

CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR THE CONFERMENT OF THE TITLE OF READER

Rationale

1. The University College *Corporate Plan* states that it is the intention of the institution to increase the level of its research activity and to foster a strong research ethos. To assist in achieving these aims, the institution has established a process for awarding the title of Reader to members of staff who meet the published criteria. Holders of the title are intended to provide role models for what is possible, but also to be active players in supporting and raising the ambitions of both experienced and less experienced researchers.

Criteria for the award of the title

2. The title of Reader may be conferred on an existing or new member of staff who has shown distinction in research.

Distinction in Research

3. For the purpose of awarding the title of Reader, distinction in research will be demonstrated by a record of publication in books and/or refereed journals, or by equivalent outputs in the public domain appropriate to the applicant's field (for example, works of art, drama productions, or innovative contributions to professional practice based upon research). In some cases it may be possible to consider research-based work which has not been published, for example, research undertaken for businesses, charities or government agencies where this can be shown to have influenced policy or professional practice. The permission of the company, charity or agency that has commissioned the research must normally be obtained.

4. Such research outputs will be expected to display at least some of the following characteristics as appropriate to the discipline:

- constitute a significant contribution to the development of theory and/or practice;
- include significant empirical findings;
- apply innovative methodologies or techniques;
- have made a demonstrable impact in the wider community or in the formulation of policy.

5. Applicants for the award of the title of Reader will be expected to demonstrate a substantial record of achievement in research over a period of at least the last four years, leading to a body of work which equates to at least national excellence in terms of quality. Readers should exhibit the potential for international excellence.

6. The research should normally be in a discipline cognate with the University College mission and/or academic portfolio.

7. Indicators of esteem, such as invited keynote addresses to major national and international events or active involvement in a research network, may additionally be deemed to support a candidate's application.

Procedures for the award of the title

Eligibility.

8. All staff are eligible to apply for the title of Reader.

9. The title of Reader may be awarded to a member of staff on appointment, on condition that he or she meets the appropriate criteria as set out above. In addition, those not currently employed by the University College may be recognised as Visiting Readers. See paragraphs 21-23 below.

Application

10. At the beginning of each academic year the University College will decide whether applications under the scheme are to be invited. If a decision to invite applications is taken, a closing date for their submission will be published. This should normally allow sufficient time for the application to be considered and for a decision to be reached before the end of the same academic year.

11. Applications should be addressed to the Research Administrator.

12. The application should consist of a completed application form and a *curriculum vitae* in the format currently approved by the University College including a list of publications or research outputs. It will be clear from the criteria above, that applicants for the title of Reader will be expected to have published, or otherwise placed in the public domain, a substantial body of original work. Applicants should select no more than four pieces for inclusion with their application. These should exemplify the quality and range of their work. Where the research output is not in published form (see paragraph 3) sufficient evidence of, and information about, the work should be provided for an evaluation of its quality and significance to be made.

13. The names and addresses of two referees (at least one of whom must be external to the University College and at least one of whom must be able to comment on the candidate's standing as a researcher in his or her field) should also be supplied by the applicant. In addition, the Principal will nominate an independent referee and request a report on the application. The independent referee shall normally be a senior academic with a distinguished record of publication.

14. The application will receive initial consideration by a panel normally comprising the Head of Research and two other members of staff nominated by the Principal. The panel will consider the application and references and decide whether there is a *prima facie* case that the applicant meets the published criteria.

15. If the panel decides that a *prima facie* case has not been established, the Chair will inform the applicant in writing and provide a report giving the reasons for the panel's decision. The applicant has the right of appeal to the Principal. Appeals must be lodged within ten working days and must state the grounds for the appeal.

16. If the panel decides that a *prima facie* case that the applicant meets the criteria has been established, or if an appeal against a decision of the panel is successful, the application will proceed to the second stage. The Principal will convene and chair a panel comprising the Head of Research and one other internal member. The panel will also include an external member, who shall normally be a senior academic with a distinguished record of research in an area which allows him or her to comment authoritatively on the work of the applicant. The panel will consider the application

and published work or other output and reach a judgement in the light of the published criteria.

17. The Principal will advise the applicant of the decision of the panel within ten working days. Where the panel decides that the title should not be awarded the letter will explain the reasons for the decision and give an indication of the ways in which the applicant's profile would need to be developed in order for a future application to be successful. The decision of the panel shall be final.

Title

18. The title of Reader will, if approved, be taken up at the start of the next academic year.

19. Once appointed, Readers will be expected to continue to fulfil the criteria as outlined above. They will be expected to play an active role both by pursuing their own programme of research and by fostering research more generally within the University College.

20. The title of Reader will not normally remain with its holder on the cessation of his or her contract of employment, although he or she may apply for the title of Visiting Reader. See paragraph 21 below.

Visiting Readers

21. The Governing Body may award the title of Visiting Reader to persons who have not been employed by the University College but who have a relevant and strong connection with the institution and who satisfy the criteria for the award of the title of Reader. Applications for the title of Visiting Reader from those external to the institution should take the form of a letter to the Principal. The letter should be accompanied by a current *curriculum vitae*. In such situations, a sub-group of the Academic Board will make a recommendation to the Governing Body based on relevant evidence such as the *curriculum vitae* and publication record of the applicant. An external reference will also normally be taken up, except where the applicant already holds such a post at a university elsewhere using a similar approach to readership title. The Governing Body may also award the title of Visiting Reader to members of staff who are Readers and take up employment elsewhere on condition that they maintain a connection with research activity at the University College. The Governing Board may on the recommendation of the Academic Board invite persons of suitable distinction to accept the title of Visiting Reader. The Academic Board would require a strong rationale for such a recommendation and clear evidence that the nominee for the award had met the published criteria in full. In such cases the Academic Board might at its discretion seek confidential external advice before making a recommendation.

22. Visiting Readers may be granted certain rights such as membership of the SCR, continued library membership and continued access to University College email for such a period as may be deemed appropriate.

23. The title of Visiting Reader will normally be offered for three years in the first instance but may be renewed by the Governing Body on the recommendation of the Academic Board.