

# MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL, AND LIFE SCIENCES DIVISION

## Procedures for the appointment of Head of Department and Head of Sub Department

### 1. Summary

Recommendations for assigning the headship of a department must be submitted to the Divisional Board, which is the appointing body. The Board has agreed that there should be two models for identifying heads of department: through a selection committee, or alternatively through a ballot, with departments free to choose which of these two arrangements suits their circumstances best. Regardless of the mechanism chosen, the final decision on the allocation of the headship is vested in the Divisional Board, since Heads of Department are accountable to the Divisional Board, through the Head of Division, for the performance of their duties.

### 2. Eligibility for departmental headships

Every statutory professor or reader and ad hominem professor or reader who is employed by the University, unless individually exempted, has the obligation to accept the headship of the department if requested to do so by the Divisional Board. In addition, all those holding an established academic post in the department, but normally only those upon whom the title of Reader or Professor has been conferred as a result of the Recognition of Distinction scheme, are eligible for appointment subject to their concurrence. In practice, departmental headships are assigned from time to time for a specified period to a person holding an established academic post in the department after due consultation with the holders of the established posts in the department. It is essential that a due and transparent process take place, either through a selection committee or a ballot, for ensuring that the name of a candidate who has the support of the department is brought to the Divisional Board.

### 3. The appointment of a facilitator

To ensure that the names of all candidates likely to command support are either brought forward to the selection committee or appear on the ballot paper, departments should consider appointing a facilitator to act as 'honest broker'. The facilitator should conduct a consultative exercise, aimed at bringing forward any nominations of members eligible and prepared to act, but not obliged to assume the headship. The facilitator should not have a direct stake in the nomination.

### 4. Model 1: a selection committee

#### 4.1 Selection committee

The Divisional Board shall, on the recommendation of the department, set up a selection committee comprising the following:

- i. Head of Division (Chairman)
- ii. Three members of the established academic staff of the department, not all professors or readers.

The selection committee shall draw up selection criteria reflecting the template of responsibilities of heads of department agreed by Council.

#### 4.2 Candidates

The selection committee shall consult all members of the department about suitable candidates. Those eligible to assume the departmental headship shall be invited by the chairman of the selection committee to indicate whether they wish to be candidates for the headship.

Testimonials as to the suitability for the position of candidates shall be sought from the current head of department and from two referees nominated by the candidates. The head will not necessarily be chosen from among those who apply. Following appropriate consultation

departments may choose to omit from the list of candidates for nomination those statutory professors or readers (including ad hominem postholders) who have indicated that they would prefer not to be candidates in the current round.

4.3 The selection committee shall make a recommendation to the Divisional Board, with which the final decision on the appointment rests.

## **5. Model 2: a ballot**

### *5.1 Nominations*

First, all those eligible to hold the headship (see paragraph 2 above) shall be asked whether they wish to be considered for the headship. A list shall then be drawn up comprising

- all those statutory professors and readers and ad hominem professors and readers required to accept the headship if invited to so do, unless individually exempted.
- all those eligible to hold the headship who have expressed a willingness to be considered.

### *5.2 Electorate*

The persons qualified to vote for the head of department shall comprise the holders of established academic posts.

### *5.3 Manner of holding elections*

The secretary of the Divisional Board shall normally give twenty-eight days' notice of the day of a ballot by writing individually to all persons qualified to vote for the head of department and shall at the same time circulate a list of all those required to accept the headship if invited to do so. In appropriate circumstances and in consultation with the Divisional Board, this notice period may be shorter. Voting papers will be sent to all persons qualified to vote for the headship of department. Voting papers will also be available from the appropriate postholder within the department (for e.g. chairman or secretary of the relevant sub-faculty). All voting papers, dated and signed, shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Divisional Board to arrive by the date set for the election. The divisional secretary shall be responsible for counting the votes, but the Head of Division shall decide on the validity of any vote that is in doubt.

### *5.4 Voting system*

- i. In cases where there are no more than two candidates the candidate securing the majority of votes will be nominated.
- ii. In cases where there are three or more candidates a single transferable vote system will be used. Any candidate who secures more than 50% of the firstchoice votes will be elected. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the votes the candidate with the least votes will be excluded from the next round. The second choice votes will be added to the remaining candidates and the process repeated until a candidate with more than 50% of the votes emerges.

### *5.5 Report of the outcome*

The Head of Division shall report the outcome of the ballot to the Divisional Board and, in consultation with the outgoing head of department and other senior academic colleagues as appropriate, make a recommendation to the Divisional Board about the headship.

## **6. Alternative procedures**

Departments that wish to use alternative procedures for the appointment of heads of department are invited to discuss these with the secretary to the Divisional Board.

## **7. Appointment of heads of sub-department**

The same arrangements as those to be adopted for appointing heads of department should apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the appointment of heads of sub-department, but one level down; i.e. where there is a selection committee, it should be chaired by the head of department, and ballots should be handled by the office of the head of department. A facilitator should be appointed from the sub-department, a consultation exercise should take place, and where the process is not entirely straightforward, a ballot should be held. In the case of heads of sub-department, the recommendation must be endorsed by or on behalf of the Board, but the heads of sub-department report to the head of department (rather than to the Head of Division).

Last updated: 21 July 2011