



University of Glasgow | Human
Resources

Early Career Development Programme Policy and Procedure

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1. General Principles

The University's Early Career Development Programme (ECDP) provides a vehicle through which newly appointed early career academic staff at Grade 7 or 8 may be effectively supported in developing their academic skills and in progressing their career.

The purpose of this policy is to develop high achieving, high performing academics who will help the University of Glasgow to deliver its vision and ambitions, as articulated in the current Strategic Plan – [Strategy 2025: World Changers Together](#)

The programme enables this by:

- Providing learning and development opportunities in all aspects of the academic role;
- Allocating a mentor to provide support and advice;
- Annual setting of objectives which enable academics to develop with a view to meeting the criteria for promotion to Grade 9 within a defined timescale.

Successful completion of the programme will be achieved by full participants gaining promotion to Grade 9 under the University's Academic Appointment & Promotion Policy.

2. Equal Opportunities

The University of Glasgow is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in all of its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, research and teaching environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. The Early Career Development Programme for newly appointed early career academic staff is intended to be fair, transparent, and consistent with the University's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

Outcomes will be based solely on assessment of individual achievement against published criteria and agreed individual objectives. Individual objectives will be set with reference to the relevant promotion criteria to ensure timely progress is made towards the next level. Staff will be treated equally, irrespective of employment or contractual status, and objective setting will take into account personal circumstances, e.g. part time, career breaks, etc.

The University's Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee (EDSC) monitors relevant protected characteristics in relation to those undertaking the ECDP. EDSC will continually review career development trends and statistics in order to ensure that the criteria, against which decisions are taken, remain objectively justifiable and lawful in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

3. Eligibility

ECDP covers all newly appointed/promoted staff on the following career tracks:

- Research & Teaching track: all staff at Grades 7 and 8
- Learning, Teaching & Scholarship track: all staff at Grades 7 and 8

- Research-only track: independent researchers (i.e. with Principal Investigator status, normally Grade 8, as confirmed by the VP/Head of College (or nominee)).

ECDP membership is on a “full” or “partial” basis depending upon the nature of the appointment held and the extent to which it provides an open-ended career track at the University.

- Full membership applies where:
 - a fully open-ended employment contract is held (i.e. without a funding review date), or
 - the initial appointment is finite in nature but a proleptic appointment to an open-ended academic position has been confirmed in contract.
- Partial membership applies where:
 - the employment contract is initially for a time limited period, denoted by the use of a fixed-term contract or an open-ended-with-a-funding-end-date contract, and
 - the initial appointment period is for 3 years, or where a fixed-term extension is issued for a further 3 years or more.

In all cases participants will:

- be assigned a mentor
- have access to ECDP learning and development modules as may be relevant to their current role and career aspirations
- have their progress and objectives, as considered via the Performance & Development Review (PDR) process, reviewed at College level by the VP/Head of College (or nominee) with appropriate feedback and guidance provided.

Additionally, full members only will:

- be required to undertake the Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) and achieve recognition at Descriptor 2, Fellow, of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education
- be subject to University ECDP Board of Review oversight of progress
- be expected to complete the ECDP programme by securing promotion to Grade 8 (where applicable) and Grade 9 within the applicable timescale (see below)

Additionally, partial members only will:

- have an annual review which will include career planning discussions to consider how potential opportunities for longer term roles at the University may be best supported, for example by planning for personal fellowship applications or applications for potentially relevant advertised posts
- in the case of Lord Kelvin Adam Smith (LKAS) Fellowships be subject to RSIO/ECDP Board of Review oversight of progress as per the terms of that scheme.

4. Programme Timescales

Dependent on the date of first appointment, full ECDP membership expects that those appointed at Grade 7 will be able to apply for promotion within the first 4 (3) years following appointment, and those at Grade 8 within a further 6 (5) years following appointment. In both cases, this will entail submission to the preceding Academic Promotions round, which will typically fall within 36-40 and 60-64 months of first appointment respectively, excluding allowances for significant absences. Earlier promotion remains possible.

Where an early career academic already has a record of academic experience, expected timescales for completion of the programme may be shorter, and in certain circumstances (e.g. where the academic is absent for an extended period) timescales may be extended. Target timescales will be confirmed during the first-year objective setting process and will be reviewed through the Performance Development Review (PDR) process annually thereafter. The approval of the VP/Head of College (or nominee), and reporting to the ECDP Board of Review, is required for any reduction or extension to timescales for the completion of the programme.

5. Objectives and Targets

5.1 Year One

The new/promoted academic member of staff will meet with their line manager shortly after appointment to agree appropriate objectives in line with normal PDR practice. For full ECDP members these objectives should take into account the resources and rate of progression that will be required to secure future promotion to Grade 8/9. For partial ECDP members these objectives should address how opportunities for a longer term academic role and associated career progression will be pursued. Objectives will be submitted online and signed off by the Head of School/Director of Institute (if different to the line manager).

The purpose of the year one objective setting process is for the line manager to:

- Explain the requirements of the staff member's specific role;
- Discuss the objectives of the Early Career Development Programme, the promotion criteria and career progression options, the relevant timescales for progression and the support available;
- Discuss the extent to which the staff member currently meets, or has firm plans in place to meet, the promotion/career progression criteria;
- Agree objectives for the first year which will enable progress towards meeting the promotion criteria or clarifying career progression options within the specified timescale;
- Agree any Development Programme exemptions;
- Agree development objectives for the first year;
- Agree longer-term targets for the following 2-3 years.

The Head of School/Director of Research Institute will meet with each new ECDP participant to clarify and confirm the objectives and target timescales. Thereafter the VP/Head of College (or nominee) and the University ECDP Board of Review will review the objectives. If either the VP/Head of College (or nominee) or the ECDP Board of Review is not content with the level of

objective setting, feedback will be given to the staff member, copied to the line manager, and the objective setting process will be repeated.

Newly appointed ECDP participants will also be subject to the normal six-month contractual probation period which applies to all new University staff.

5.2 Annual Objectives and Progress

Regular progress review and monitoring will be led by the immediate line manager and the Head of School/Director of Research Institute. The University will require evidence of sustained performance and satisfactory progress towards completion of the programme within the relevant timescale/s. This evidence will be gathered via the annual PDR exercise which will capture objectives set at each stage of the programme and will track progress, taking into account any outstanding activities or development required to meet the relevant promotion criteria or other identified career steps.

The VP/Head of College (or nominee), with oversight from the ECDP Board of Review, will review the completed PDR form and may communicate feedback and/or require amendments to objectives before endorsing and ratifying progress to the next stage of the programme.

While feedback to inform promotion planning may be provided through the ECDP process, formal promotion case handling remains as per the established academic promotion procedures.

The primary aim of this procedure is to ensure the required performance standards are understood and to support the staff member to achieve them, and where relevant to regularly consider necessary career planning. At any time, where there is insufficient progress towards completion of the programme, and where the normal review mechanisms highlight serious concerns regarding progress, there shall be a dialogue including the VP/Head of College (or nominee), a Board of Review representative, the relevant Head of School/Director of Research Institute and the College Head of HR to consider whether suitable progress is being made relative to the objectives set in line with normal ECDP expectations, in order to agree appropriate actions to support the staff member going forward.

6. ECDP Board of Review

The ECDP Board of Review is answerable to Professor Frank Coton, Vice-Principal (Academic Planning & Technological Innovation), who has overall responsibility for ECDP. It will:

- Review initial objectives and targets to decide if these will progress the individual's development and career at the appropriate pace. Endorse these objectives or return them to the line manager for redrafting if they are not satisfactory.
- Review PDR forms annually to:
 - Assess achievement against the previous year's objectives along with the individual's rate of progress against the target timescale

- Decide if objectives for the following year are appropriate for the individual's development and career progression
- Receive reports from the VP/Head of College (or nominee) regarding any variations to timescales for promotion or completion of the programme. This will include extensions due to unforeseen extenuating circumstances, maternity and other types of parental leave, long-term sickness absence, part time status and any extensions considered as part of disabled staff reasonable adjustments. See section 10.

7. Mentoring

Each ECDP participant will be assigned an academic mentor¹ by their Head of School/Director of Research Institute, in consultation with the VP/Head of College (or nominee), within four weeks of appointment. Mentoring within the programme is specifically concerned with supporting the achievement of career objectives and is positioned as a positive support mechanism to assist early career academics to take ownership of their career development. Mentors will be senior staff at Grade 10 or senior Grade 9 level who will normally be able to offer support across all areas of Grade 9 promotion expectations. Typically, the mentor will be within the same School/RI given the focus of early career mentoring but will sit out with the mentee's direct line management structure.

It is expected that the mentor will meet with their mentee 6-8 times per year to provide support and guidance and to monitor progress. If, for any reason, the initial mentoring arrangement does not work satisfactorily, the line manager and VP/Head of College can decide to allocate a new mentor.

The mentor's primary focus is the professional development of their mentee. Mentors can help inform the developmental aspects of ECDP discussions; however, they should not normally be involved in contributing to feedback on performance or formally addressing performance issues. The mentor will assist with a range of tasks and developmental activities and planning; these include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring the mentee is aware of the research and teaching objectives within the School/Research Institute and College/University
- Interpreting and discussing any feedback and/or evaluation of teaching (e.g. student feedback)
- Commenting upon draft publications and critiquing and commenting on grant proposals.

8. Development Programme

¹ Further information on the role of the ECDP Mentor can be found at <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/all/pay/ecdp/mentoring/>

Early career academics will be supported to achieve career success through a development programme² which includes a range of learning opportunities. The framework provides a structured series of themed development activities which map to the key aspects of academic careers, as also depicted in the University's academic promotion criteria. The framework includes a blend of centrally delivered, College-based activities and mentor-led support to maximise the learning and support opportunities for ECDP participants. The Development Programme contains compulsory and optional components dependent upon the staff member's career track. Compulsory elements of the development programme must be completed, unless they are exempted due to prior learning, if the participant is to be considered to have successfully completed ECDP.

Full ECDP participants will participate in the current Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) and will achieve recognition at Descriptor 2, Fellow, of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education. Such recognition is normally gained through the University's Recognising Excellence in Teaching (RET) programme.

9. Successful Completion of Programme

For full ECDP members successful completion of the programme requires:

- Completion of any mandatory elements of the Development Programme;
- Completion of the relevant number of optional elements outlined within each theme of the Development Framework;
- Successful completion of annual objectives;
- A viable application to Grade 9, supported by the Head of School/Director of Research Institute, granted via the established academic promotion procedures within the applicable timescale.

For partial members successful completion will be the attainment of a longer term academic role. Where such a role is not at the Grade 9 level the individual would transfer to full ECDP membership at this time, and work towards a promotion application within the same overall timescales. For the avoidance of doubt, the ECDP scheme itself cannot determine whether an ongoing academic role can be offered, and any such decision would be taken in accordance with normal staff recruitment and contract extension protocols.

10. Unsuccessful Completion of Programme

Unsatisfactory progress in the completion of the programme should be managed at the earliest opportunity and through regular performance monitoring and feedback, via the annual PDR process.

² Further information on the Professional Development Programme is available at: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/all/pay/ecdp/ecdpdevelopmentprogramme/>

Where an individual is unable to complete ECDP within the specified timescale, the ECDP Board of Review upon recommendation from the Head of School/Director of Research Institute may exceptionally agree to an extension of the timescale for completion of the programme. This is likely to apply in cases where an individual has met the majority of the criteria required for promotion to Grade 9 and is likely to meet the remaining criteria in a period of less than one year. In these circumstances the extended timescales for completion of the programme will be agreed by the ECDP Board of Review.

Where an extended timescale is unlikely to result in an individual meeting the criteria for Grade 9 or where, following an extended timescale, an individual has not met the criteria for Grade 9, the individual will be removed from the programme by the VP/Head of College acting in consultation with the Board of Review. In these circumstances and, subject to competent performance at Grade 8, the staff member will be retained in a post at this level. In circumstances where there is no requirement for a post at this level within the School/RI, every effort will be made to redeploy the individual into another suitable role at an equivalent or lower level in another area.

11. Salary Progression

Normal salary progression arrangements apply.

12. Extended Absence during the ECDP

Where the candidate is absent during the ECDP period for acceptable reasons, e.g. extended sick leave, maternity leave, parental leave, etc., the University will extend the ECDP period. Please note that in cases where a member of staff is on research leave or is absent from the University undertaking development explicitly linked to their normal academic career these will form part of the programme and accordingly no extensions to the programme will apply. Extension decision will be made formally by the relevant VP//Head of College (or nominee) in consultation with the Head of School/Director of Research Institute and the College Head of HR. The decision will be communicated to the ECDP Board of Review.

In such circumstances, as part of the return-to-work arrangements, a meeting will take place to discuss the rescheduling of the ECDP objectives/targets between the candidate and the line manager. The outcome of the meeting will be reviewed by the VP/Head of College, with oversight by the ECDP Board of Review as required.

13. Early Completion of ECDP

Where a participant achieves promotion to Grade 9 ahead of the 5 or 8-year timeframe, the appointment will be confirmed and successful completion of ECDP will be recorded.

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