



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Academic Career Pathways 2022 (Research & Teaching)

Assessment Criteria and Scoring  
**2021-2022**

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# Assessment Criteria

This section sets out the promotion and progression criteria for the ACP processes, which apply to all academic staff. The [Assessment Criteria](#) for each academic office are given below together with generic [Indicators of Excellence](#).

Each application will be considered and assessed on its own merit against the [Assessment Criteria](#) for the level in question, taking into equal account evidence of both inputs and outputs.

The generic [Indicators of Excellence](#) as well as the respective School/Institution-specific [Indicators of Excellence](#) provide examples of evidence of fulfilment of these criteria. All examples are suggestive in nature and non-exhaustive, and not all the indicators will be relevant to all applicants.

Applicants should refer to the [Committees](#) section (in particular [Overarching Considerations](#)) in this Guide for more guidance on the approach that Committees are expected to take in evaluating evidence.

The [General Board](#) has the discretion to make changes to the weighting, thresholds, score range, or any other element of the scoring methodology that it deems necessary.

## School/Institution-specific Guidance and Indicators of Excellence

Each School/Institution is expected to adopt and publish its own specific guidance on expectations for promotion and progression and exemplar [Indicators of Excellence](#); these indicators are in addition to the more generic [Indicators of Excellence](#) set out in this Guide. The School/Institution-specific guidance will state the expectations with regard to the balance between teaching and/or researcher development for progression or promotion.

To ensure parity of standards and expectations, the School Guidance must be approved by the respective School Councils prior to adoption. Each School will be expected to review their guidance annually and update it, as necessary, to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. Schools may find it helpful to refer to the minutes of previous ACP (or Senior Academic Promotions) rounds for examples of [Indicators of Excellence](#) for their disciplines.

**Please see the School/Institution-specific information for further details <insert link>.**

## Professor (Grade 12): Criteria for the Assessment of Research

Promotion to Professor requires **outstanding achievement in research and research leadership assessed by reference to international levels of excellence**. This includes both individual and collaborative contributions to research, as well as contributions to leading an excellent institutional research culture.

There are two criteria and outstanding achievement is normally required in both:

<b>CRITERION 1: Consistently conducts rigorous research addressing significant questions, contributing new ideas and advancing the boundaries of the field whilst ensuring the highest standards of are promoted and maintained.</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A substantial portfolio of high quality research outputs that are internationally recognised as world-class in terms of their originality, significance and rigour. The University acknowledges that the intellectual content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published</li> <li>• Makes a significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge in their research discipline</li> <li>• Produces and disseminates research outputs that have an impact, for example in the REF or informs national or international policy development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently invited to present work at major national and international conferences and institutions</li> <li>• A significant track record of winning competitive research funding</li> <li>• In receipt of prizes and honours for research</li> </ul>
<b>CRITERION 2: Consistently provides high-quality research leadership, strategically planning for the future and supporting an inclusive and productive research culture</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads and contributes to collaborative research projects</li> <li>• Elected/appointed to research-related leadership roles</li> <li>• Creates and manages large research groups</li> <li>• Convenes and leads major research conferences and seminar programmes</li> <li>• Provides intellectual thought leadership which informs and contributes to setting the international research agenda in an individual's area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in high-quality public, industrial and/or policy engagement activities linked to research</li> <li>• Edits major academic journals</li> <li>• Promotes collaboration and develops cross-disciplinary research activities</li> </ul>

## Professor (Grade 11): Criteria for the Assessment of Research

Promotion to Professor (Grade 11) requires **outstanding achievement in research and research leadership assessed by reference to national levels of excellence and international recognition**. This includes both individual and collaborative contributions to research, as well as contributions to institutional research culture.

There are two criteria and outstanding achievement is normally required in both:

<b>CRITERION 1: Consistently conducts rigorous research addressing significant questions, contributing new ideas and advancing the boundaries of the field whilst ensuring the highest standards of research integrity are promoted and maintained.</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A substantial portfolio of high quality research outputs that are internationally recognised in terms of their originality, significance and rigour. The University acknowledges that the intellectual content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.</li> <li>• Contributes to the advancement of knowledge in their research discipline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produces research outputs that have an impact, for example in the REF.</li> <li>• A track record of winning competitive research funding.</li> <li>• Invited to present work at major national and international conferences and institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>CRITERION 2: Contributes to high-quality research leadership and supports an inclusive and productive research culture.</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes a significant contribution to collaborative research projects.</li> <li>• Contributes to organisation of major research conferences and seminar programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in high-quality public, industrial and/or policy engagement activities linked to research.</li> <li>• Edits major academic journals.</li> <li>• Promotes collaboration and develops cross-disciplinary research activities.</li> </ul>

## Professor (Grades 11 and 12) Applications: Criteria for the Assessment of Teaching and Researcher Development

Applicants are required to show that they have **made an effective contribution toward the University’s goal of providing high quality research-led teaching to undergraduate and post graduate students and/or fostering the professional development of research students and early career research staff.** It is recognised that applicants may contribute in different ways at different points in their career and that effective contributions may differ between disciplines. Contributions will be assessed in the context of the relevant Institution’s expectations, including the local workload model where applicable. In its guidance, each Institution should indicate the balance of expectation as between teaching (undergraduate/postgraduate) and researcher (PhD/Postdoc) development. An effective contribution must be shown by reference to all or some of the following criteria:

<b>CRITERION 1: Consistently delivers excellent teaching that benefits from and engages with Cambridge’s research-rich environment and is intellectually challenging</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designs and develops new programmes.</li> <li>• Leads/makes a significant contribution to internal teaching reviews.</li> <li>• Demonstrates breadth of knowledge and teaches effectively beyond immediate research area.</li> <li>• Receives prizes for teaching.</li> <li>• Undertakes examination/acts as a course examiner.</li> <li>• Provides educational leadership and organisation including curriculum development and learning design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully introduces innovative teaching/assessment methods or significant contribution to their enhancement.</li> <li>• Publishes major textbooks/e-learning materials adopted in courses internal or external to the University.</li> <li>• National or global press coverage of the candidate’s educational ideas or activities.</li> <li>• Holding an educational leadership position within a professional body</li> <li>• Receives excellent student feedback.</li> <li>• Demonstrates sophisticated, reflexive approach to teaching and supporting learning which enables students to develop subject knowledge and capabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>CRITERION 2: Consistently delivers high-quality research supervision that is intellectually challenging and supportive</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently high research student completion rates.</li> <li>• Award of prizes and honours for researcher development.</li> <li>• Consistently receives positive feedback from research students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides inclusive leadership and delivers excellence through the performance of others.</li> <li>• Creates a positive working environment and acts as a role model in promoting inclusion and mutual respect.</li> <li>• Contributes significantly towards recruiting and winning support for research students.</li> <li>• Recognises and nurtures talent and demonstrates consistent engagement with researcher training and development processes.</li> </ul>

**CRITERION 3: Consistently ensures that early-career researchers receive excellent opportunities to develop their potential and prepare them for future success**

<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently receives positive feedback from postdoctoral researchers.</li> <li>• Enables and encourages early-career researchers to develop independent research lines and/or pursue independent publications or funding applications.</li> <li>• Mentors or coaches early-career researchers in other groups or departments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides inclusive leadership and delivers excellence through the performance of others.</li> <li>• Creates a positive working environment and acts as a role model in promoting inclusion and mutual respect.</li> <li>• Recognises and nurtures talent and demonstrates consistent engagement with researcher training and development processes.</li> <li>• Helps early-career researchers to be creative about their futures and takes active steps to support career pathways both in and beyond academia.</li> </ul>

**Professor (Grades 11 and 12) Applications: Criteria for the Assessment of Service to the University and to the Academic Community**

Applicants are required to show an **effective service contribution**. University members are expected to demonstrate and promote collegiality by nurturing a culture of mutual respect. The University recognises that individuals may contribute in different ways at different times and that as individuals become more senior they may be asked to take on more commitments that are external to the University. Nevertheless, the University normally expects applicants to demonstrate a significant degree of service contribution that is internal to the University.

**CRITERION: Consistently makes an effective contribution of service to the University and to the academic community beyond the University. Promotes collegiality and engenders a culture of mutual respect.**

<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departmental/Faculty/University academic leadership roles.</li> <li>• Sits on Departmental/Faculty University committees and bodies.</li> <li>• Provides active mentoring and support for colleagues.</li> <li>• Promotes and demonstrates effective use of the Staff Review and Development Scheme.</li> <li>• Significant and sustained contributions to equality, diversity and inclusion activities.</li> <li>• Creates a positive working environment and acts as a role model in promoting inclusion and mutual respect.</li> <li>• Promotes cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to leadership, administration and student support within Colleges.</li> <li>• Significant and sustained contribution to widening participation activity</li> <li>• Engages significantly in peer review activity.</li> <li>• Advises government and parliamentary bodies.</li> <li>• Sits on public review bodies.</li> <li>• Significant and sustained contributions to fostering strategic partnerships (e.g. industry, trusts and foundations, philanthropic donors).</li> <li>• Supports the work of other HEIs (e.g. significant external examining; participation in research/teaching and learning reviews).</li> <li>• Significant and sustained public engagement activity.</li> </ul>

## Associate Professor (Grade 10 Progression/Promotion Scheme A): Criteria for the Assessment of Research

An applicant is required to demonstrate **achievement in research assessed by reference to national levels of excellence**. This may include individual and/or collaborative contributions to research.

<b>CRITERION: Consistently conducts rigorous research addressing significant questions, contributing new ideas and advancing the boundaries of the field, whilst ensuring the highest standards of research integrity are promoted and maintained.</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A portfolio of high quality research outputs that are nationally recognised as excellent. The University acknowledges that the intellectual content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.</li><li>• Invitations to present work externally.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invitations to join research consortia.</li></ul>

## Associate Professor (Grade 10 Progression/Promotion Scheme A): Criteria for the Assessment of Teaching and Researcher Development

An applicant seeking progression to Associate Professor (Grade 10) via the ACP Progression/Promotion Scheme A is required to show consistent and sustained excellence in **providing high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate education that benefits from and engages with Cambridge's research-rich environment and/or nurturing the professional and personal development of research students and early-career research staff**. It is recognised that effective contributions may differ between disciplines and that an applicant's contribution is therefore to be assessed in the context of their Institution's expectations, including the local workload model where applicable. Sustained excellence must be shown by reference to all or some of the following criteria:

**CRITERION 1: Consistently delivers excellent teaching that benefits from and engages with Cambridge’s research-rich environment and is intellectually challenging**

<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designs and develops new programmes.</li> <li>• Contributes to internal teaching reviews.</li> <li>• Undertakes examination / acts as a course examiner.</li> <li>• Provides educational leadership and organisation, including curriculum development and learning design.</li> <li>• Demonstrates sophisticated, reflexive approach to teaching and supporting learning, which enables students to develop subject knowledge and capabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully introduces innovative teaching/assessment methods or significant contribution to their enhancement.</li> <li>• Publishes materials adopted in courses internal or external to the University.</li> <li>• National or global press coverage of the candidate’s educational ideas or activities.</li> <li>• Receives excellent student feedback.</li> </ul>

**CRITERION 2: Consistently delivers high-quality research supervision that is intellectually challenging and supportive**

<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervises research students effectively.</li> <li>• Consistently receives positive feedback from research students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides inclusive leadership and delivers excellence through the performance of others.</li> <li>• Creates a positive working environment and acts as a role model in promoting inclusion and mutual respect.</li> <li>• Contributes towards recruiting and winning support for research students.</li> <li>• Recognises and nurtures talent and engages with researcher training and development processes.</li> </ul>

**CRITERION 3: Consistently ensures that early-career researchers receive excellent opportunities to develop their potential and prepare them for future success**

<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently receives positive feedback from postdoctoral researchers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides inclusive leadership and delivers excellence through the performance of others.</li> <li>• Creates a positive working environment and acts as a role model in promoting inclusion and mutual respect.</li> <li>• Recognises and nurtures talent and engages with researcher training and development processes.</li> </ul>

## Associate Professor (Grade 10 Grade 10 Progression/Promotion Scheme A): Criteria for the Assessment of Service to the University and to the Academic Community

An applicant is required to show an **effective service contribution**. University members are expected to demonstrate and promote collegiality by nurturing a culture of mutual respect. The University recognises that people may contribute in different ways at different times and that as individuals become more senior they may be asked to take on more commitments that are external to the University. Nevertheless, the University normally expects applicants to demonstrate some degree of service contribution that is internal to the University.

<b>CRITERION: Consistently makes an effective contribution of service to the University and to the academic community beyond the University. Promotes collegiality and engenders a culture of mutual respect.</b>	
<i>Generic examples of indicators of excellence</i>	<i>Generic examples of impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departmental/Faculty/University academic leadership roles.</li> <li>• Sits on Departmental/Faculty University committees and bodies.</li> <li>• Provides active mentoring and support for colleagues.</li> <li>• Promotes and demonstrates effective use of the Staff Review and Development Scheme.</li> <li>• Significant and sustained contributions to equality, diversity and inclusion activities.</li> <li>• Creates a positive working environment and acts as a role model in promoting inclusion and mutual respect.</li> <li>• Promotes cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to leadership, administration and student support within Colleges.</li> <li>• Significant and sustained contribution to widening participation activity.</li> <li>• Engages significantly in peer review activity.</li> <li>• Advises government and parliamentary bodies.</li> <li>• Sits on public review bodies.</li> <li>• Significant and sustained contributions to fostering strategic partnerships (e.g. industry, trusts and foundations, philanthropic donors).</li> <li>• Supports the work of other HEIs (e.g. significant external examining; participation in research/teaching and learning reviews).</li> <li>• Significant and sustained public engagement activity.</li> </ul>

# Performance Descriptors and Scoring

In evaluating applications Committees will expect to see a rising career trajectory, particularly with regard to research for promotion to Professorships (Grades 11 and 12). The bandings and scores set out in the tables below should be used to summarise the description of achievement in relation to the [Assessment Criteria](#).

## Scoring Professorships (Grades 11 and 12)

Applicants for promotion to Professorship will be assessed against the following evaluative criteria and scoring methodology:

- Research and Research leadership (50/100);
- Teaching and Researcher Development (30/100);
- and Service to the University and the Academic Community (20/100).

The lowest two bandings ('Clearly Unsatisfactory' and 'Insufficient Evidence') are deemed to be below the threshold for promotion.

Performance descriptor (banding)	Score		
	Research and Research Leadership	Teaching and Researcher Development	Service to the University & Academic Community
Outstanding Evidence	36 – 50	24 -30	15 - 20
Strong Evidence	22 – 35	15 – 23	10 – 14
Clear Evidence	12 – 21	9 – 14	7 – 9
Insufficient Evidence	7 – 11	4 – 8	4 – 6
Clearly Unsatisfactory	1 - 6	1 - 3	1 -3

## Scoring Associate Professorships

Progression to and within Associate Professor Grade 10 is via the ACP Progression Schemes A and B and is intended to recognise and reward academic staff who are fulfilling the relevant Assessment Criteria.

Progression to Associate Professor Grade 10 (via ACP Progression / Promotion Scheme A) is determined by reference to the scoring scheme

for promotion to Professor but adapted to reflect the fact that the balance between research, teaching and / or researcher development and service can shift in different directions over the course of an individual's career.

The ACP Progression / Promotion Scheme A has the flexibility to accommodate the non-linear progression of many academic careers.

## ACP PROGRESSION/PROMOTION Scheme A: Option 1

Applicants are assessed against the following evaluative criteria and scoring methodology:

- Research (50/100);
- Teaching/Researcher Development (30/100); and
- Service to the University and the Academic Community (20/100).

Performance descriptor (banding)	Score		
	Research	Teaching / Researcher Development	Service to the University & Academic Community
Outstanding Evidence	36 – 50	24 -30	15 - 20
Strong Evidence	22 – 35	15 – 23	10 – 14
Clear Evidence	12 – 21	9 – 14	7 – 9
Insufficient Evidence	7 – 11	4 – 8	4 – 6
Clearly Unsatisfactory	1 - 6	1 - 3	1 -3

## ACP PROGRESSION/PROMOTION Scheme A: Option 2

Applicants are assessed against the following evaluative criteria and scoring methodology:

- Teaching/Researcher Development (50/100); and
- Service to the University and the Academic Community (30/100).
- Research Leadership (20/100).

Performance descriptor (banding)	Score		
	Teaching / Researcher Development	Service to the University & Academic Community	Research Leadership
Outstanding Evidence	36 – 50	24 -30	15 - 20
Strong Evidence	22 – 35	15 – 23	10 – 14
Clear Evidence	12 – 21	9 – 14	7 – 9
Insufficient Evidence	7 – 11	4 – 8	4 – 6
Clearly Unsatisfactory	1 - 6	1 - 3	1 -3



- A case may be made to transfer 10 points from Teaching/Researcher development (Option 1) or Service (Option 2) to one of the other two descriptors.
- The lowest two bandings ('Clearly Unsatisfactory' and 'Insufficient Evidence') are deemed to be below the threshold for promotion.

## General Comments on Scoring

### Scoring range

The maximum score for an evaluative criterion is reserved for demonstrable exceptional achievement against the norms of the applicant's discipline, for example a high level of international recognition for their stage in their career. It would be highly unusual for an applicant to operate at the maximum score across all three evaluative criteria; therefore, any committee awarding such high scores is expected to include a justification in the minutes of their meeting.

### Scoring Teaching and Researcher Development Contribution

Each committee will assess the quantity, quality and degree of innovation and leadership (e.g. course design at a macro level) in teaching. If a teaching officer is undertaking a standard amount of teaching, for example lectures, exams and demonstrations, in a satisfactory way, a mid-range score would be appropriate. Many teaching officers teach more than their stint from time to time and regularly contribute to updating courses and modules; such contributions are regarded to be part of their usual academic role.

If a Head of Institution (or other senior academic) providing the [Institutional Statement](#) believes the applicant's contribution is at a significantly higher or lower level than the standard expected and merits a score substantially higher or lower than the standard expected, detailed evidence must be provided.

If the quantity or quality of teaching is significantly greater than the standard expected or there has been a contribution to the design of new courses or modules or to a major revamp of existing offerings, then an award of additional points may be considered by the FC.

The award of a very high score indicates that the candidate is making an exceptional contribution in one or more aspects of teaching. The nature of that exceptional contribution should be addressed in the respective FC and SC meeting minutes. A low score indicates that there are significant concerns about the quantity or quality of an applicant's teaching and the [Institutional Statement](#) should clearly set out these concerns.

### Departure from the Standard Scoring Model

In exceptional circumstances the Head of Institution may propose a departure from the standard scoring model for promotion to Professor (Grades 11 and 12) on an individual basis so that the maximum Teaching / Researcher Development score is reduced to 20, with:

- **Either** Research up to a maximum of 60 and Service remaining at a maximum of 20 points,
- **Or** Research remaining at 50 maximum but with Service up to a maximum of 30 points.

The proposal must be approved by the FC with reasons recorded in the minutes. Heads of Institution and FCs should bear in mind the standard scoring model reflects extensive discussion across the University on the critical importance of high-quality teaching to the University's mission and the wish to reflect this in the promotions system.

The Head of Institution should set out the reasons for the proposed exception. It is not appropriate to seek to use the exception to side-step the normal expectation of three years teaching experience at Cambridge.



### **Scoring Service to the University and the Academic Community**

For a standard general contribution, a mid-range score would be appropriate. To justify a higher score there needs to be evidence of sustained contribution to the Institution, University or externally. If a Head of Institution (or other senior academic) providing the [Institutional Statement](#) believes the applicant's contribution is at a significantly higher or lower level than the standard expected and merits a score substantially higher or lower than the standard expected, detailed evidence needs to be provided. The award of a very high score indicates that the candidate is making an exceptional contribution and this should be addressed in the respective committees' minutes.

### **No carry forward**

Any score received, whether against a particular criterion or as a total score, only applies to the ACP round for that particular year. The score will assist the FC and School Committee for that year's exercise in creating a rank-ordered list, rather than being an absolute number. Scores will not be carried forward from one ACP round to another and the [Committees](#) will not be made aware of scores from any previous applications.

Each year is a new exercise and it is the responsibility of each Committee to make its own decision on the basis of an evaluation of the evidence provided.



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