

## **Grade Progression Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

The Grade Progression Policy covers the process by which progression to a higher grade occurs as a result of re-grading and progression within a grade as a result of normal incremental progression. Progression related to promotion as a result of a vacancy within the institution or as a result of exceptional contribution (accelerated increments or movement into contribution points) are not applicable under this policy and will be addressed under the College's separate recruitment and contribution policies (to be revised and developed respectively). All new or revised posts<sup>1</sup> will also be subject to job evaluation and this process will also be detailed in the recruitment policy.

#### **1.1 Re-grading Procedure**

Most existing posts in the College have been evaluated by the HERA job evaluation system and this same system will be used to evaluate whether or not a new grade should be applied, therefore you should expect to be able to produce evidence to support your request for re-grading<sup>2</sup>. This procedure relates to a permanent change in your role.

The re-grading procedures apply to all posts in the College that were analysed in the original HERA job evaluation implemented in 2006 and any other post that has been evaluated subsequently.<sup>3</sup>

#### **1.2 Stages in the Re-grading Procedure**

There are three stages in the Re-grading Procedure as follows:

##### **1.21 Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure**

This procedure is the first step in any application for re-grading.

##### **1.22 Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure**

You can progress to this stage if you are dissatisfied by the outcome of the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure. This stage will be omitted only where there is an unresolved dispute in evidence between the role holder and verifier.

##### **1.23 Stage 3 - Formal Re-grading Appeal Procedure**

Where you are dissatisfied with the outcome of both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Re-grading Procedures your application can be put to the Formal Re-grading Appeal Panel for a final decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Minor revisions to a role would be considered under the Re-grading Procedures, normally on the basis that there has been an upwards increase in the level of the role. Revised roles would be considered in the same way as a new role where the role requirements are significantly different.

<sup>2</sup> Posts which were exempt from the 2006 HERA job evaluation exercise would be required to complete a role outline form and undergo a full job evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> For academic appointments to the post of Reader or Professor the Stage 1 Procedure sets out the first part of a two-part process. This is because initially the job size/content needs to be evaluated in order for the appropriate grade to be recommended. The conferring of academic titles will still be subject to peer review but essentially grades will be allocated to those role holders as is determined by the evaluation of role content. Therefore, for the purpose of senior academic promotions the job content will be considered first, appropriate designation second.

### 1.3 Grounds on which to apply for a re-grading

Your reason for requesting a re-grading of your role should be submitted on the Re-grading Application Form<sup>4</sup> and should be based on one of the following:

- There has been a significant change in your role to the extent that you are *required*<sup>5</sup> to operate at a higher level. (This is expected to be the most common ground for re-grading applications)
- You feel that your allocated Role Description no longer accurately reflects your role and the level at which you work (you should identify specific elements)
- You feel you are being treated inconsistently in comparison to other role holders
- You are no longer carrying out the role requirements on which you were evaluated
- You feel there has been a failure in the process leading to the incorrect allocation of a grade including the incorrect interpretation of evidence or unfair/biased interpretation of evidence
- There was a significant omission of evidence in your original evaluation.<sup>6</sup>

The decision to request a re-grading can be made by the role holder or the line manager. It is normally expected but not essential that your line manager supports your decision.

Grounds for re-grading should be submitted under the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure in the first instance. Any new grounds raised during the Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure (other than specific complaints regarding a failure in the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure) would be referred back to the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure for consideration.

Where a re-grading application has been unsuccessful you would not be expected to re-apply on the same grounds again at a future date. Re-grading applications are limited to one per role holder or group of role holders (for group roles) in a twelve-month period, unless subsequent re-grading requests are as a result of significant School/Department re-structuring.

### 1.4 What evidence should you gather?

To demonstrate that you require a re-grading the starting point should be your original HERA job evaluation form. If you have misplaced this document a copy may be requested from Human Resources. You should identify whether all or only specific elements within your original form are no longer representative of your role. Remember the ECA Role Outline form should contain evidence of your role that is typical, representative, and accurate and covers your role requirements. Where you consider it necessary a new form should be completed. Alternatively you should amend or add to the existing information. Other documentation which may assist you to complete your re-grading application could include your most recent Career Review (or Activity Plan); an up-to-date job description or; written clarification of your duties/responsibilities from your line manager.

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<sup>4</sup> Re-grading Application Form Appendix 1, parts 1 and 2 for Stage 1 and part 3 for Stage 2.

<sup>5</sup> The HERA system evaluates the requirements of your role and it would be a normal expectation that your line manager supports your re-grading application.

<sup>6</sup> This is expected to be the least common ground as omissions of evidence would generally be expected to have been considered under the Job Evaluation Appeal Procedures. This may also be of relevance where a new person has been appointed to a role.

As with the original evaluation your line manager will be asked to verify the information you have provided.

### **1.5 Accompaniment**

During the Stage 2 Re-grading and Formal Re-grading Appeal Procedures you have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague. It is recommended that your chosen representative or colleague has attended a minimum of an Introductory HERA training course.

## **2 Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure**

You should submit your grounds and evidence for re-grading to the Human Resources Manager who will within one month make arrangements for a pair of role analysts to consider. [Where the evidence you have provided is considered to be insufficient the Human Resources Manager will arrange a meeting to discuss either improvements to the evidence provided or request further evidence is provided and request that you revise and re-submit where appropriate.] The role analysts will consider the additional evidence provided and subsequently whether a case for revision of your grade under particular elements is required, whether a total re-evaluation is required or whether there is no case for re-evaluation. With respect to the latter point this will be communicated to you and your line manager in a meeting with the Human Resources Manager and one of the role analysts. If re-evaluation is required you may be asked to attend an interview with the role analysts. If there is a recommendation for re-grading this will be submitted to the Management Group along with appropriate explanation. If there is not a recommendation for re-grading this will be communicated to you and your line manager in a meeting with the Human Resources Manager and confirmed in writing.

Where a new grade has been approved by the Management Group following the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure the new salary will be backdated to your application date.

## **3 Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure**

It is anticipated that most re-grading requests will be dealt with under the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure. However, where a decision that there is no requirement for a re-evaluation has been made or a re-evaluation does not result in a re-grading *and* you are dissatisfied with this decision then you will have the right to invoke the *Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure*.

### **3.1 Application to progress the Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure**

Within 15 working days of receiving written confirmation that your re-grading application will not be progressed under the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure you should state in writing that you wish your application for re-grading to be considered under the Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure. You should also state your grounds for being dissatisfied with the decision of the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure. Where appropriate the evidence will be evaluated by a different pair of role analysts either by way of consideration of specific elements or a full re-evaluation within a further 20 working days. (Re-evaluation will not be carried out under the Stage 2 Appeal Procedure where there is an unresolved dispute in evidence between a role holder and a verifier, however you would be able to progress your application directly to the Formal Re-grading Appeal Procedure).

The results of this are communicated to the Human Resources Manager who would inform you normally **within 5 working days**. If the results lead to a new grade being recommended then you should confirm in writing to the Human Resources Manager that you are satisfied with the outcome **within a further 5 working days**. The new grade will then be recommended to the Management Group.

If the Role Analysts confirm the original grade you should inform the Human Resources Manager of whether you wish to progress your application to the Formal Re-grading Appeal Panel within **15 working days**. (In the unlikely event that you are dissatisfied where a new grade has been allocated you should also inform the Human Resources Manager of your wish to progress your application to the Formal Re-grading Appeal Panel).

#### **4 Formal Re-grading Appeal Procedure**

If you wish to appeal the outcome of the Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure then your application will be submitted to the Re-grading Appeal Panel which will sit a maximum of three times a year. The months in which the panel sits will be advertised in the College calendar, on the Human Resources intranet and local trade union representatives will be informed. Where there are no appeals lodged within 15 working days prior to the advertised date then the Appeal Panel will not meet and subsequent applications will be held until the next date.

##### **4.1 Appealing the Stage 2 Re-grading Decision**

Your appeal will be lodged with the Human Resources Manager who will arrange for the Re-grading Appeal Panel to consider all the evidence collected for and from both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Re-grading Procedures on or around the advertised date. The Appellant will also be given the opportunity to state their case with support from a HERA trained trade union representative or colleague.

Where the Re-grading Appeal Panel thinks it is necessary further evidence will be gathered and the Panel may call any persons for clarification or to provide further evidence.

Where possible the Re-grading Appeal Panel will adjourn to reach a consensus decision and inform the Appellant of their recommendation to Management Group on the same day but in no less than **5 working days**. Confirmation of the recommendation will be issued in writing by the Human Resources Manager or the Chair of the Re-grading Appeal Panel within **5 working days**. Where the Appeal Panel has instructed that further evidence is required they will arrange to reconvene in no less than **15 working days** where possible. Any delays will be explained to the Appellant, similarly where the Appellant has been asked to provide the further evidence they would be required to explain any delays exceeding 15 working days.

The Human Resources Manager will submit the recommendation of the Re-grading Appeal Panel to the Management Group within **5 working days** with the expectation that this will be considered within a further **10 working days** during academic session, out with academic session timings would not be unnecessarily extended.

The decision of the Re-grading Appeal Panel is final.

## **4.2 Composition of the Re-grading Appeal Panel**

The Re-grading Appeal panel will consist of four members with no previous involvement in the re-grading case as follows: one member of Senior Management (or nominee), the Head of Human Resources and two trade union representatives (not from the appropriate trade union for the Appellant). All members of the Re-grading Appeal Panel should be trained in HERA (and refresher training when more than one year out of date). The Re-grading Appeal Panel will reach a consensus decision; in the event that this is not immediate reference will be made to an external HERA consultant for the purpose of obtaining advice.

## **4.3 Protocol of the Re-grading Appeal Panel**

The purpose of the Re-grading Appeal Hearing is to consider the application of the HERA analysis and to ensure the Appellant has proper opportunity to state their case. The responsibility of the Re-grading Appeal Panel is to assess the re-grading appeal on the basis of HERA methodology and the evidence provided. Following a decision relating to an individual role the Re-grading Appeal Panel must also consider the impact of their judgement on previously evaluated roles and advise the Human Resources Manager where other roles may need to be re-visited. All Re-grading Appeal Panel members should have attended a minimum of an Introductory HERA training course.

## **5 Related Points**

### **5.1 Jurisdiction of the Management Group**

The Management Group's role is not to correct or re-interpret the evaluation results of the role analysts but to decide on whether the recommendation should be approved on other factors such as:

- whether they consider the level of the role requirements to be appropriate (if not the Management Group could recommend that instead of re-grading the job design and ways of reducing the responsibilities of the role are considered),
- whether the role requirements should be fulfilled by another role holder in the College<sup>7</sup>
- whether the role requirements are consistent with similar roles in other areas of the College
- whether the recommendations are affordable

### **5.2 Disagreements in verification of evidence**

Where your line manager is not in agreement with the evidence provided they should communicate their reasons to you. You should consider their comments and whether your evidence is typical, representative, does not contain extreme or rare examples etc. You should then consider amending and re-submitting your form for verification. Where agreement cannot be reached you will be asked to provide further evidence to support your information. This could include written instructions from your line manager; or communication of duties to your line manager in order to demonstrate awareness. Where you have a senior line manager, this person will then be asked to give judgement in relation to your evidence and supporting documentation e.g. a lecturer's line manager

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<sup>7</sup> The Management Group may consider that the growth in the role requirements of one role holder has arisen as a result of role requirements being removed from another role holder. The Management Group may consider this correct and justifiable in some circumstances but may request further information particularly where there is not a supporting statement.

may be the Head of Department, therefore the senior line manager would be the Head of School. Evidence of activity which your line manager could not be reasonably expected to be aware of would not normally be considered role requirements. Additionally contribution which is over and above the requirements of your role would not be evaluated in a re-grading exercise but may be eligible under the College's procedure to recognise exceptional contribution (see ECA's Contribution Policy).

### **5.3 Exceptional circumstances**

Should an individual wish to explore the possibility of reducing the requirements of their role they may do so voluntarily. This is expected to occur exceptionally, for example, where an individual wishes to reduce managerial responsibility or where an individual does not feel fully capable to fulfil all the requirements of their role. Mutual agreement must be reached between a line manager and an individual as the line manager must be certain that there is not a detrimental effect on the Department/School either because the duties are not critical and/or they can be reallocated to another role holder (by agreement) and the grade implications must be clear to the individual.

### **5.4 Progression within a grade**

It is a normal expectation that an individual will progress, subject to in exceptional circumstances procedures for dealing with performance problems, from the minimum point applicable to their grade to the maximum point applicable to their grade (excluding contribution points which are awarded on an application basis only). This expectation will also be normal following recruitment or re-grading (subject to point 5.5) and in particular circumstances such as maternity leave, long term absence or sabbaticals.

Satisfactory performance will be confirmed annually by way of career review.

### **5.5 New staff or staff recently appointed to a new role**

5.5.1 All new staff or staff appointed to a new role within the College (as a result of restructuring or an internal vacancy *and* as such are moved into a higher grade) are subject to being in the new post for a minimum of 6 months before an increment is applied.<sup>8</sup>

5.5.2 Increments are applied on the 1<sup>st</sup> August each year, the only exception to this would be accelerated increments agreed as recognition for exceptional contribution.

5.5.3 For all staff appointed on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006 their probationary period will be for 12 months. Increments can be applied during the probationary period (subject to 6 months in post) provided that your line manager confirms that performance is satisfactory up to that point. Where a probationary period has been extended an increment will not be applied until such time as the extension is removed. An increment would then be applied from the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following the date when a successful probationary was deemed to be completed but would not be backdated to the normal increment date.

5.5.4 Applications under the re-grading procedures from staff still under their probationary period will not normally be accepted unless their role requirements

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<sup>8</sup> Illustrative examples: Start date 1<sup>st</sup> January, expected increment date 1<sup>st</sup> August in the same year. Start date 1<sup>st</sup> September, expected increment date 1<sup>st</sup> August the following year. For clarity, increments are not paid on the anniversary of employment start date.

have changed significantly as a result of School/Department or College-wide restructuring.

## **5.6 Defined Career Paths (including progression through the academic lecturer grades)**

- 5.6.1 Where a specific career path has been identified (including those who have been allocated an ECA Academic Role Profile Level 2 in either Teaching and Scholarship or Teaching and Research) and there is an expectation to progress to a higher grade the role holder will be required to demonstrate that their role has grown sufficiently to meet the specified criteria.
- 5.6.2 Role holders who have a specified career path will be invited to meet with the HR Adviser (Staff Development) two years prior to expected progression to the next grade.
- 5.6.3 Where role growth is not demonstrable an individual plan will be agreed to try to assist the role holder to achieve their own and the College's expectations within the agreed timescale.
- 5.6.4 Where role growth does not occur sufficiently to attain the expected progression the new grade will not be applied. Where an individual is unwilling or unable to develop as expected (and specified) the line manager will decide whether the individual's expected career progression can be removed (and as such stay in the lower grade on an indefinite basis) or whether the role is required to develop in order to fulfil the School/Department wider objectives. Both options will be considered a non-performance of contractual obligations, however in cases where this is unacceptable to the School/Department disciplinary proceedings relating to performance may be initiated.
- 5.6.5 It should be noted that a specified career path will relate to a minority of role holders and will normally be clearly identified to you at recruitment and/or within your terms and conditions of employment.

## **5.7 Career Review Processes**

All processes relating to career reviews, activity planning and activity reviews are under review and as such a new policy and guidance is expected to be in place by August 2007. It is anticipated that sections or parts of sections 5.4.3, 5.4.4, 5.5.3, 5.5.4 and 5.6 will be transferred to the new policy.

**Re-grading Application Form Part 1**

**Name** .....

**Job title** .....

**School/Department** .....

**Current grade** .....

**Instructions for completing this form**

- Forms should be completed in black type or ink. This form is available electronically and boxes can be expanded as required.
- If you have a disability and require reasonable adjustments in order to complete this form please contact Human Resources.
- In order to ensure a level playing field assistance will be given to staff to complete re-grading forms if their day to day role would not normally require similar types of written work.
- You should obtain a copy of your original role outline form, role descriptor, and if you have one a copy of an up-to-date job description and career review/activity plan.
- You should complete Parts 1 and 2 of the form in order to progress your re-grading application to the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure. Incomplete forms will be returned.
- Whilst it is expected that most re-grading applications will be dealt with under the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure, should you wish your application to progress to the Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure you must have completed Part 3 of this form and it must be received by Human Resources 15 working days prior to the Re-grading Appeal Panel meeting. The dates of these meetings will be published in good time. Late applications will not be considered until the subsequent meeting.
- By completion of this form you agree that the information will be considered by HERA trained members of College staff, and in exceptional circumstances considered by an external HERA consultant.

**Re-grading Application Form**

**Stage 1**

**Name** .....

State your grounds for making a re-grading application and where you feel it is necessary give a brief explanation as to why the context of your role has changed significantly, or has not been previously evaluated:

**Re-grading Application Form  
Stage 1, Part 2**

Please provide evidence under the HERA elements giving evidence to demonstrate how the level at which you are required to work has increased or; provide evidence that you have previously omitted but you feel is significant. You are not expected to provide new evidence in relation to each element but should state "evidence unchanged" where this is the case for clarity.

**Name** .....

<b>1A Oral Communication</b>
New Evidence:
<b>1B Written Communication</b>
New Evidence:
<b>2 Teamwork and Motivation</b>
New Evidence:
<b>3 Liaison and Networking</b>
New Evidence:
<b>4 Service Delivery</b>
New Evidence:
<b>5 Decision Making</b>
New Evidence:
<b>6 Planning and Organising Resources</b>
New Evidence:
<b>7 Initiative and Problem Solving</b>
New Evidence:

<b>8 Analysis and Research</b>
New Evidence:
<b>9 Sensory and Physical Demands</b>
New Evidence
<b>10 Work Environment</b>
New Evidence:
<b>11 Pastoral Care and Welfare</b>
New Evidence:
<b>12 Team Development</b>
New Evidence:
<b>13 Teaching, Training and Learning Support</b>
New Evidence:
<b>14 Knowledge and Experience</b>
New Evidence:

Signature of role holder ..... Date .....

Signature of line manager ..... Date .....

**Re-grading Application Form**

**Part 3** (this should only be used when you wish to progress to the Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure)

State your grounds for appealing the outcome of the Stage 1 Re-grading Procedure:

Signature of role holder ..... Date .....

**Re-grading Application Form**

**Part 4** (this should only be used when you wish to progress to the Formal Re-grading *Appeals* Procedure)

State your grounds for appealing the outcome of the Stage 2 Re-grading Procedure:

Signature of role holder ..... Date .....