Guidelines for Professorial Objectives

March 2023

The role of Professor is a critical role to the success of the University and at Edinburgh Napier, we support our professors in leadership and academic excellence.

The following guidelines set out to support Professorial colleagues in shaping performance objectives reflecting expectations on research, leadership, learning and teaching and in ensuring a focus on personal development.

We realise that there will be different priorities within disciplines and in different schools, and that flexibility will be required for individuals when shaping their objectives, but the guidance will ensure that there is a level of consistency in expectation for Professorial colleagues.

The guidance has been produced to support effective conversations as part of the annual performance management process and to ensure consistency in the support and recognition offered to all Professorial colleagues. If there is a particular scenario or extenuating circumstance to justify objectives drawn from significantly different areas from those outlined below, then this should be discussed and approved by the Dean of the School.

1. **All Professors in all four pathways are expected to be included in the REF 2028 in terms of their outputs and research activities.**
2. The guidelines for objectives in this document assume **a minimum 20% of each Professor’s annual workload is allocated towards their research and that they are supervising one or more PhD students and/or working closely with one or more research fellows.** Any variance in this allocation should be agreed with the Dean and discussed with the school Head of Research. The relevant justification should be noted including the impact this has on objectives related to volume of high-quality outputs and volume of external funding success. **The objectives should be SMART and no more than five or six in number.** In addition to the objectives captured, the activities and responsibilities captured in the Professorial role description will be considered when measuring performance.
3. **One objective is recommended to be linked to the quality of research outputs.** [**Edinburgh Napier University is a signatory of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and has committed to the use of quantitative methods**](https://livenapierac.sharepoint.com/sites/rio/research-policy-guidelines/Research%20%20Innovation/Responsible%20Metrics/Responsible%20Research%20Metrics%20Statement.pdf?csf=1&e=zETVqZ&cid=25b356be-e1f1-4336-9db7-ce4604e43714)**alongside qualitative indicators when assessing the quality of research, which includes appreciation by peers, impact, scale, originality, rigour and significance of the research.** It is appreciated that these can be journal articles, art portfolios, exhibitions, pedagogic research, policies, etc. Professors at Level C (previously Grade 8)are expected to produce at least one output per year of international excellence or above. Professor Level A and B (previously Grades 9 & 10) are expected to produce at least two such outputs. Outputs can count as long as they are formally accepted (i.e., not necessarily published). In recognition of the low acceptance rate of outputs in high quality publishing venues and the significant amount of time taken for review results to be shared with authors, it is recommended that the track record of two consecutive years is considered while determining whether this objective has been met.
4. **One objective is recommended to be linked to successful acquisition of research and KE external funds.** This includes CPD and Consultancy. It is appreciated that different disciplines have different sizes of external funding opportunities and so a generic minimum absolute amount of external funds secured is not appropriate as a KPI. Equally, while it is appreciated that external funding bids do not have anywhere near 100% probability of success, it is sensible to focus this objective on successful grants as opposed to number of bids submitted. Level C Professors are expected to produce at least one external funding success in a year. Level A and Level B Professors are expected to produce at least two external funding successes as PI/CI. Evidencing achievement of this objective can also include opportunities that the Professors have generated for other academic colleagues to participate in external bids. The wider context will be considered when discussing objectives including the longer-term implications of funded activity, the significance of any successful bids and the feedback received on unsuccessful bids. Where an individual is identified as not being on track to achieve this, support will be given at the earliest opportunity. The fact that we do not specify minimum amounts secured per year plus that the funding successes do not need to be just in research but also consultancies and short courses, provide a good amount of latitude in terms of how to evaluate the performance against this objective in the annual review. There are three further points to be raised here: Firstly, if the Professor has an existing running externally funded project or more from previous years’ submissions then that should count towards achieving this objective. Secondly, as is common sense, even though the KPI relates to number of successes per academic year, if the Professor achieves a single but significant successful bid then that should be seen as at least achieving expectations. Thirdly, in further recognition of the highly competitive nature of winning external funding awards, it is normal if there is an academic year in which the Professor has not achieved any external funding successes. In this case, if the Professor made several grant applications AND these applications received positive technical feedback then, again, this should be evaluated as achieving expectations. This point is not applicable if there are two or more continuous years in which there is no funding success.
5. **One or more objectives is recommended to be linked to the following areas: teaching quality evidenced by module results and end of module questionnaires, curriculum development (as appropriate) evidenced by successful development and approval of a new programme, programme/research centre/subject leadership evidenced by one or more specific indicators of success, or other specific strategic initiatives that the Professor will be leading in the School or University.** It is appreciated that not all the above examples may be relevant to each Professor. If all are relevant, then the line manager can use discretion and through dialogue with the Professor, identify two of the above that should be prioritised as objectives whilst the rest can be looked at in the context of the overall job description. It is important that each of these objectives (like the others) include specific KPIs that will be used to measure the level of success achieved.
6. **One objective is recommended to be linked to the Professor’s personal development.** It is suggested that this relates to completion of any training/development required or to their development of their external visibility and esteem through participation in national committees, PABs, government related academic bodies/groups, organisation of high-quality, international research events, etc. The area of focus for this objective should be linked to the Professor’s career progression plans rather than a specific School objective.
7. If the line manager of the Professor is not Professor then it is expected that the School Head of Research will be consulted in terms of evaluating the performance against objectives related to research outputs and external income generation.
8. If the Professor has clearly more or less than 20% annual workload allocated to research, then the line manager should consult with the School Head of Research in terms of recalibrating expectations with respect to objectives related to volume of high-quality outputs and volume of external funding successes.

DVC R&I, DVC L&T, Deans of School, March 2023