



# University of Limerick

## POLICY FOR RETENTION OF ACADEMIC STAFF

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Document Version</b>       | Version 2 (Version 1 approved by GA 16 April 2021) |
| <b>Document Owner</b>         | Human Resources                                    |
| <b>Approved by</b>            | Executive Committee                                |
| <b>Date</b>                   | 29 January 2024                                    |
| <b>Consulted with</b>         | Unite  |
| <b>Date</b>                   | 22 April 2024                                      |
| <b>Approved by</b>            | People & Culture Committee                         |
| <b>Date</b>                   | 20 September 2024                                  |
| <b>Approved by</b>            | Governing Authority                                |
| <b>Date</b>                   | 24 September 2024                                  |
| <b>Effective Date:</b>        | 24 September 2024                                  |
| <b>Scheduled Review Date:</b> | 24 September 2029                                  |

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This Policy is designed to provide the University of Limerick (UL) with a mechanism to retain academic staff of strategic importance to the realisation of UL's mission and objectives as set out in its Strategic Plans, and who have been offered posts at institutions of equivalent academic standing, by considering them for promotion Associate Professor B, Associate Professor A, Professor, and Full Professor, as appropriate, having regard to their academic standing and the level of post offered to them.

The Policy is required to enable the University respond rapidly where the staff member in question is not eligible to apply for promotion or where the next round of promotional posts is not due.

## 1.2 Scope

### 1.2.1 To whom does the Policy for Retention of Academic Staff apply?

This Policy applies to all academic staff at the following grades; Assistant Professor, Associate Professor B, Associate Professor A, Professor, and Full Professor.

### 1.2.2 In what situations does the Policy apply?

Academic staff members who have been offered an appointment, above the grade of their existing UL grade, by another institution of equivalent or greater academic standing (as determined by current Higher Education world rankings), whether they are or are not eligible to apply for promotion/progression across the merit bar under the relevant UL Policy, are eligible to make an application under this Policy for promotion to the equivalent grade at which they have been offered an appointment, provided that they have the endorsement of their Executive Dean.

Alternatively, staff members who have been awarded a prestigious/major ERC award or equivalent are eligible to make an application under this Policy for promotion to the next academic grade, provided that they have the endorsement of their Executive Dean.

### **1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented and monitored?**

The implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of the Director Human Resources, with the relevant Executive Dean of Faculty playing a key procedural role.

## **1.3 Definitions**

### **1.3.1 European Research Council (ERC)**

The European Research Council provides grant awards to applications evaluated by peer review panels composed of renowned scientists and scholars selected by the ERC Scientific Council.

The fundamental activity of the ERC is to provide attractive, long-term funding to support excellent investigators and their research teams to pursue groundbreaking, high-gain/high-risk research. Research funded by the ERC is expected to lead to advances at the frontiers of knowledge and to set a clear and inspirational target for frontier research across Europe.

## **2 Context**

### **2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context**

#### **2.1.1 Employment Equality Acts, 1998 -2015**

The Equality Employment Acts 1998-2015 prohibit discrimination under the grounds of Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Race, Age, Religious belief, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Membership of the Traveller Community. Decisions taken in regard to conditions of employment and promotion or retention of employees should ensure that discrimination has not taken place on the basis of any of the grounds named above.

### **2.2 Other Context**

#### **2.2.1 University of Limerick Strategic Plan 2019-2024**

The University of Limerick's Strategic Plan 2019-2024 "UL@50" outlines the operating context for the University and the specific aims of the University to further build its reputation internationally as a university recognised for its research, impact and distinctiveness and as a significant contributor to solving global challenges.

## 3 Policy Statements

### 3.1 Principles for the Policy for Retention of Academic Staff

#### 3.1.1 Standards

The standards for promotion under this Policy will be the same as the standards outlined as applicable to the grade in the University of Limerick Policy and Procedures for the Promotion of Academic Staff, the Policy and Procedures for Progression Across the Merit Bar/ Policy and Procedures for Granting Permanent Status to Tenure Track Academic Staff and the Scheme for Internal Promotion to Professor (Personal Chair) at the University of Limerick.

#### 3.1.2 Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Operation of the Policy

The operational structure of the Policy is designed to employ procedures which are seen to be transparently fair and thorough and which are accepted as such by the academic community.

## 4 Related Procedures for the Policy for Retention of Academic Staff

### 4.1 Criteria

Account will be taken of three broad areas as set out in the Policy and Procedures for the Progression/ Promotion of Academic Staff to the relevant grade.

- Research and Scholarship;
- Teaching and Learning;
- Service to the University and Wider Community.

Applicants for Associate Professor A/Professor/Full Professor grades will also be expected to demonstrate satisfactory performance in Academic Leadership as set out in the University of Limerick Policy and Procedures for the Promotion of Academic Staff and the University of Limerick Scheme for Internal Promotion to Professor (Personal Chair).

In addition, in the case of all applicants, consideration will be given to:

- The career path of the applicant;
- The standing of the institution which has offered the appointment to the applicant;
- The importance of the research expertise to the strategic goals of the University

### **4.1.1 Timing**

Applications may be made at any time to the Office of the Director Human Resources.

## **4.2 Application Documentation**

The application must include:

- A copy of the letter of offer received from the other institution, to include information on the grade of post offered, salary, and the conditions attaching to the post; **or**,  
Evidence of a major ERC award or equivalent;
- A completed portfolio document for the relevant grade offered. Portfolio documents are available at [www.ul.ie/hr](http://www.ul.ie/hr).
- Applications must be supported by three complete external academic references from referees who should be familiar with the candidate's work. Candidates are required to ensure their referees submit references in confidence directly to the Office of the Director Human Resources.
- Confirmation that the application is supported by the relevant Executive Dean of Faculty.

## **4.3 Assessment**

### **4.3.1 Composition of Committee**

The Retention Committee should normally consist of:

- President (Chair) or nominee;
- Provost (to Chair in the absence of the President);
- Vice-President Research;
- Faculty Executive Deans, excluding the Executive Dean of the home faculty;
- Three members nominated by the President (at least two of whom should be external academics);
- One member of Governing Authority (non-voting) who is not an employee or student of the University;
- A HR representative will be present at meetings.

**4.3.2** Voting members of the Retention Committee should reflect an appropriate gender balance (minimum 40%).

**4.3.3** In the event of a Retention Committee member(s) becoming unavailable for the Retention Committee review meeting, it will be open to the President to nominate a replacement(s) or to determine whether the process proceeds or not.

**4.3.4** An applicant may not be a member of the Retention Committee and will be replaced by a nominee of the President.

#### **4.4 Determination of Prima Facie Case**

**4.4.1** The Internal members of the Committee will hold a pre-meeting to consider whether a prima facie case has been made for retention under the Policy based on the application material provided by the applicant. In arriving at its decision, the Committee may seek additional and confidential statements from the applicant's Head of Department/School on the applicability of the applicant's research to the strategic goals of the University, and from other senior academics, as it deems appropriate, on the applicant's suitability for promotion to the relevant grade. The application will only be considered by a full Retention Committee in circumstances where the internal Committee members have determined that a Prima-Facie case exists.

#### **4.5 Decision**

**4.5.1** The Retention Committee will, in the context of the totality of the information available to it, decide on the application and (a) make a positive recommendation to Governing Authority for adoption, or (b) make no recommendation and, in such cases, the applicant will not be promoted.

**4.5.2** Where promotion is not recommended, the applicant will be informed of the decision by the relevant Executive Dean.

## **5 Implementation of a Positive Recommendation**

### **5.1 Promotion**

**5.1.1** The positive recommendation of the Retention Committee will take effect from the first day of the month following on the adoption of the recommendation of the Retention Committee by Governing Authority and the applicant will be informed accordingly.

## 6 Related Documents

*Policy and Procedures for the Promotion of Academic Staff*

*Policy and Procedures for Progression Across the Merit Bar*

*Policy and Procedures for Granting Permanent Status to Tenure Track Academic Staff*

*Policy for Internal Promotion to Professor (Personal Chair) at University of Limerick*