Academic Staff Promotion Candidate Guidance 2027

This year's Academic Promotion Process will be undertaken via an online form. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate their growth since their appointment or most recent promotion, whichever is later, in a clear and concise manner.

Part One: The Promotions Process

This guidance explains the process, eligibility criteria, timelines, and documentation requirements for the promotion to the grades of:

- Associate Professor (Grade 1 and Grade 2)
- Associate Professor (Clinical)
- Associate Professor of Education
- Professor
- Professor (Clinical)
- Professor of Education
- (Honorary) Professor of Practice
- Senior Research Fellow
- Principal Research Fellow

1. Key Changes to Academic Titles

From 1 June 2025, Imperial adopted internationally recognised academic titles.

Previous Title	Current Title
Senior Lecturer	Associate Professor (Grade 1 – Transition Grade)
Reader	Associate Professor (Grade 2)

During the transition period 1 June 2025 – 31 May 2029:

- Promotion to Associate Professor (Grade 1) remains available only to staff in post or whose appointment was offered before 1 June 2025.

See flow charts in **Appendix 10.**

2. Before Applying

Presentations and Q/A sessions on the Promotions process will be given by the Associate Provost (Academic Promotions) and Consuls early in the Autumn term. You are encouraged to attend these whether or not you are applying this year.

Probation and Disciplinary Matters

Applications may be paused if the applicant:

- Is subject to disciplinary or capability procedures.
- Has an extended probation related to performance or conduct.
- Has not yet had employment confirmed for performance-related reasons.

Staff on probation may apply if there are no active disciplinary or capability concerns, but promotion cannot be conferred until probation is passed.

Imperial Essentials

All successful applicants must be fully compliant with Imperial Essentials before promotion can be formally confirmed.

Visa Sponsorship
For staff sponsored under UK immigration routes:

- Promotions must be reported to UKVI.
- A change of occupation code may require:
    - A new Certificate of Sponsorship.
    - A new visa application.
    - A new Right to Work check.

Promotions cannot take effect until these requirements are completed.

3. Roles Not Covered by Academic Promotions

The Academic Promotions process does not apply to:

- Assistant Professors - Appointment is through recruitment, not promotion.
- Research Fellows - Promotion is normally through the Research Job Family route.
- Learning & Teaching Staff (Levels 3–7) - Promotion follows the Learning & Teaching Promotions process.

Professors of Practice - Academic, Research, and Learning & Teaching staff cannot be promoted into this title through the standard academic route. Only Honorary Professors of Practice are covered by it.

4. Departmental Review

All departments should undertake an annual review of eligible staff.
Departments should:

- Review all academic staff below Professor level.
- Consider eligible Research and Learning & Teaching staff for possible transfer to the Academic family. Such transfers are not common, but are permitted if the criteria for both research and teaching are met.
- Inform staff of the departmental timetable.
- Allow personal (or self-)applications for candidates whom the department opts not to support (see section 5).
- Ensure all eligible staff are reviewed consistently and fairly.
- Provide appropriate mentoring and promotion advice.

Departments are discouraged from supporting applications prematurely where candidates are unlikely to succeed.

5. Personal Applications

If your Department does not support your application:

- The Department must explain to you the reasons for the lack of support. Note this does not indicate a lack of support for you as an individual, but is an assessment that it has doubts that your application will be successful at this time.
- You may still submit a personal application. You must give the department adequate advance notice of your intention to submit, as they still have duties to perform regarding your application.
- The departmental statement accompanying your application will explain the lack of support to the panel.
- Personal and supported applications follow the same panel process and are assessed against the same published criteria. The department's support position is made available to the panel but does not determine the outcome.

- Personal applicants should nominate two rather than one personal referee.

Applications from NHS staff, Research Council staff, and applicants for honorary titles require departmental support and cannot be submitted personally.

6. Jump Promotions

It is permitted to apply for a Promotion skipping one or even two levels, for example an Assistant Professor may apply for a full Professorship. It is very important to recognise that such applications entail considerable risk. If a jump application is unsuccessful, panels will not promote to a skipped level, and an application the following year will not normally be permitted. For this reason, jump applications are not encouraged. If you wish to consider such an application you should discuss it carefully with your department. General advice may also be obtained from the Associate Provost and Proconsuls.

7. Previous Applications

Applicants may normally not:

- Reapply in the academic year immediately following an unsuccessful application.
- Apply for a further promotion the year after a successful promotion.

Exceptions require clear evidence of substantial further achievement or past departmental error and require prior approval from the Associate Provost (Academic Promotions).

8. Criteria

Review the relevant promotion criteria and role descriptors before preparing your application and ensure you can demonstrate evidence of achievement and impact at the level sought. See **Appendices 1-6.**

9. How your application will be reviewed

Your application will be assessed against the published criteria for the promotion sought. The panel will consider the application as a whole, taking account of the quality, significance, impact and sustained nature of your contributions.

The panel will consider:

- your application;
- the departmental citation and teaching statement
- references received through the approved process;
- any personal context you choose to provide; and
- evidence provided at interview.

Departmental support and references inform the panel's consideration but do not determine the outcome. The panel is responsible for making its own assessment against the published criteria.

Applications are considered in their relevant disciplinary and professional context. The form of evidence may vary between disciplines and career pathways, but the same published criteria and review principles will be applied consistently across Imperial.

In considering applications, panels will give due regard to freedom of speech and academic freedom. Candidates will not be disadvantaged because of lawful academic views, research interests, teaching approaches or participation in academic debate.

10. Deadline for submission

For candidates from the Business School, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering: by Noon on **9 December 2026.**

Because of the difference in interview dates the Faculty of Medicine deadline is later:
By Noon on **15 January 2027.**

All candidates must use the on-line Application Form

A facsimile of this form is available as a Word document for help with preparation, however this document will not be accepted in lieu of the online form.

Your department must submit a folder of supporting documents by **29 January 2027.** If you are teaching in the Autumn term, you may obtain student feedback after the deadline (MEQ or other data). You should send any such data to the HoD by **29 January 2027.** If these data do not become available until after the deadline, you may present a summary of them at the interview.

11. Interviews

All candidates will be interviewed, save that some promotions to Associate Professor Grade 1 may proceed without an interview, at the Panel's discretion.

Interviews are normally held:

Faculty	**Interview Period**
Business School	March
Engineering	March/April
Natural Sciences	April
Education Office	May
Medicine	May/June

Applicants should declare on their application form any dates in these periods which they will be unable to make.

Teaching commitments will not normally be accepted as reasons for rescheduling.
Candidates invited to interview will receive further details nearer the time. If you require reasonable adjustments to the interview process, please contact the Progression Team before submitting your online application to discuss your requirements.

Conduct of the Interview
The interview panel normally consists of the Dean and two Consuls. For Professorial interviews or those in the Business School, the Associate Provost also attends. Your HoD, or their representative, will attend as an observer. If you are making a personal application, you may nominate a suitable Imperial member to act as observer (who may be your HoD). At the start of the interview, you will be asked if there are any updates to your application since it was submitted. You will then be asked questions by the panel broadly relating to Research, Teaching, Service and Esteem. At the end you will be asked whether there are areas you feel

the panel may have missed. Following your departure from the interview, the observer will be asked briefly for any comments on the fairness of the interview.

12. Decisions

- Final decisions are normally made by July and communicated to the HoD if the application is supported by the department. The HoD then informs the candidate.
- Personal applicants are informed directly by the University.
- Promotions take effect on **1 September 2027.**
- The Dean may be willing to provide additional feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
- Formal letters of confirmation will be sent on or after 1 September. They may contain advice about future career development.

13. Appeals

An appeal may be made where there is evidence of a material procedural defect in the departmental or university process. An appeal is not a rehearing of the application and cannot be used solely to disagree with the panel's academic judgement.

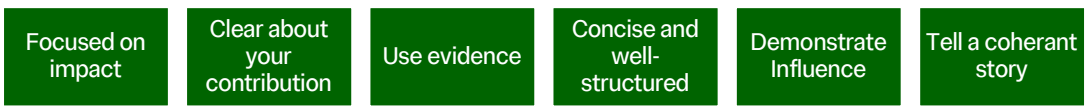
Appeals must normally be submitted by email to Daljeet Birdy (d.birdy@imperial.ac.uk) within 30 days of receiving the formal decision. The appeal should identify the alleged procedural defect and explain how it may have affected the outcome.

Part Two: Completing Your Application

General advice: What makes a strong application?

The promotion panel is looking for evidence that you are already operating consistently at the level being sought. The purpose of the application is not to provide a comprehensive record of everything you have done, but to demonstrate the quality, significance and impact of your contributions. You may include examples from across your career, but applications should place particular emphasis on achievements and contributions since your last appointment or promotion that are relevant to the promotion being sought.

Strong applications focus on a relatively small number of significant achievements and explain clearly why they matter. In addition to describing activities or responsibilities, applicants should focus on the outcomes they have achieved and the difference their work has made. The strongest applications are:



Focus on Impact
Throughout the application, demonstrate the impact of your work as well as describing what you did. For example, rather than stating that you developed a new programme, if possible explain how it affected student outcomes, influenced practice elsewhere, increased engagement, secured funding or delivered another measurable benefit.

The promotion panel is interested in the difference your contribution has made to research, education, clinical practice, your department, the university, your discipline or wider society. The panel also values service to University processes, operations and governance.

Be Clear About Your Contribution

Academic work is often collaborative, and promotion panels fully recognise this. However, reviewers need to understand your personal contribution.

Where work has involved collaborators, make it clear the extent to which you led, initiated, coordinated, supervised, chaired and/or contributed to the activity in other ways, and explain the role you played in achieving the outcome.

Use Evidence

The most persuasive applications support claims with evidence. This might include:

- Quantitative metrics (not contravening the DORA agreement)
- Funding secured
- Student outcomes
- Citations
- Adoption of practice by others or industry
- Policy influence
- Awards, honours and recognition
- Entrepreneurship (e.g. Patents, commercialization of your research)

Not all evidence will be quantitative, but applicants should seek to demonstrate the significance and reach of their contribution wherever possible.

Concise and Well Structured

Word limits are maximum limits, not targets. Clear, focused and well-evidenced responses are more effective than lengthy descriptions. If something is relevant in two places, provide a pointer the second time rather than repeating yourself.

You should not use generative AI to write your application, but you may use it to help gather information about the impact of your work in the most concise and clear way. If you use AI you must check every claim it makes independently.

Demonstrate Influence

As promotion levels become more senior, panels will expect to see evidence of wider influence.

This influence may be demonstrated through leadership, educational innovation, research contributions, entrepreneurship, professional standing, clinical impact, the development of others, or contributions beyond your immediate role. The nature of that influence will vary across disciplines and career paths, but applicants should consider how their work has extended beyond their own individual responsibilities.

Tell a Coherent Story

The strongest applications create a clear overall picture of achievement. Reviewers should be able to understand the progression of your career, the significance of your contributions and why the evidence presented demonstrates readiness for promotion.

When preparing your application, consider whether someone unfamiliar with your field would be able to understand:

- What you have achieved

- Why it matters
- The impact it has had
- Why it demonstrates readiness for the level sought.

A clear and well-evidenced application is often more effective than a longer application containing large amounts of information.

Filling in the form:

The online form is saved automatically when you are logged into your Office 365 account and have an active internet connection. Nevertheless, you are advised to save your input occasionally.

You may draft responses elsewhere before copying them into the online form. Pay particular attention to the coherence and legibility of your application. The textboxes are limited – they do not permit images, tables nor complex symbols.

You may, if you wish, make use of this Word representation of the online form while drafting your application. Note that **you must use the form for your actual submission** and that errors, especially of formatting, may be introduced if you copy sections from the Word document onto the form. Check it carefully.

1. Personal and Appointment Information

The first section asks you to provide your personal information. Please ensure all information is accurate and up to date.

2. Referees

Provide details for one personal referee (or two in the case of personal applications.) Other referees will be selected by Imperial and you will not be informed who they are.

References provide independent expert evidence about the significance, influence and standing of your work and your esteem within the wider academic community. They inform the panel's consideration but do not constitute votes for or against promotion and do not replace the panel's assessment against the published criteria.

Referees should:

- Be senior (usually a full Professor) and recognised in your field.
- Be familiar with the standards associated with the promotion level sought.
- Be independent of you.
- Not have worked closely with you or co-authored publications with you within the last five years.
- Not have been employed by Imperial within the last five years.
- Have sufficient knowledge of your subject area to assess your contributions effectively.
- Have agreed to support your application before listing them. You should therefore contact them in advance.

The most valuable referees are often individuals who:

- Have sufficient standing to assess work at the level sought
- Understand your field
- Can comment credibly on the significance of your contributions

- Are able to provide an independent assessment

If in doubt, you are strongly encouraged to discuss referee selection with your mentor or departmental line manager before submitting your application.

3. Career Snapshot

Career Overview

Provide a concise overview of your academic career that helps reviewers understand the narrative of your academic career. This section is not intended to be a detailed CV or complete career history. You should give particular emphasis to achievements since your last promotion or appointment. Focus on:

- Current role and responsibilities.
- Career progression.
- Significant changes in focus or responsibility.
- Context that helps explain the scale and significance of your achievements.

> **What good looks like**: A strong overview helps reviewers understand:
> - The breadth and scope of your role
> - The progression of your responsibilities
> - The environment in which your achievements were delivered
>
> Focus on providing context rather than listing appointments.

Key Achievements

List up to five major achievements – fewer than five is normal. For each achievement include:

1. What you did.
2. Your personal role.
3. The outcomes and impact.

Prioritise achievements demonstrating:

- Leadership
- Innovation
- Influence
- Excellence
- Measurable impact

4. Research Contributions

Describe your most important research or clinical contributions and their significance. Consider including:

Research Activity

- Main areas of research.
- Key discoveries, innovations or developments.
- Interdisciplinary or collaborative work.
- Entrepreneurship

Impact and Influence

- Citations and scholarly influence.
- Adoption in policy, practice or industry.
- Changes to services, systems or clinical practice.
- National or international influence.

Funding
Include major grants, scholarships/studentships or externally funded projects, noting:

- Amount and source.
- Your role, and for joint awards the proportion which pertains to you.
- Significance of the funding.

Research Leadership
Describe:

- Researcher development.
- PhD, MRes/PhD or MD supervision.
- Leadership of research teams or programmes.

For Clinical Applicants
Include evidence of:

- Contributions to clinical practice.
- Impact on patients, services or healthcare systems.

Future Research plans

Give brief indications of your research aspirations and plans.

> **What good looks like**: Strong responses focus on:
>
> - The importance of the contribution
> - Your personal role
> - Evidence of influence or impact
> - Why the contribution matters within your field
>
> Panels are generally more interested in the significance and scale of a contribution than the volume of activity undertaken.
> When describing collaborative work, clearly explain your individual role and contribution.

5. Four selected publications

Provide the full citation and DOI for four significant publications since your last promotion/appointment.

ArXiv references or similar are permitted but refereed journals are preferred.

For each publication:

- Explain its significance – why was the work important or novel and what is its influence or impact.
- Describe your contribution.
- Explain why you selected it.

In line with Imperial's commitment to DORA, emphasis should be placed on the content and significance of the work rather than journal metrics.

> **What good looks like**: A strong response demonstrates the importance of the work rather than simply describing the publication.
> Panels are interested in:
>
> - Originality
> - Quality
> - Influence
> - Contribution to knowledge

6. Academic Profile and Publication List

Provide a link to your Imperial academic profile which will be taken as your career Publication List. You should ensure the information is current and complete. If you have publications in press or which are not listed in your academic profile you may list them on the form.

If a substantial number of your publications do not appear on your Imperial academic profile and you consider these important for your case, you may provide your department with a full publication list before **January 29th 2027** for them to include with their submission. (See **Appendix 8)**

7. Research Supervision and Staff Development

Research Students

List current and completed PhD or MD students, including:

- Dates of supervision and status (e.g. completed, writing up, ESA etc)
- Sole or joint supervision arrangements.
- Whether you were the primary supervisor.
- Include those who did not graduate or who were at other institutions.

Postdoctoral Researchers

Describe:

- Postdoctoral researchers you have supported.
- Your role in their development.
- Steps taken to encourage applications from under-represented groups.

Research Grants and Contracts

List externally funded grants and contracts obtained during the past five years, including ongoing awards which commenced prior to the five years in chronological order. Include:

- Funding body
- Award value, both the total and Imperial's portion
- Dates
- Your role within the project

> **What good looks like**: The panel is interested not only in the number of students and staff supervised, but also in the quality of supervision provided.
> Applicants may wish to highlight:
> - Completion and progression of students
> - Development of research staff
> - Career outcomes
> - Mentoring and support provided
> - Contributions to inclusive recruitment
> - Development of future academic leaders
>
> Focus on demonstrating the impact of your supervision and leadership.

8. Education and Student Impact

Describe your most significant contributions to education.

Consider including:

Teaching Activity

- Types of teaching delivered.
- Scale and reach of teaching activity.
- Supervision (undergraduate and Masters), personal tutoring and mentoring.

Curriculum Development
- Programme or module leadership.
- Development of new teaching approaches.
- Assessment innovation.

Evidence of Impact
Use evidence such as:
- Student feedback (MEQ, MODES, and any other method used).
- Attainment and progression outcomes.
- Student engagement.
- Adoption of educational innovations.

Summaries of received feedback should be provided on the form. If appropriate, you may provide the full documents to your department for inclusion by January 29th 2027.

Inclusive Education
Describe contributions to:
- Student support and wellbeing.
- Inclusive teaching practices.
- Access and participation initiatives.

Educational Leadership
Include:
- Leadership roles.
- Educational collaborations. Education to industry or bodies external to Imperial.
- Educational awards or recognition.

> **What good looks like**: Strong responses demonstrate how educational activity has improved outcomes for students, programmes or the institution.
> Effective examples often include:
> - Improvements in student outcomes
> - Positive trends in student feedback
> - Successful curriculum innovation
> - Assessment reform
> - Adoption of educational approaches by others
> - Enhanced student engagement
> - Institution-wide impact
> - Improved accessibility and inclusivity
>
> Where possible, provide evidence of the scale and impact of your contribution. When describing teaching activity, focus less on volume and more on quality, innovation and influence.

9. Leadership, Service and Esteem

Describe contributions that demonstrate leadership within and beyond the institution.

Leadership
Include examples of:
- Strategic leadership.

- Committee roles.
- Programme or departmental leadership.
- Academic management responsibilities.

Service
Include:
- Departmental roles.
- Mentoring and coaching.
- Outreach and widening participation.
- Admissions and recruitment activity.
- External Examining.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion work.

Esteem and External Recognition
Include evidence such as:
- Invited or keynote presentations.
- Editorial appointments
- Professional body roles.
- Fellowships and prizes.
- Industry, policy or public engagement activities.

Professional Memberships
List memberships of and/or affiliations with professional bodies, learned societies and similar organisations, including relevant dates.

> **What good looks like**: Strong responses focus on the significance of contributions rather than providing an exhaustive list of responsibilities.
> Panels are interested in:
> - Leadership and influence
> - Strategic contribution
> - Development of others
> - Institutional impact
> - External recognition
> - Professional standing
>
> When discussing committees, working groups or leadership positions, explain:
> - Your role
> - What changed or improved
> - The impact achieved
>
> Leadership is demonstrated through outcomes and influence rather than job title alone.

10. Ways of Working

Describe how you contribute to a positive, collaborative and inclusive work culture.
Consider examples of:
- Working effectively across teams and disciplines. Conflict resolution.
- Developing staff, students and colleagues.
- Promoting inclusion and belonging.
- Demonstrating integrity and professionalism.
- Improving ways of working and organisational effectiveness.

Focus on behaviours, outcomes and the impact you have had on colleagues, students and the wider community.

11. Personal Context (Optional)

You may provide information about personal circumstances that have affected your career progression, opportunities, or the timing or pattern of your contributions. This might include:

- Career breaks
- Parental leave
- Part-time working
- Health circumstances including personal stress
- Caring responsibilities
- Alternative career pathways or secondments

Providing personal context is optional. The information will be available only to authorised members of the Progression Team and the Promotions Panel. It will not be shared with your department, referees or the Referee Approval Panel.

Personal context does not change the published promotion criteria. The panel may use it to understand your achievements in the circumstances in which they were delivered, including any effect on the opportunities available to you or the timing, volume or pattern of your work.

The panel will not make assumptions about your capability, commitment or future performance based on the information provided. Please include only information that is relevant to the assessment of your application. You do not need to provide detailed medical or other sensitive evidence.

Final Checklist

Before submitting, ensure that you have:

- Focused on your most significant achievements,
- Demonstrated impact through evidence where possible,
- Clearly explained your personal contributions and leadership,
- Balanced research, education and leadership appropriately,
- Included accurate referee details,
- Updated your academic profile,
- Written clearly and concisely, tabulating data where appropriate, and
- Provided relevant contextual information.

After submitting, if you have additional documents to provide to your department, you must do so by January 29th 2027. Note that summarising these on the form is preferable, if possible.