



Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University

## **Head of School Appointment Policy**

## Introduction

As part of its commitment to fostering leadership and career development of all staff, DCU actively supports and encourages academic staff to pursue senior academic leadership roles. The Head of School role is critical in providing strategic, academic, and operational leadership to their School, ensuring alignment with the broader Faculty and wider University strategy. This role is key to advancing the School's core mission in teaching, research and external engagement, while cultivating a collegial, inclusive, and high-performing environment for all staff and students, and provides an opportunity for individuals to shape the strategic objectives and future direction of their discipline within DCU.

## Purpose

This Head of School Appointment Policy outlines the process involved in the appointment of a Head of School within a Faculty. The policy clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders to ensure a transparent, fair, and effective selection process.

## Scope

This policy applies to Heads of School appointments within all faculties and is applicable to academic employees at the appropriate grades (please see next point).

### Eligibility Criteria

Given the seniority and strategic importance of this leadership role, academic staff at the grades of Associate Professor<sup>1</sup>, Professor and Full Professor will be eligible for consideration.

## Policy Statement

### Full Professor

It is expected that staff at the grade of Full Professor will normally undertake the role of Head of School at an appropriate point in their tenure. The timing of this undertaking will be determined through consultation with the respective staff member and the Executive Dean. The requirement to undertake the role may be reflected in the staff member's contract of employment or in other employment documentation issued by DCU People.

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<sup>1</sup> In certain limited circumstances, colleagues at Assistant Professor level in the Institute of Education may be deemed eligible to be considered for appointment to this role. This provision reflects the relatively recent establishment of the faculty and will be in place for the next three years only. Any decision to allow for eligibility at this level will be made in conjunction with the Executive Dean and the Vice President for People Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

## **Probation**

A one-year probationary period will apply to the Head of School appointment, during which time the appointee's suitability for continuing in the role will be assessed. The probation procedure is outlined [here](#).

## **Remuneration**

For the duration of this temporary assignment, the postholder's remuneration will increase to the scale above their substantive position and will be eligible for incremental progression. Upon completion of the Head of School role, individuals will revert to their substantive post at the nearest point on their substantive scale (please see example [here](#)). It is important to note that this temporary assignment does not constitute a promotion. While the role carries a higher level of remuneration, it does not confer the title or academic status associated with the higher grade.

## **Duration of Appointment**

The Head of School appointment will be for an initial period of 3 years but may be extended to 5 years at the behest of the Executive Dean, subject to exceptional performance (please see next point).

## **Performance Review**

Subject to the successful completion of the probationary period, the Executive Dean will determine over years 2 and 3 whether to seek to extend the Head of School's term for a further two years. The decision will be at the discretion of the Executive Dean in conjunction with the Deputy President and the Vice President for People, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will be determined on the postholder's achievement of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with the School's strategic objectives and the mission and values of DCU. Progress against these KPIs will be evaluated through the Performance Review and Development (PRD) process.

## **Promotion**


If the postholder successfully undertakes the post for a five-year period and meets the required University standard and criteria for an academic promotion set out in the DCU Academic Development and Promotion Framework (details of which can be [found here](#)) at that point, or following a period of sabbatical, they will be offered an opportunity to submit an application and be interviewed for academic promotion.

## **Sabbatical Leave**

Sabbatical leave may be provided for staff who have undertaken either a 3 or 5 year period as Head of School, subject to the normal provisions of the Academic Sabbatical Policy found [here](#).

## **Pre-Application Preparation**

All applicants for the role of Head of School will be required to engage in an informal discussion with the Executive Dean in advance of submitting a formal application. Applicants



will also be required to complete the Explore Staff Leadership and Management programme (outlined [here](#)), in order to be deemed eligible for consideration for the post.

### **Continuous Leadership Development**

All newly appointed Heads of School will be required to participate in a comprehensive, modular leadership training programme. This programme is designed to equip appointees with both the essential knowledge such as budgeting, University policies, and governance processes and the key leadership skills required for success in the role, including staff management, conflict resolution, and strategic planning.

### **Application Procedure**

Selection for the Head of School role will be through an internal competition, details of which can be found [here](#).

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **The Head of School Appointee has a responsibility to:**

- Engage proactively with the Head of School Appointment Policy and related procedures to develop a clear understanding of the responsibilities, expectations, opportunities and governance associated with the role.
- Uphold and model DCU values and leadership behaviours, contributing to a positive, collegial, and high-performing academic environment within the School and wider Faculty.
- All other responsibilities are as outlined in the job description found [here](#).

### **The Executive Dean has a responsibility to:**

- Act as the key sponsor of the appointment.
- Engage with School members to outline the Head of School appointment process, clarify eligibility requirements, and communicate the expectations associated with the role to the postholder and the support required from School members.
- Act as the Hiring Manager and core member of the selection board, assessing applicants' suitability for the role, focusing on their leadership potential, academic standing, and ability to deliver on Faculty and DCU strategic objectives.
- Uphold and model DCU values and leadership behaviours, contributing to a positive, collegial, and high-performing academic environment within the School and wider Faculty.

### **School Members have a responsibility to:**

- Put themselves forward for consideration for the Head of School role.
- Nominate a suitable school member to participate on the interview selection panel to represent the School.
- Play an active role in supporting the Head of School in their leadership and management of the School.

- Uphold and model DCU values and leadership behaviours, contributing to a positive, collegial, and high-performing academic environment within the School and wider Faculty.

#### **DCU People have a responsibility to:**

- Oversee the implementation and consistent application of the Head of School Appointment Policy across all Schools and Faculties.
- Manage the entire appointment process, establishing timelines, application procedures, and documentation requirements.
- Provide clear advice, support, and guidance to all stakeholders (applicant, Executive Dean, selection panel) on process, policy, eligibility and best practice throughout the appointment process.
- Communicate outcomes to unsuccessful applicants in a timely and respectful manner and provide constructive feedback upon request.
- Ensure the appointment process adheres to the University's governance, DCU People policies, and equality, diversity and inclusivity regulations.
- Maintain accurate and confidential records of applications, interview, outcomes and rationale for decisions.
- Support the implementation and monitoring of the Head of School probationary period.
- Ensure performance and development reviews are conducted.
- Uphold and model DCU values and leadership behaviours, contributing to a positive, collegial, and high-performing academic environment within the School and wider Faculty.

## **Related Documentation**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and toolkit:

- [DCU Academic Development and Promotion Framework](#);
- [Academic Sabbatical Policy](#);
- [Explore Staff Leadership and Management Programme](#); &
- [Head of School Appointment Policy Toolkit](#).


## **Contact**

Any queries regarding this policy or its associated procedures should be directed to your [DCU People Partner](#).

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed as and when changes are required.

## Version Control

<b>Policy Name</b>	Head of School Appointment Policy	 Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University
<b>Unit Owner</b>	DCU People	
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**End.**