University of Hertfordshire UH

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Introduction of an Associate Professorship Scheme

The new Associate Professorship Appointment Procedure at the University of Hertfordshire was launched in 2017 to provide a parallel career pathway to that of the Readership route that will open the access to a wider cross-section of UH staff towards a full Professorship. It runs alongside the existing process for the appointments of both Readerships and Professorships.

The criteria for Associate Professor

The University Policies and Regulations for the Associate Professorship provide detailed criteria, indicative metrics and very explicit key performance indicators to support applicants. There are three categories: Research; Enterprise and Entrepreneurship; and Learning and Teaching, each with detailed criteria, indicative metrics and key performance indicators.

A successful applicant fed-back that:

'It was certainly heartening to read criteria that related directly to my work and recognize that I did have a place at UH, so I enjoyed the application process. My work has much more visibility outside the university than within it and I hope that the title might open doors within the university and allow me to bring value internally.'

	CRITERIA	INDICATIVE METRICS	INDICATIVE KPIs
Outputs and contributions	Research outputs of at least internationally-recognised quality as defined in subject area Evidence of diffusion and impact of research	• Defined by any national research assessment process and/or learning community (pedagogic research) and/or professional practitioner groups • Citations • Development of ideas by others • Influence on public policy • Research awards • Technology transfer, consultancy etc.	• 1-3 non-conference outputs p.a. (depending on subject area)* • 5-50 (depending on subject area) including international* • One example in a three year period • One example in a five year period • Awards of over £25,000-£500,000 (subject dependent)* • 1-3 examples (depending on subject area)*
Research standing and esteem	Measures of peer esteem appropriate to the subject community and research activities	• Peer and/or expert review • Editorship of original works • Grants won • Research conference presentation invitations • Internal/external exhibitions • External Doctoral award research examinations	• Minimum of 5 examples including at least 2 international*
Professional practice/ consultancy	Effective contribution to changing and developing practice	• National committee work • Formulation of policy • Standards of work • Quality, scope and impact of consultancy work	• Leader/active engagement of at least one area of consultancy with at least two projects per year and including at least one international example over 3 years*
Contribution to research-based teaching and practice-based teaching	Successful supervision of postgraduate taught/ research students	• Evidence that teaching and learning are informed by personal research and endeavours etc.	• Successful supervision of two doctoral degrees* • Supervision of at least two students per year*
Contribution to the collective good	Effectiveness in team-based activities	• Demonstration of ability to work as part of a team	• At least four activities per year*
Academic leadership	Achievements in leadership roles	• Range of positions held • Impact on research/teaching/professional practice within and/or without the University	• At least five major achievements at either regional, national or international level per year*
Collegiality/good citizenship	Citizenship contributions	• Committees • Working groups • Task forces • Community groups • Volunteering • Supporting citizenship of the University and wider scholarly networks • Being a good colleague	• At least four examples per year including one international*
Development of self and others context	Evidence of continued self-development	• Roles as mentor/coach • Contribution to staff development activities • Awareness of equal opportunity issues sector-wide issues and debates. • Contribution to university and educational sector-wide issues and debates.	• At least four examples per year* international example* • Demonstrate contribution including overseas issues and debates*
External roles	External contribution	• External examinerships • Consultancy • Election to/membership of recognised national bodies • Representing the School/Centre/University in external fora relevant to academic role	• At least two examples from UK and one international*

December 2017   *examples for at least 3 consecutive years

The process for applicants

The process for appointment of Associate Professorships has an annual cycle, with one opportunity each year to apply, whereas applications can be made for Readerships and Professorships at any time during the academic year. A full curriculum vitae, a synopsis of the candidate's achievements, professional standing and future plans in their chosen field of endeavour, a statement on how the candidate lives the UH values and names of three academic referees are submitted. Applications require a letter of support from the Dean of School. The Associate Professorship Promotion Panel reviews applications and appoints the Interview Panel of at least three, including the Deputy Vice Chancellor and an external assessor who is independent of the candidate but working in the relevant field.

One of the successful applicants shared:

'I think the process was good, because it made you take stock of what you had done and what you were doing, and to have the opportunity to get feedback from other people that you don't get in your everyday work.'

The initial impact of the scheme

The development of this new route to academic progression is having a positive impact on improving equality and diversity.

Although numbers are small, and it will take time to gather enough data, the initial appointments indicate that the development of this new route to academic progression has the potential of having a positive impact on improving equality and diversity.

33% of Readers are female; whilst 43% of Associate Professors are female, whilst the proportion of BAME compared to white is currently the same through both routes.

A successful applicant stated:

'Being an Associate Professor has opened up lots of doors for me.'

Another felt that:

'I saw it as a way to demonstrate UH's value for my work outside the university.'

A successful applicant from 2018 found that:

'For me, the creation of this title at UH signified an institutional understanding of the complexities that academics face regarding the competing demands in the balance of research, teaching and academic administration. It provides a pathway for someone like me who is research focussed, but who by virtue of my current role cannot be solely dedicated to research, an accessible route to full professor status. I see it as an adjunct to the traditional route via Readership, which for someone like me who came to academia after a decade in the pharmaceutical industry seemed tantalisingly always just out of reach.

Associate Professor status contextualises the research successes and ambition that I have demonstrated whilst acknowledging successes in the competing demands of academic life. The title provides me with a focus, to ensure that my research remains an important factor when determining my workload. It also provides credibility, particularly with external collaborators and funding bodies, where the title of Associate Professor is an indicator of both my investment in research, and UHs investment in me as a researcher'.

Going Forward

The University of Hertfordshire Researcher Development Group aim to increase opportunity and diversity in career progression to Reader, Associate Professor (Research) and Professor by publishing case studies of researchers' promotions, enhancing transparency and broadening review panels. Our success measure will be the appointment of at least one Associate Professor (Research) each year in addition to promotions to Reader and Professor (Research) and HR figures on gender and BAME diversity in these staff.