



Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta / Policies and Procedures

Code	QA072
Title	Proleptic Academic Appointments Scheme
Date	April 2021
Approved By	UMT, Standing & Strategic Planning Committee

1. Policy Statement

A core objective of University of Galway Research Strategy is to “recruit, retain and reward excellent academic staff who have a proven track record in delivering measurable research outputs”. In pursuing this objective, the University recognises the need to develop recruitment practices which facilitate an agile response to opportunities, in an increasingly competitive research environment.

2. Proleptic Appointments

It is proposed to introduce a new scheme to create Proleptic appointments linked to a limited range of prestigious external research awards. This scheme is primarily targeted at early-career researchers who, in securing one of the following awards, are on a clear track to research leadership.

Proposed Awards* covered by this proposal:

ERC Starter Awards

SFI Royal Society Fellowship Awards

Wellcome Trust Research Career Development Awards

*UMT may review the list of Awards periodically to ensure their ongoing relevance.

In creating Proleptic appointments linked to externally funded research awards as set out above, the University accepts that the application and peer-reviewed assessment process required by the external funder is suitably rigorous as to substitute for a standard University recruitment process for an academic position.

3. Open Advertisement

In order to meet the recruitment requirement for open advertisement of available positions, the University will carry a permanent advertisement seeking Expressions of Interest from research awardees holding the above awards, on the public website.

In addition, the University will proactively engage with externally-based researchers who are interested in coming to University of Galway to support their applications for the above awards.



4. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a Proleptic appointment, the following eligibility criteria apply:

- Holders of one of the above-named awards who are not currently holding a permanent academic position at University of Galway are eligible to apply.
- Candidates must hold a Level 10 doctorate.
- Candidates must have at least two years of actual research experience post PhD (2 years is the min. threshold post PhD for ERC Starter Awards; 3 years for SFI Royal Society Fellowships).
- Researchers currently at University of Galway and at other institutions who are considering moving to Galway are eligible for Proleptic appointments.
- For researchers at other institutions, it must be possible to move the Research Award to University of Galway and candidates must have at least 3 years left on the Award.

5. Appointment Process

- Upon securing a research award (from the list set out in 1.0), the candidate must engage with the relevant Head of School, Research Institute Director (where relevant) and Executive Dean of College at University of Galway to assess whether the Research Award aligns with the strategic priorities of the College. The Executive Dean must confirm that the College is interested in accepting the Research Award and progressing with a Proleptic appointment.
- Through the College process for approving posts, the Executive Dean, drawing upon a consultation with the College Executive, will approve the Proleptic appointment, following confirmation of availability of headcount and budget at the end of the research award (or during the period of the Award if the grant does not fully support salary costs).
- Once the College Executive has approved the proleptic appointment, the Executive Dean, relevant Head of School and Research Institute Director meet with the candidate to advise them that they are on a tenure track, a special purpose academic contract is issued to cover the duration of the research award, with the expectation that the candidate will transition to a permanent academic post at the end of the research award. At this meeting, the candidate is requested to outline their 5-year Research Plan with clear targets and milestones set out (this may be the same as the plan set out for the external funder in securing the Research Award).

6. Mentoring and Support

- The relevant Head of School will allocate a tenure track mentor to each Tenure Track researcher.
- The mentor will provide advice and support to help develop the researcher's independent career and fulfil their potential as a future research leader.
- The mentor will be a tenured PI/senior academic within the College.
- The mentor and Tenure Track researcher should meet regularly to discuss all aspects of running a successful research group /project and developing suitable teaching and academic skills. In addition to providing guidance on career development and opportunities (internally and externally) it is expected that the mentor will read and comment on manuscripts and grant applications.
- In addition, the Office of the Vice President for Research & Innovation will also provide advice to the candidate in setting out their Research Development Plan, including identifying a pipeline of targeted calls to grow research activity over the tenure-track period.



7. Stages of Review and Confirmation of Tenure

- Candidates offered Proleptic Appointments will undertake a 12-month probationary period at the start of their Research Fellowship. The Executive Dean has the discretion to reduce the probation period to 6-months if they deem it appropriate.
- Upon successful completion of Probation, the candidate will receive a yearly progress review. This review, which is intended to be developmental in nature, should be conducted annually by an internal panel of three senior academics, to be appointed by the Dean.
- In the third year of the Research Fellowship a major review will be undertaken to confirm the transition to a permanent post at the end of the research award. This is a review of performance, with the aim of assessing the extent to which the candidate has achieved the targets set at the outset of the award. The assessment should take the form of an interview with the candidate and should be conducted by a 4-person panel of senior academics, appointed by the Executive Dean, with two of the four members external to the University.
- There are three possible outcomes to the tenure review: (i) the track to tenure is confirmed; (ii) the panel confirms that objectives of the research award have not been met and the candidate is not suitable for a proleptic appointment; (iii) the candidate has achieved some, but not all of the targets set at the start of the award, and a decision on tenure is deferred until the end of the fourth year of the award, with a further review required.
- The candidate will be notified of the outcome of the tenure review within one week of the meeting with the assessment panel.
- Two years before the end of the Research Award, prior to the commencement of the tenured academic position, the Head of School will work with the candidate to prepare a Development Plan to assist the candidate in transitioning to a full academic post. This will include providing opportunities for the candidate to undertake teaching and/or contribution to the School, within the parameters allowed by the research grant, as well as providing access to any training required to prepare for teaching.
- At the end of the Research Award (generally 5 years), the candidate will transition to a permanent academic position, at the appropriate point on the academic scale, as determined by the Director of Human Resources, noting that the default entry grade is Lecturer. Proleptic Appointments will normally be made at Lecturer or Senior Lecturer levels. For the purposes of calculating the appropriate point on the academic scale, the candidate's service will be calculated from the point at which the proleptic appointment was made.

8. Protected Periods of Leave

- Special consideration will be given to researchers whose research in the assessment period may have been limited or affected by personal circumstances including:
 - Parental leave (such as maternity, paternity, adoption, etc.) or other carer duties - part-time work
 - disability including temporary incapacity
 - absence due to ill health
- In the case of maternity leave, the School will normally expect tenure review to be delayed by 12 months for each period of maternity leave.



9. Academic Promotion

- The normal rules of eligibility to apply for sabbatical leave shall apply to all candidates recruited under this scheme.
- For the purposes of assessing teaching excellence, periods on a purely research contract shall be treated as equivalent to protected leave, so that the requirement to submit evidence from the last three years shall mean the last three years when teaching was part of the contract.

10. Review

This scheme will be reviewed every three years.