SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISIONAL BOARD

Arrangements for the conferment of the title of Associate Professors: 2020 exercise

Action required

Departments are asked to ensure that information about the 2020 exercise is circulated to all staff who are potentially eligible to apply for conferment of the title of Associate Professor by the Social Sciences Divisional Board.

Departments are asked to consider applications via the appropriate departmental committee rather than solely by the Head of Department.

Nominations should be received in the Division by Monday 21 September 2020. Only nominations submitted by one of the Division’s Heads of Department (or their nominee) will be considered.

Background

1. The Social Sciences Division has agreed to set a deadline of Monday 21 September for this year’s exercise, with applications to be considered by PRC in Michaelmas term 2020.

2. The principles for the exercise, which have been agreed across the divisions, are attached at Appendix 1.

3. For any colleagues who are not University employees, and hence not on the University pay scales, the Division will seek confidential assurance that the individual meets the grade criterion (that is, equivalent to grade 9 or 10).

Operating principles for the scheme in the Social Sciences Division

4. Departments should ensure consistency of approach under the scheme, and, in particular, ensure that all staff in the department who are potentially eligible to be considered under the criteria have an opportunity to do so.

5. Departments should ensure that potential applicants have sight of the departmental research criteria for reappointment to the retiring age for Associate Professors (see criterion 8.b. below).

6. To apply, individuals should submit to their Head of Department (or their nominee):

   a. a statement outlining how they meet the scheme criteria; and

   b. and an up-to-date CV (not exceeding 12 sides of A4).

7. The appropriate departmental committee will determine whether an application meets the criteria. Applications meeting the criteria shall be submitted to the Division for consideration by PRC.

Criteria

8. Criteria for award of the title are as follows:

   a. Staff will be on Grade 9 or 10 or, if a clinician, on a consultant or honorary consultant grade (whether on a fixed-term, open-ended or permanent contract); 

   b. The individual has an independent programme of research as a key focus of their role and of a standard (in terms of both quality and quantity) equivalent to that required for confirmation in post as an Associate Professor;

   c. Teaching role comparable with that of a substantive Associate Professor, to include supervision as appropriate;
d. Teaching and administrative duties are carried out at no less a level of excellence than is expected of a substantive Associate Professor;

e. Contribution to other departmental duties, academic and otherwise, demonstrating the level of citizenship expected of a substantive Associate Professor.

**Procedure for submitting nominations to the Division**

9. Nominations from Heads of Department will be considered by the Division’s Planning & Resources Committee (PRC), with delegated authority from Divisional Board.

10. The following should be provided for each nomination to the Division:

   a. the nominee’s statement and up-to-date CV (not to exceed 12 sides of A4);

   b. a statement from the Head of Department confirming that the individual’s duties are comparable to those of an academic post-holder;

   c. a short reference from the Head of Department, or an appropriate senior academic from within the department, attesting to the quality of the individual’s contribution and demonstrating that the criteria for the award of title in above have been met;

   d. three references from external assessors, attesting to the quality of the individual’s research, as set out in criterion 8.b. A template letter for use by departments in writing to external assessors is attached at Appendix 2.

   e. a reference from the Head of House to accompany any nominations for college-only staff. This should address the quality of teaching carried out in the college, in comparison to the standards expected of a substantive Associate Professor. (This is not a requirement for University employees, unless the nominating department considers that this would be useful in terms of its process for considering nominations.)

11. Nominations to the Division should be submitted to Meghan Lawson (meghan.lawson@socsci.ox.ac.uk) by Monday 21 September 2020.

12. There will be no appeal, but Heads of Department will be able to re-nominate individuals for consideration on an annual basis.
Appendix 1: University principles for the conferment of the title of Associate Professor by divisional boards

These principles are intended to promote comparability between divisions in the process and criteria for the award of the title of associate professor to those who do not automatically qualify for it but who: are employed by the University (or, in certain circumstances by one of the colleges); making a significant and sustained contribution to the achievement of the University’s goals; and are of comparable distinction to those holding the substantive post of associate professor.

Individuals who hold a college-only appointment but who have made and are expected to continue to make a significant contribution to the work of a Department or Faculty, in terms of teaching (including supervision) and administration and who meet the criteria listed below can be nominated for the title of Associate Professor by the Head of Department. It is recognised that there will be few instances in which individuals make the requisite contribution without a University employment contract; the willingness to undertake duties will not justify the award of title.

- Nominations to be made by Heads of Department who, in the course of PDR or other development discussions, should discuss the possibility of nomination with those who would be likely to qualify.
- Decisions to be made by Divisional Boards, or by an appropriately senior and experienced sub-committee of the Board, on the delegated authority of the Board.
- Submissions by the Head of Department will include:
  - an up-to-date CV;
  - a statement from Head of Department confirming that the individual’s duties are comparable to an academic post-holder;
  - a short reference by Head of Department or appropriate, senior academic from within the Department, attesting to the quality of the individual’s contribution and demonstrating that the criteria listed below have been met.
- Divisions may, if they wish, seek additional references, including external references, if they are deemed necessary to establish whether applicants have met the criteria below.
- Applications for college-employed staff should include a reference from the Head of House, addressing the quality of teaching carried out in the college, in comparison to the standards expected of a substantive Associate Professor.
- The criteria for the award of the title of Associate Professor are:
  - Grade 9 or 10 or, if a clinician, on a consultant or honorary consultant grade (whether on a fixed-term, open-ended or permanent contract);
  - The individual has an independent programme of research as a key focus of their role and of a standard (in terms of both quality and quantity) equivalent to that required for confirmation in post as an Associate Professor;
  - Teaching role comparable with that of a substantive Associate Professor, to include supervision;
  - Teaching and administrative duties are carried out at no less a level of excellence than is expected of a substantive Associate Professor; and,
  - Contribution to other departmental duties, academic and otherwise, demonstrating the level of citizenship expected of a substantive Associate Professor.
- There will be no appeal, but Heads of Department will be able to re-nominate individuals for consideration on an annual basis.
Appendix 2: Template letter for use by departments in writing to external assessors

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. date

Dear

Reference for [NAME]

The [DEPT] proposes to recommend to the Social Sciences Division (University of Oxford) that the title of Associate Professor be conferred upon [NAME].

I am writing to ask you to act as an external assessor. It would be of considerable help if you would comment on the quality of [NAME]’s research and confirm that it is of a standard (in terms of both quality and quantity) equivalent to that required for confirmation in post as an Associate Professor, as set out below:

[DEPT TO INSERT ITS RESEARCH CRITERIA FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE RETIRING AGE FOR ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS]

I also attach [NAME]’s CV.

All evaluations received will be treated as confidential, and held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and related UK data protection legislation. However, applicants have the right to request a copy of their evaluation under the GDPR. In this event, you would be asked for your views on disclosure before the University responded to the request.

It would be most helpful if you could let me have your comments (via email) by [DATE].

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,