

## PERSONNEL SERVICES

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 Director of Human Resources



To: heads of division, divisional registrars

Ref. Ref. EMS/5,  
 EMS/6

cc. HR business partners

31 October 2019

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO REVIEWS OF THE INITIAL PERIODS OF OFFICE OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

*Clarifications to the existing best practice guidelines in relation to reviews of the initial periods of office of Associate Professors and to the guidance on arrangements in cases in which there are concerns about the performance of individuals have been approved by the Personnel Committee. A new document outlining the role of the mentor in the IPO has also been approved.*

*The guidance has been amended to make it clearer to departments/faculties that warnings about unsatisfactory performance are part of a formal process which must be followed, and to ensure that individuals are aware that they risk non-reappointment if they fail to meet the relevant criteria.*

*Divisions are asked to share the revised guidance with heads of academic departments/faculties.*

### 1. Action required of Divisions

The Personnel Committee asks divisions to:

- a) consider whether any amendments to their own guidance to departments/faculties is necessary in light of the attached revised guidelines; and
- b) draw the revised guidelines and the new guidance on the role of the mentor to the attention of heads of academic departments/faculties in their divisions.

Since this is a clarification of the requirements already within the guidance, this revised guidance should come into force immediately.

### 2. Detail

Following legal advice, in 2015 the Personnel Committee revised its outline of best practice on managing the initial periods of office (IPO) of Associate Professors and its guidance on arrangements in cases in which there are concerns about the performance of individuals. These revisions clarified that, in the event of poor performance during the IPO such that the individual's eventual success in their IPO was in doubt, it was necessary that, after due process, the individual



be given formal warnings for performance. This would reduce the risk that any subsequent dismissal at the end of the IPO (or at the end of any extension to the IPO) would be found to be procedurally unfair in law. It also ensured that the University was being entirely fair and transparent with those academic staff whose performance might lead to their dismissal.

Feedback from divisional registrars has suggested that further clarification of the guidelines is required:

1. to ensure that departments/faculties are fully aware that warnings about poor performance are part of a formal process whatever the reason for the lack of satisfactory progress, and if they are not given, following due process, any dismissal at the end of the IPO (or an extension) may be automatically unfair; and
2. to ensure that individuals understand the seriousness of the situation and realise that they may not be reappointed at the end of the IPO if they fail to meet the relevant criteria.

The opportunity has also been taken to update the references to individual circumstances in Appendix B to Annexe A.

Divisional registrars also suggested that guidance for individuals appointed as mentors for academics in the IPO would be useful, as mentors do not always understand the nature of their role. A guidance note for mentors is therefore included with this circular.

Attached to this circular are:

Personnel Committee's: best practice in relation to reviews of the initial periods of office of Associate Professors (Annexe A);

Guidance on the role of the mentor in the IPO (Annexe B).

### **3. Further information**

If you have a query about the revised IPO guidance, please contact the appropriate HR Team Leader for your division.

MR J DUXFIELD  
Director of Human Resources.

*Replaces existing circular: Yes  
Copy for noticeboards: No*