

Personnel Committee: best practice in relation to reviews of the initial periods of office of Associate Professors¹

- a. Recognition of the importance of teaching, administration and good citizenship/wider engagement as well as research.
- b. A clear written statement provided to the Associate Professor at the start of the appointment of the divisional criteria and the formal procedures for reappointment until the retiring age.
- c. Personal confirmation by the head of department/faculty board chair (or their nominee) to the Associate Professor, within the first year, of what the divisional criteria for reappointment until the retiring age actually mean in the particular case, in terms of what exactly needs to be achieved by the final review date. This may, however, need to be refined as the research programme progresses. An agreed written record of this discussion should be retained on file and a copy given to the Associate Professor.
- d. Provision of effective mentoring in relation to teaching, research, and administration, providing a channel outside the formal assessment process for personal advice and help (including the potential for continuing professional development). Guidance on the mentoring relationship is attached.
- e. Annual one-to-one meetings with the head of department/faculty board chair (or their nominee) to provide feedback and monitor progress towards the requirements for reappointment, to be followed up with an agreed written record which is retained on file and a copy given to the Associate Professor. The head of division should be alerted to any concerns about the Associate Professor's progress. Timely action, including formal processes in the same manner as under Part D of Statute XII where appropriate, must be taken if any concerns about performance are raised (see Appendix A below). The Associate Professor must be informed at an early stage of any concerns which might impact on their meeting the criteria for reappointment to the retiring age. If all appropriate support has been given and improvements are not made, this may result in the Associate Professor's dismissal.
- f. Timely completion of interim and final reviews (at interim review, the Associate Professor must be informed as to whether or not there are any concerns which might impact on their successful reappointment to the retiring age (see Appendix A).
- g. Strong external involvement, through the use of references and/or membership of the formal review committee, in the final review of research progress, focused around the divisional criteria.

¹ The probationer's college will be asked for feedback at the interim and final review stages and may have its own procedures for joint appointees in the initial period of office.

h. Close involvement of the head of division and/or the divisional board or an appropriate subcommittee in monitoring the progress of Associate Professors – the procedures for ensuring that reappointment until the retiring age is given only to those who deserve it should not be seen as a transactional issue, but rather one of key strategic importance.

Personnel Committee guidance: Arrangements in cases in which there are concerns about the performance of the Associate Professor

These procedures are intended to be supportive and to enable the Associate Professor to make the improvements required in order to complete their IPO successfully. The standards in teaching and research at Oxford are necessarily set higher than at many other Universities. Where an Associate Professor's performance is not on track to meet Oxford's standards in the IPO, they will be offered support to assist them in reaching the required standards, and, where appropriate without pre-judging the outcome of the IPO process, to assist them in considering how best to further their career in another way.

If concerns about performance arise *at any time* during an Associate Professor's IPO, prompt action must be taken to explore the reasons for the failure to meet expected standards (recognising that a range of factors may impinge upon performance), clarify the University's expectations, provide any reasonable support necessary to meet those expectations, and explain the consequences of failing to do so. This is the responsibility of the head of department / faculty board chair, supported by the division and HR Business Partner.

If the concerns are serious, or if they persist, advice should be taken about whether formal action in the same manner as under Part D of Statute XII is required. In each case, the appropriate process must be followed, and formal warnings may result. This is not intended to be punitive, but to ensure the Associate Professor is aware of the concerns and understands that a failure to reach the required standard may result in their dismissal.

Interim review

The purpose of the interim review is to ensure that the Associate Professor is on track to meet the specific criteria required for reappointment until retirement age, and to identify and provide support where needed to assist the Associate Professor to achieve this. In every case where concerns are raised at interim review stage that the Associate Professor might not achieve reappointment to the retiring age, the review should include a full discussion between the Associate Professor and the department/ faculty of expectations, of perceived obstacles to progress, and of reasonable support to overcome those obstacles, and should conclude with a clear position on the precise requirements to be met if reappointment to the retiring age is to be achieved at the final review. Those precise requirements must be set out in writing and must include details of what achievements are needed, and by what date.

It must be made clear that, if those requirements are not met, the appointment will not be renewed. Depending on circumstances of the case, it is likely that a formal process in the same manner as under Statute XII, Part D, by the head of department / faculty board chair, resulting in a formal oral or written warning, will be required. In each case, the HR Business Partner should be consulted on a timely basis about the process for the warning, including the contents of any formal correspondence.

The divisional office should be kept informed of progress, and consulted as necessary.

The period between the interim and final reviews

After the interim review, it is important that regular reviews of progress continue to be made, in meetings between the Associate Professor and the head of department / faculty board chair (or their nominee), in accordance with the timetable agreed as part of the interim review process. If, despite the implementation of the agreed support, the Associate Professor does not make progress towards the requirements for reappointment, a formal process by the head of department / faculty board chair to consider the imposition of a further formal warning is likely to be appropriate. The HR Business Partner should be consulted as soon as it becomes apparent that progress is not satisfactory.

Final review

If the Associate Professor continues to fall short of expectations, and two formal warnings (or, in exceptional cases, one) have been given, the final review is likely to result in a recommendation from the department to the division that the Associate Professor's contract not be renewed. Before non-renewal is confirmed at the final stage, Associate Professors will have one opportunity to make representations within the division; and then one opportunity to make representations to the central University (by seeking to make representations to a sub-committee of the Personnel Committee's Joint Appointments Panel that the divisional decision should not be confirmed).

The final review should be completed well before the end of the initial period of appointment to allow time for notice of dismissal to be given if required.

If the decision is confirmed, the Associate Professor has the right to a final appeal to a University Appeal Panel.

Reviewing the progress of Associate Professors whose initial period of office has been affected by individual circumstances which have constrained the Associate Professor's ability to work productively throughout the IPO

Where the achievements of Associate Professors in their initial period of office have been affected by maternity or other family leave, caring for relatives, sickness absence, disability etc., the head of department / faculty board chair and the Associate Professor should discuss whether it is in the best interests of the Associate Professor for the review processes and/or a decision on reappointment to be carried out on the normal timescale, or whether the initial period of office should be extended. The preference of the Associate Professor will be of particular importance.

In such cases there should be no compromise on the quality of the research achievement required for reappointment to the retiring age. In some cases it will be reasonable to accept a lower quantity of publications, but it might be unreasonable automatically to assume that all achievements necessary for reappointment would have been forthcoming if the period of office had not been disrupted.

If, in such cases, the review is held on the normal timescale and reappointment is made for a further fixed-term solely because of uncertainties arising from individual circumstances, such reappointment should not be regarded in any way as a sanction.

Consideration may also be given to extending the initial period of office in cases where Associate Professors have had significant amounts of their time bought out to enable them to hold research fellowships or similar, and have not had sufficient time working to full duties in the five-year period to demonstrate fulfilment of all the criteria for reappointment.