# Grade 6 to 7 Researcher Promotion Procedure

# Introduction

The promotions processes at the University of Reading are based on the principles of fairness, equity and the recognition of the value and strength of an individual’s contribution.

This procedure outlines the promotions pathway for **research staff** Grade 6 to Grade 7. Research staff promotions to Grades 8 and 9 are considered under the academic staff promotion [**Personal Titles**](https://www.reading.ac.uk/human-resources/working-life/reward-and-recognition/academic-promotions)procedure.

All applications for promotion are considered afresh each academic year in line with the eligibility criteria detailed within this guidance.

# Eligibility

Applicants are expected to have been employed at the University and to have held their Grade 6 Researcher position for **at least 2 years** and demonstrate they meet the required promotion criteria, as outlined in section 4 below, before applying for promotion. Applicants with a shorter length of service/position will require exceptional justification. Applicants do not, however, need to be at the top of Grade 6 to consider applying for promotion to Grade 7.

Funding will be made available to facilitate the promotion of Research Staff from Grades 6 to 7, regardless of the presence of monies within the grant that may be primarily funding their employment.

In cases where salary costs are paid from an external research grant, the expectation is that additional costs associated with any promotion will be borne by the grant, where this is possible without detriment to the successful completion of the work on the grant. If it is not possible to charge the additional salary costs to the grant, it would be expected that departmental/School budgets will carry the additional costs so that no justifiable promotion is turned down or refused on the basis of funding.

This promotion scheme is not a contractual benefit, and the University reserves the right to amend or withdraw it.

# 3) Submitting an application for promotion

An application should be completed by the candidate and must include:

* A completed G6 to G7 Research Staff promotion application form
* A CV (to include details of the individual’s publication record) in the correct format (see template/example on HR webpages)
* A copy of the candidate’s current Grade 6 job description and person specification.

In the interests of consistency, no additional documentation will be allowed.

## 3a) Impact of Personal Circumstances

There is a ‘Personal circumstances’ section on the application form. This is to be used if a candidate wishes to draw specific attention to what might be perceived as an atypical career profile and/or to any particular personal, familial or other relevant circumstances that they feel have significantly impacted upon their work outputs for a defined period of time.

Such circumstances may include family leave, extended sick leave, caring responsibilities, and/or any other circumstance covered by the Equality Act 2010.

Where candidates hold fractional appointments, and where relevant, a statement indicating as to how the part-time nature of the appointment may have impacted their ability to achieve the expected criteria can also be included under this section.

Candidates should adhere to the word limit and should use this box to describe:

* the period of time impacted,
* how the particular personal circumstances impacted their ability to do their job / produce the required outputs for that period of time and;
* which promotion assessment criteria the impact of the individual or collective personal circumstances relate(s) to.

## 3b) Application Timetable

Applications can be considered at any time during the academic year, or by a timetable set by a particular School to best support the facilitation of the decision-making process.

Where a more structured timetable is required the relevant Head of School will ensure this is communicated to all eligible staff and their line managers at the beginning of the academic year. A maximum of one application can be considered in a 12-month period.

If applicants require guidance in relation to this procedure or in preparing proposals, they should contact their line manager/supervisor or Head of Department in the first instance so they can be advised of what local mentoring arrangements are available to support candidates who may be considering applying for promotion. Alternatively, applicants can contact their relevant [HR Adviser or HR Partner](https://www.reading.ac.uk/human-resources/about-us/professional-and-advisory).

# Promotion assessment criteria

When completing the application form, Grade 6 Research staff should provide a narrative including clear examples of how they can demonstrate their independence as a researcher. This will include making significant contributions to the writing of grant proposals and research outputs of international quality and which will contribute to gaining substantial external research funding. As an independent researcher you will also need to demonstrate your experience and capability in effectively managing research projects and supervising and developing high performing teams.

As such, the 4 **mandatory** assessment criteria for promotion from Grade 6 to Grade 7 are;

1. Research Leadership
2. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
3. Delivering high quality research
4. Developing recognition and esteem as an independent researcher

An individual’s contribution is demonstrated both in terms of the outcomes (results) and the manner in which the work was completed (values and behaviours). Proposals should, therefore, detail how the individual has met the criteria in both of these aspects and how this links to the demonstration of the [University’s Leadership Principles Framework (3Rs – Resourceful, Responsible, Respectful](https://www.reading.ac.uk/human-resources/people-development/leadership-and-management-development/3-rs)) and/or [Values and Professional Behaviours](https://www.reading.ac.uk/human-resources/-/media/project/functions/human-resources/documents/humresvalues-for-working-together-and-professional-behaviours.pdf?la=en&hash=0528F51C4148B5C8A1F0A9ECD90941E2).

There are some examples below of evidence which would satisfy the relevant assessment criteria. It is expected that you will provide a selection of examples against each of the 4 assessment criteria. However, the assessment of your independence as a researcher and your suitability for promotion to Grade 7 will be based on considering the application as a whole.

## 4a) Research Leadership

Candidates should demonstrate research leadership which includes leadership within your Department/ School and/or leadership associated to your discipline (this latter may be exhibited largely through externally focused activities, or through activities locally at Reading).

Leadership capability also includes leading groups of staff and/or research students/teaching assistants); leadership of activities and leadership by example in a variety of external engagement activities. Leadership can also be demonstrated through active membership of groups within the University or externally that are responsible for significant activities or developments. We expect that leadership will largely be discipline focused, with evidence of a developing leadership contribution within the Department/School/University.

Typical examples of demonstrating you have fulfilled this criteria may include:

* *leadership within discipline, such as by taking ownership of own research, developing own ideas on how to solve a problem or identifying new problems that need consideration and resolution*
* *leadership in the development of research proposals, either as a self-contained application or as a substantial and/or specialised part of a large project/broader programme of work*
* *leadership of external engagement activities (e.g external presentations to external partners, to lay audiences, as part of schools outreach; the nurturing and development of external relationships important to the School or University; initiatives to achieve impact beyond academia).*
* *leadership through active membership of groups within the University or externally that are responsible for significant research activities or achievements.*
* *Leadership of groups of staff or research students/ teaching assistants), including supporting their development through mentoring and/or line management*
* *Contributing as panel member to the recruitment and induction of new staff members*
* *Engagement with PhD, Masters and/or UG student training and supervision, and/or -, supporting PhD development activities (e.g. PGR conferences, journals).*
* *Active contribution to the organisation and running of research-related committees, research councils, or professional or learned societies nationally or internationally.*
* *Constructive and active contributions to School/University life e.g. through membership of School/University Committees or working groups or active engagement in School/University initiatives e.g diversity and inclusion, health and safety and/or sustainability.*

## 4b) Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Candidates should demonstrate an account of activities/roles that you have undertaken which have contributed to your professional development, with an explanation of/reflection on the associated development that has taken place.

For example, attending training courses, seminars, conferences, and/or through personal study and reading and providing a brief explanation in the submission of how these activities have contributed to your professional development and/or informed your working practices.

Typical examples of demonstrating you have fulfilled this criteria may include:

* *Evidence of continuous professional development via a personal training record, coupled with reflection on the impacts that training has had on your working practice.*
* *A record of significant conferences/ workshops, etc. attended and reflection on how these may have shaped your subsequent work and future plans.*
* *Details of your own contributions to support the professional development of other colleagues in the University and/or externally, for example through mentoring activities, etc.*
* *An account of activities/roles that you have undertaken which have contributed to your professional development, with an explanation of/reflection on the associated development that has taken place e.g. attending training courses, seminars, conferences, and/or through personal study and reading and providing a brief explanation in the submission of how these activities have contributed to your professional development and/or inform your working practices*
* *Contribution to teaching or student project supervision, development of teaching practice via gaining Associate Fellow to the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA) to support a career plan to become an academic*

## 4c) Delivering high quality research

Candidates should demonstrate how they have developed their **independent research profile and an emerging record of research of at least national standing.**

Typical examples of demonstrating you have fulfilled this criteria may include:

* *Publication of outputs from independent research, including outputs of at least 3\* quality or recognised equivalent for the discipline (e.g. exhibitions, performances or datasets, including outputs based on PhD research)*
* *Development of new research collaborations (internal and external, which could include research centres and/or institutes) with tangibles outcomes (e.g. impact, publications, grant proposals, exhibitions).*
* *Leading successful applications for independent funding for research (as appropriate to the discipline) and/or making substantial contributions to the writing and submission of high quality, competitive applications for significant external funding, and leading the successful delivery of research*
* *Development and publication of new research tools or methodologies*
* *Development of new tools and methodologies to deliver impact from research*

## 4d) Developing recognition and esteem as an independent researcher

Candidates should demonstrate external esteem for their research with a developing national and/or international profile.

Typical examples of demonstrating you have fulfilled this criteria may include:

* *Speaking at national or international events/conferences*
* *Organising panels at major conferences*
* *Invitations to give seminars/talks at external organisations or conferences*
* *Invitations to join national or international committees or organisations relevant to the discipline*
* *Acting as a peer reviewer or assessor for grant proposals for major funders or for publications in leading journals).*
* *Emerging track record of engagement with the public and/or the end-users of research; dissemination of research across the University and beyond to develop impact – evidenced by the delivery of public lectures, engagement with the media, involvement in public events, use of blogs and other social media to communicate research, engaging with industry, third sector, public policy and end-users to develop research impact.*
* *Demonstrating how your research fits at the forefront of your field*

# Decision Making Procedure

In the interests of equity and consistency, the Heads of School will only consider the written evidence presented on the G6 to G7 Research Staff promotion application form and contained in the eligible additional documentation provided by candidates.

Heads of School will be accountable for decisions made. To assist them in considering cases and making decisions, Heads of School are encouraged to involve senior colleagues from within their School (such as members of their leadership team) and/or appropriate senior colleagues from outside the School, for example a Research Dean appropriate to the discipline or another Head of School. This may be helpful where a researcher has worked in multiple Schools during the course of their employment or where subject specific expertise may be required to help with decision making.

It is expected that Heads of Schools and those involved in the decision making will work with and take appropriate advice from their **HR Partner** to ensure:

* There is consistency in their interpretation and implementation of the procedure, eligibility and decision making criteria
* Cases are rejected where they are not sufficiently made and there is a clear written record of why a case is unsuccessful so that appropriate feedback can be provided to the candidate
* That cases are not considered where there is a retention issue, as there is a separate University procedure for such cases.
* That outcomes and feedback from the University’s annual validation process[[1]](#footnote-2) are considered

**There is no right of appeal against the non-award of a G6 to G7 promotion in relation to the academic judgement/decision. However, where you feel there has been a procedural irregularity which has impacted the decision making process please set out your concerns to the Director of HR who will appoint an appropriate manager to undertake a review.**

# Contacts

If you require guidance in relation to this procedure or in preparing proposals, please contact your line manager, Head of Department or relevant [HR Adviser or HR Partner](https://www.reading.ac.uk/human-resources/about-us/professional-and-advisory).

1. The University’s validation process is led by the HR Function to review decisions made each year across the institution. The purpose of this process will be to notice trends which may indicate unfairness and/or bias in decision making or the implementation of the procedure which may be negatively impacting particular staff groups and/or staff with particular protected characteristics. Information will be shared with Heads by HR Partners to highlight any concerns and to improve the future implementation of the procedure and decision making. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)