A number of questions and queries about Education-focused Roles were received during the 
calls for expressions of interest in transfer to an Education-focused Role in late 2011 and early 
2012. These questions and responses have been collated into the “Q & A” set out below. This 
document will be amended with further “FAQ” as they arise.

Q1: Can a staff member in an Education-focused Role apply for OSP?

Yes. OSP has never been linked exclusively to research activities.

However, it should be noted that this would be in accordance with the eligibility provisions for all 
academic staff as set out in the Outside Studies Scheme policy. [For example, the appointment fraction must be at least 0.4 and there are other specifications – 
these are set out in clause C7.2 and may be viewed at this link.]

(It may also be worth noting that the General Principles of the Scheme includes elements that are 
particularly applicable to staff in Education-focused Roles, depending on individual circumstances 
– e.g. enhancement of the quality of teaching in line with the University’s strategic plan, gaining 
experience to improve and enhance professional knowledge, developing teaching or curriculum 
materials, developing links with external organisations etc.)

Q2: In the promotion guidelines at present there is a Clause 3.2 [Poor performance in teaching 
or research] may provide grounds for not recommending promotion, notwithstanding the strength 
of the case in other areas. Can you indicate whether in an Education-focused Role this still 
applies?

As you may be aware, this provision has been a part of the Promotion to Levels B, C and D policy 
for a very long time.

The way “may provide grounds” is to be interpreted* in this context is as follows (in respect of 
clause 3.2)

• Poor performance in teaching or research may provide grounds for not recommending 
promotion, notwithstanding the strength of the case of other areas – for staff in balanced 
teaching and research roles
• Poor performance in teaching may provide grounds for not recommending promotion, 
notwithstanding the strength of the case of other areas – for staff in Education-focused Roles

*Note: This interpretation was implemented in the 2012 promotions rounds.

(The criteria for promotion in the Promotion to Levels D Plus and E policy do not include a similar 
statement. The concept of poor performance is approached from a different angle. [clause 8])

Q3: What happens when a staff member reverts from an Education-focused Role back to a 
“balanced” (teaching and research role) after 3 or 5 years in terms of promotion and the need to 
meet all categories in their application?

There are a number of points worth considering:

(a) Each case for promotion is judged on its merits. The EO clause (14.2) in the Promotion to 
Levels B, C and D policy requires the Committee to ensure that “productivity is weighted in 
relation to opportunity”. In the case of a staff member who has spent the last 5 years in an 
Education-focused Role, consideration would accordingly need to be given to the balance of
duties expected in that period, including the reduced emphasis on research per se. So this should be a reassuring protection to a staff member who reverts back. But note that staff in Education-focused Roles applying for promotion are still required to weight research at a minimum of 10%.

(b) The DVC(A) has also been very clear (for instance at the informal information session conducted in March 2012 and recorded) that choosing to undertake an Education-focused Role is analogous to being at a fork in the road and choosing one path over another, at least for a significant period of time. Reverting to a balanced role after 5 years in an Education-focused Role is not going to be equivalent to never having switched – e.g. obviously the “most recent five years research track record” (which is an assessment period that the ARC uses) will be affected.

(c) The University has ensured that the promotions policies provide parity of opportunity for staff in Education-focused Roles to apply for and be successful in gaining promotion.

(d) A staff member may not necessarily revert back. At the end of the specified period:
- The default is that the staff member would return to his/her substantive role (e.g. balanced teaching and research).
However:
- A staff member’s intention to return to a balanced teaching and research role would need to be worked through by the staff member and his/her supervisor in advance of the end of the period – to ensure that there is a planned approach aimed at returning the staff member to productive research.
- Alternatively, continuation in the Education-focused Role is equally an option (would require the approval of the Executive Dean – i.e. the matter would not have to go back to the Specialised Academic Appointments Committee). The DVC(A) anticipates that this will probably be the most common pattern.

(The above advice about what happens at the end of the specified period forms part of the formal letter of offer that is sent to successful applicants.)

(e) The DVC(A) has had some preliminary and positive discussions with the DVC(R) about whether/how staff who plan to re-engage with research again after time spent in an Education-focused Role may be treated in a similar way to early career researchers and will recommend the same perspective to Executive Deans and School Deans.

Q4: Are staff on contract eligible to apply?

Academic staff on contracts* (“meaning fixed-term appointment) are able to apply. The term to be specified in the application form (section 3.3) would normally reflect the end-date of the fixed term employment.

(Note: Academic staff who have converted from casual to Sessional Fixed-term Employment are not eligible.)

Q5: What is the situation with Early Career Academics?

Early Career Academics (i.e. academic staff at Level A or Level B in the first five years of their appointments as academics) are, in the interests of their professional development as academics, expected to fulfil the duties of a balanced teaching and research role. Clause 3.2 of the Flexibility in Academic Work policy provides more information about this.
(However, it is noted that under the calls for expressions of interest, Early Career Academics were eligible to make a case for transfer under those specific processes.)

Q6: Can individuals still apply for these positions out of session (i.e. outside of the call for expressions of interest process)?

Yes. 
In accordance with clause 4.2 of the Flexibility in Academic Work Policy, an application to transfer to an Education-focused Role can be initiated via discussions between the staff member and his/her supervisor. Any transfer to an Education-focused Role is subject to approval by the Specialised Academic Appointments Committee (as set out in clause 5). Advice about applications out-of-session will be provided shortly.

Q7: Can a staff member seek to transfer to an Education-focused Role for an ongoing period rather than a fixed period?

Yes but this requires specific approval on a case by case basis. Clause 5.6 of the Flexibility in Academic Work Policy provides more information.

You are welcome to direct any further questions / comments / feedback of a general nature to the Senior HR Consultant for your area or Jane Bromley, Senior HR Policy and Projects Officer - contact details are available here. For all other information – please contact your School Dean/immediate supervisor.

24 July 2012