion application.

(61) In exceptional circumstances, an appellant may request additional time to appeal by applying in writing to the Committee Secretary, who will request written approval from the Vice-Chancellor. This request must be received prior to the appeals closing date.

(62) An appeal will normally only be considered after the applicant has met with the Chair (or nominee) of the Academic Promotions Committee to discuss the outcome of their promotion application.

(63) The Vice-Chancellor will convene an Academic Promotions Appeal Panel within five working days of the appeal

period closing.

(64) The appeal panel will comprise:

a. Vice-Chancellor's nominee;
b. a Professor of the University; and
c. Director People and Culture (or nominee).

(65) Committee members who made the original recommendation regarding the applicant’s application shall not be Panel members.

(66) The Panel will consider the appeal within thirty (30) working days and provide a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor to:

a. dismiss the appeal; or
b. uphold the appeal and arrange for the application to be reassessed by a panel not previously involved in the initial assessment.

(67) In exceptional circumstances the Academic Appeals Panel can request an extension from the Vice-Chancellor.

(68) The Panel will submit a summary of deliberations and its recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor for final decision.

(69) The appellant will be provided with written confirmation of the outcome of the appeal.

Responsibilities of Applicants

(70) Applicants must:

a. be familiar with the promotions procedures and the relevant Academic Classifications and make application in accordance with this document, the Policy, and the instructions provided with the application form;
b. identify a potential Referee in accordance with the criteria set out in this procedure under the section Pro Vice-Chancellor, Referee and Assessor Reports to be provided;
c. ensure that the application is completed fully and accurately;
d. discuss their intention to apply for promotion with their Pro Vice-Chancellor and provide that person with original evidence of awards, recognition and results of evaluation of teaching which are to be used in the application;
e. bring to the attention of the Committee, as part of the application, any information related to career interruptions;
f. sight the comments of the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Referee, sign to indicate that these have been sighted and respond to the Pro Vice-Chancellor's comments within their application form, should the applicant choose to do so;
g. bring to the attention of the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee, through the Committee Secretary, any matters which they believe might affect the fair and objective assessment of their applications; and
h. be contactable throughout the promotion process.

Responsibilities Pro Vice-Chancellors

(71) The Pro Vice-Chancellor must:

a. be familiar with the relevant Academic Classifications and policies;

b. identify qualified staff and encourage applications;
c. offer well-informed and current advice to staff seeking promotion;
d. identify potential Assessors in accordance with the criteria set out under the section Pro Vice-Chancellor, Referee and Assessor reports to be provided;
e. in consultation with the applicant's supervisor, if that is someone else, provide written confirmation of the applicant's performance in each area against their Level, agreed workload allocation and type of appointment. In particular this report should indicate whether the annual performance goals as identified in the DCP have been met, and should confirm the accuracy of the application;
f. encourage applicants to seek evaluations/peer review from those with expertise in Teaching and Learning (e.g. Associate Deans, VET Team Leaders) where the case relies heavily on excellence in curriculum, learning and teaching;
g. encourage applicants to seek guidance from those with expertise in Australian First Nations knowledges and cultures about appropriate contributions in areas of Academic Work;
h. provide timely additional information to the Committee in cases requiring clarification or additional information about a particular discipline or specialist area;
i. nominate eligible academic staff members for the Academic Promotions Committee;
j. provide the names of potential Assessors for applications to promotion to Level D or E arising in their Faculty;
k. make recommendations and offer comments for the Committee about how well the applicant meets the criteria, and specify whether they support the application; and
l. discuss with the Chair of the Academic Promotions Committee the reasons why an unsuccessful applicant was unsuccessful.

Responsibilities of the Academic Promotions Committees

(72) Members of the Academic Promotions Committee must;

a. be familiar with the relevant Academic Classifications and policies;
b. assess applications for promotion against the criteria for promotion contained in the Policy;
c. consider applications in light of the Academic Classifications for the level to which each applicant is applying, and the demonstrated capacity of the applicant to perform the duties and responsibilities as outlined for that level;
d. seek clear evidence of sustained and high-level contributions to those areas nominated by an applicant;
e. select appropriate Assessors based on nominations by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and the area/s of achievement on which the application is based;
f. make a judgment about the application for promotion in the relevant areas of Learning and Teaching; Research and Scholarship, Engagement, Academic Management and Leadership make and objective assessment of each application that is free of conflict of interest, discrimination or bias;
g. recommend to the Vice-Chancellor whether or not an applicant should be promoted; and
h. provide feedback on applications as appropriate.

Responsibilities of Academic Promotions Committee Secretary

(73) The Academic Promotions Committee Secretary must:

a. be selected by the Director, People and Culture, from staff within the People and Culture division;
b. arrange information sessions prior to the Promotions round;
c. respond to enquiries and receive applications and related documentation;
d. follow up with relevant parties (applicants and/or Pro Vice-Chancellors) to gain any incomplete documentation;

e. Collate and make available to the Committee the relevant documentation in a timely fashion;
f. Contact and follow up Assessors;
g. Keep accurate records of Promotions Procedures and outcomes;
h. Draft letters to the applicants communicating the Promotion outcome for consideration of the Chair;
i. coordinate feedback processes with applicants for continuous quality improvement initiatives; and
j. assist the Academic Promotions Committee to report on promotions outcomes and quality improvement initiatives to Academic Board and other relevant internal stakeholders.

Academic Promotions Committee Deliberations

(74) Upon receipt of applications, the Academic Promotions Committee shall review for each applicant:

a. the application;
b. the comments/recommendation of the Pro Vice-Chancellor;
c. the comments/recommendations of the referee; and
d. the potential Assessors for the application.

(75) The Committee shall then decide whether a prima facie case for promotion had been established.

(76) Upon receipt of the Referee and Assessor reports, the committee will reconsider the application and decide whether the applicant has met the criteria for promotion.

Information Sessions

(77) Information sessions about promotion will be conducted at least once a year.

Fast track promotions – exceptional circumstances

(78) In exceptional circumstances, and when the Vice-Chancellor believes it to be an appropriate mechanism in support the University's strategic goals, an application for promotion may be considered outside of the normal promotions schedule.

(79) The criteria for fast-track applications will be consistent with the standards expected for promotion through the normal promotions round.

(80) A Pro Vice-Chancellor may submit to the Vice-Chancellor a recommendation that a staff member be considered for fast-track promotion. Documentation submitted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor should include:

a. an up-to date curriculum vitae for the staff member;
b. a statement prepared by the staff member providing evidence of their contributions to or achievements in the relevant areas;
c. a statement by the Pro Vice-Chancellor detailing the exceptional circumstances which would warrant fast-track assessment (including evidence of an offer to the staff member from another University if this is the basis for the case, and the date by which the applicant must respond to the offer);
d. the significance of the staff member’s contributions in terms of meeting the University's strategic or operational goals;
e. an assessment of the staff member’s profile and contributions against the criteria for promotion to that level; and
f. a list of four assessors nominated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor in consultation with appropriate senior person with knowledge of the particular discipline or area.

(81) The Pro Vice-Chancellor should forward all the above documentation in electronic form to the committee Secretary at the same time as the submission is made to the Vice-Chancellor.

(82) The Vice-Chancellor will advise the committee Secretary of his recommendation. The committee Secretary will ensure the relevant Promotions Committee considers the application as soon as practicable through an out of session meeting.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(83) 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.

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

(85) 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

Status	Current
Effective Date	23rd June 2026
Review Date	2nd November 2026
Approval Authority	Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	23rd June 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Peta Preo Director People and Culture
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.

"Development and Career Plan" - The Development and Career Plan (DCP) is the annual staff development and career planning process at the University

"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’.