

Guidance for Promotions to Research Officer and Research Fellow

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document provides guidance for promotion to Band 6 (Research Officer) and Band 7 (Research Fellow) research roles only.
- 1.2. Promotion to grades above Band 7 (Research Fellow) are either via the New Research Staff Career Track (to Assistant Professorial Research Fellow, Associate Professorial Research Fellow or Professorial Research Fellow, on Bands SBA1, SBA2 or SBA3 respectively) or via the Policy Fellow Career Track (to Senior Policy Fellow or Distinguished Policy Fellow, on Bands 8 or 9 respectively).

2. Grade structure and outline of level of responsibility for Research Staff

- 2.1. The LSE Research staff role profiles are available on the Human Resources website [here](#).
- 2.2. When proposing a Promotion to the new grade, managers will be required:
 - either** to demonstrate how the employee is already fulfilling the requirements of the new grade;
 - or** to make a case for promotion on the grounds that employment at the higher grade is necessary and/or appropriate, that funding is available, and that the employee is suitably qualified and competent. Promotion to the new grade will take into account the role profile of the post, and the individual's qualifications and experience.
- 2.3. All promotions of research staff are contingent on the availability of funding.
- 2.4. The effective date of the promotion will be in the month following the submission and will be backdated to that time should the process of reaching the decision extend past that time.

- 2.5. Promoted individuals will normally move to the minimum salary on the next salary band, (Salary Band 6, Step 24.5 for promotions to Research Officer; Salary Band 7, Step 32.5 for promotions to Research Fellow), or receive two additional increments, whichever is greater (funds permitting), to be paid from the effective date of promotion.
- 2.6. All promotion decisions must be taken in line with LSE's Code of Practice on Free Speech, which outlines the School's responsibilities to protect and promote freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law.

3. Promotion procedures

- 3.1. In each term, there will be one deadline for submitting requests for promotion. Deadlines will be published on the Human Resources website and communicated to relevant staff. To ensure consistency, all requests where the full documentation is received before that deadline will be considered together in that term.
- 3.2. Promotions to Research Officer are subject to confirmation by the Vice Chair of the Appointments Committee (VCAC). In any cases of difficulty, the VCAC will refer the request to the Research Fellow and Policy Staff Promotions Panel.
- 3.3. Promotions to Research Fellow are subject to confirmation by the Research Fellow and Policy Staff Promotions Panel ("the Panel").
- 3.4. The Panel will consist of:
 - Either the VCAC or the VPFD (Chair)
 - Associate Vice President (Impact)
 - Associate Vice President (Research)
 - A Centre or Institute Director or senior member of staff with experience on, or of managing staff on, the relevant grades (e.g., a Professor [NAC], a Professorial Research Fellow, a Distinguished Policy Fellow), appointed for a period of two years.
- 3.5. Members will declare any conflict of interest and will not contribute to the discussion or decision of a case where the Chair judges there to be a conflict of interest. Where the Chair themselves has a conflict of interest, the Associate Vice President (Impact) will replace them as chair.
- 3.6. The Panel will meet once per term. It will aim to decide cases by consensus but can decide cases by majority vote. The Chair will not vote unless necessary to provide the casting vote (e.g., because one of the members must recuse themselves or abstains for other reasons).
- 3.7. Promotions require the following information to be submitted to Human Resources via email by the Head of Department/Research Institute Director/Research Centre Director:
 - i. A formal letter of justification from the Head of Department or Centre or Institute Director, explaining the reasons for the promotion, giving evidence to demonstrate how the individual is performing at the higher level, or would be capable of performing at the higher level. This letter should systematically review all the elements of the relevant job description/role profile and explain how the individual meets them. The candidate's principal investigator, if not the Head of

Department or Centre of Institute Director, should be consulted.

- ii. A full job description. (Please see the [role profiles](#) for Research Officers or Research Fellows beforehand.) The job description will be evaluated in accordance with the role profiles to determine the grade of the post.
- iii. A copy of the individual's CV. For Research Fellow, this should be on the School's [CV template for promotion to Research Fellow](#) (see Annex A for the template and Annex B for instructions).
 - a. Electronic copies (pdf format) of two writings. Candidates should submit their strongest writings in terms of originality, rigour and significance. The VCAC/the Panel welcome submissions that have been published or accepted for publication but is willing to accept unpublished outputs.
 - b. Where writings are co-authored, candidates should give priority to writings where they have made the leading or at least major contribution, as candidates should keep in mind that the VCAC/the Panel are looking for evidence of their independent contributions. The School appreciates that authorship norms vary by discipline (e.g., in terms of joint, team, or sole authorships; order of names, etc.). Candidates are required to provide a numerical indication in percentage terms of their contribution(s) to joint work on the CV, alongside the requirement to state the respective contributions of co-authors regarding the initiation, conduct and direction of the work. Candidates should also provide details of the degree of intellectual contribution made to the work (e.g., indicating their involvement in the formulation of key themes, concepts and theories). The statement should not exceed 200 words. The VCAC/the Panel reserve the right to ask co-authors for a confirmation of the respective contributions stated by promotion candidates.
- iv. Details of mentoring support that the individual has received.
- v. The names and contact details (including e-mail addresses) of **three** referees (for Promotion to Research Officer) or **four** referees (for promotion to Research Fellow) with relevant expertise in the field, all but one of whom are external to LSE.
 - "External to LSE" means that a referee has not held any formal position at, or affiliation with, LSE in the last four years.
 - Where appropriate, one of the external referees can be a senior person from outside academia (e.g., a governmental body, think tank, research institute or non-governmental organization) who has close knowledge of the research capability of the candidate.
 - The naming of referees should not, normally, include people who have co-authored with the candidate in the past four years.
 - Heads of Department/Centre or Institute Directors should seek the advice of the VCAC where co-authors may be best placed to act as Referees.
 - Human Resources will then seek approval from the VCAC for these referees and will contact them.
- vi. Email confirmation from a central function such as LSE Research and Innovation or Finance Division of the availability of funding for promotion. This should include reference of the salary band and spine point of promotion and the date to which funding is available.
- vii. If relevant, an [Optional Declaration of Individual Circumstances Form](#). This can be

submitted by the candidate directly to Human Resources, if preferred. Details on how the submission of such forms are handled can be found in the Guidance on Optional Declarations of Individual Circumstances document, available [here](#).

- 3.8. Declaration of any possible conflicts of interest should also be highlighted to Human Resources at this stage. Human Resources will notify the VCAC and liaise with the School Secretary to ensure compliance with the School's Ethics Code, available [here](#).
- 3.9. Once Human Resources have received all necessary documentation above and the solicited referee letters, these will be sent to the VCAC/the Panel for review.
- 3.10. The VCAC/the Panel will review the documentation and decide whether to approve the promotion.

4. Self-sponsored cases

- 4.1. Whilst departmentally-sponsored promotion is the usual route, individuals are free to propose their own promotion if their departments do not intend to recommend them. This process may also be suitable for cases where the researcher is also the Principal Investigator on the project.
- 4.2. Individuals are reminded that all promotions of research staff are contingent on the availability of funding. Confirmation of the availability of funding should be in place prior to submitting a case for promotion. (This can be requested from LSE Research and Innovation via email, with a copy of the confirmation to be submitted to Human Resources along with the documentation requested below). In instances where funding for the promotion is available in principle, but the Department/Centre is not willing to support the promotion, the procedure set out below may be followed.
- 4.3. In such cases, the individual is free to write directly to the VCAC, copying in Human Resources Division, to make a case for promotion. The following information should be enclosed:
 - i. A formal letter of justification, explaining the reasons for the promotion, giving evidence to demonstrate how the individual is performing at the higher level, or would be capable of performing at the higher level.
 - ii. A copy of the CV, which, for self-sponsored promotion to Research Fellow, must be on the relevant School template (see Annex A for the template and Annex B for instructions).
 - iii. Details of mentoring support that the individual has received.
 - iv. The names and email addresses of two referees with relevant expertise in the field. The remaining referee(s) (one for promotion to Research Officer, two for promotion to Research Fellow) will be selected by the VCAC. The criteria for selection of referees as stated in Section 3 above, will apply.
 - v. Electronic copies of two writings. The selection of writings should adhere to the same criteria as stated in Section 3 above.
 - vi. Email confirmation from LSE Research and Innovation of the availability of funding

for the promotion.

- vii. If relevant, an [Optional Declaration of Individual Circumstances Form](#). This can be submitted by the candidate directly to Human Resources, if preferred. Details on how the submission of such forms are handled can be found in the Guidance on Optional Declarations of Individual Circumstances document, available [here](#).
- 4.4. Declaration of any possible conflicts of interest should also be highlighted to Human Resources at this stage. Human Resources will notify the VCAC, and liaise with the School Secretary to ensure compliance with the School's Ethics Code, available [here](#).
- 4.5. Once the proposal has been received, Human Resources Division will write to the Head of the Department or Centre/Institute Director concerned, requesting written statements about the work of the self-sponsored candidate.
- 4.6. After the receipt of documentation, the case will be considered based on the procedures set out above, except that for promotion to Research Officer, it will be considered by the VPFD, and for promotion to Research Fellow, the Panel will always be chaired by the VPFD. This permits the VCAC to act as an independent guardian of the fairness of the process.

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	July 2018	Appointments Committee	
2	August 2019	Appointments Committee	
3	July 2021	Appointments Committee	
4	June 2026	Appointments Committee	

Contacts

Position	Name	Email	Notes
Human Resources	Review and Promotion Team	Hr.Reviewandpromotion@lse.ac.uk	

Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	No
Will training needs arise from this policy	No
If Yes, please give details	