



UHR Conference 2025

Online 13 - 15 May

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UHR Conference Workshop:

**Successfully implementing changes to
promotions criteria and processes**

Introductions



- Louise Abrahams, Reward Manager at the University of York
- Helen Selvidge, Assistant Director of HR at the University of York
- You...
 - Which institution are you from and what are you hoping to get from this workshop today?

Session plan



- Why did we need to make changes?
- Our approach
 - Our working group
 - Involving interested parties
- Challenges
- The agreed changes
- Launching the new criteria and processes

Why did we need to change?



- Our promotions criteria:
 - Academic promotion criteria had been in place since 2015
 - Professorial promotion criteria had been in place for many years & not aligned to the Academic promotion criteria
 - Bring alignment between promotions criteria and the strategy and vision
- Improve the process:
 - Address criticism of a lack of transparency, clarity and equality of opportunity
 - Improve the opportunity to encourage and facilitate career progression

Poll question....



- Where are you on a scale of 1 to 5 when you think about the work required to change your promotions criteria & processes?

Why now?

- Increasing recruitment of people from Industry
 - needed to address this in the criteria
- Professorial criteria not robust enough
 - leading to lack of transparency
 - Off putting for underrepresented groups of staff

Approach - getting started

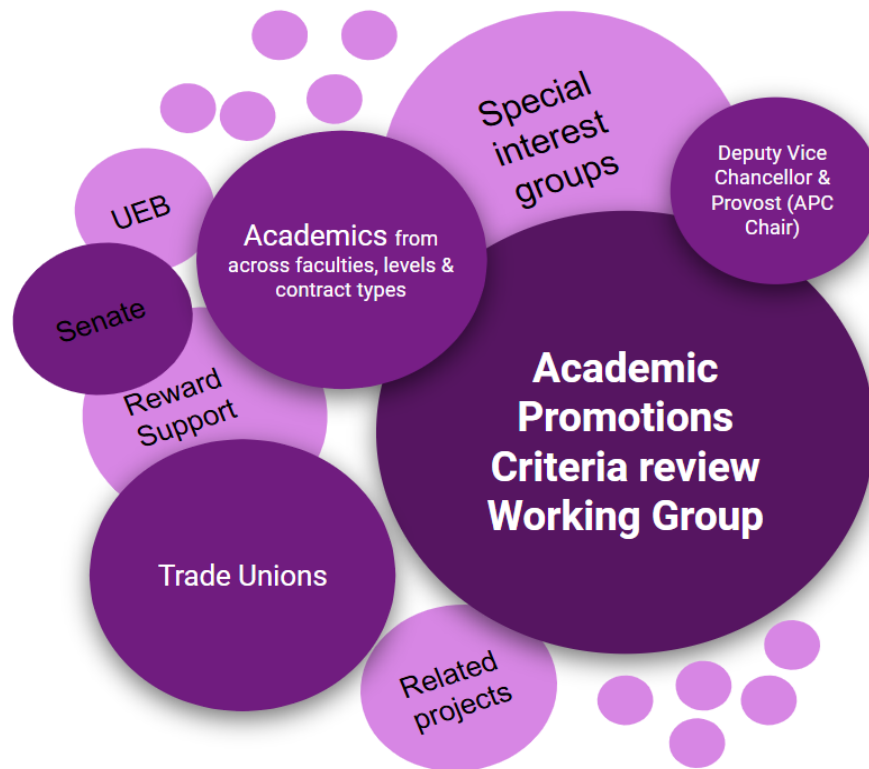


- University process
- HR supported, not owned
- Important to get the right people into a working group
- Important to engage with other interested parties
- Wanted to give the project the time it needs but still work at pace

Chat question...

- Who do you think you would need to involve in reviewing your promotion scheme?

Who we got involved



Getting the right working group



- Chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost/ Chair of Academic Promotions Committee
- Academic representation across each:
 - faculty
 - contract type
 - grade
- Crossover to other related projects
 - Review of contracts & consideration of professor of practice
 - Pay Gaps Action Group
- Ensured that the final group was balanced

How the Working Group operated



- 6-weekly meetings
- Three sub groups set up with an academic lead:
 - Criteria
 - Terminology
 - Policy & Process
- Special interest groups input
- External views

Engaging stakeholders in the process



- Roadshow to Faculty Executive Boards & Special interest groups
 - Shared proposals
 - Sought feedback
 - Considered feedback received
 - Shared finalised proposals
- All staff
 - Regular updates in newsletters
 - Dedicated project website

Challenges



- Change of DVC&P - Chair of working group
- Existing criteria for Professorial promotion
- TU relations were strained by strikes & MAB
- Running 'old' scheme whilst knowing improvements were coming
- Financial crisis

What were the key changes we made?



- Merged academic and professorial promotions processes
- Assessment of levels replaced with two sets of criteria:
 - **Category A criteria** - all are essential for promotion
 - **Category B criteria** - some are essential for promotion
- Decision making on academic promotions now at faculty level
- Removed the '2-year' re-apply rule
- Reduced referencing requirements
- Introduced Departmental Promotions Groups & Departmental Assessment Form
- New application form accompanied by an academic CV
- Individual circumstances moved to the first page of the application

Poll question...



- What do you think is the most important step you would take when preparing to launch a revised promotions criteria and process?

Launch plans - What we did



- Implementation Working Group in HR
 - Submission process build
 - Written communications to launch website
 - Videos and creative content
- Communicated with staff
 - Newsletter updates
 - Staff webinar to launch new process
- Communicated with promotion decision makers
 - Chairs thought session
 - Panel members workshop

Summary



We couldn't have predicted the obstacles and challenges we would face along the way, but the commitment from across the University to importance of this work kept us moving forward.

By communicating with so many academics and special interest groups, we ensured a smooth transition to these new arrangements and we are keen to see the changes in action when the scheme opens in September.

Questions & Answers

Contact us



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<https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/pay-and-grading/promotion/overview/>



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