Academic Heads of Department
Role and Responsibilities
Definition

The term of Academic Head of Department applies to appointed post-holders who have responsibility for either an academic department or school. Heads of Department are appointed by, and are responsible to, the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor (FPVC) and ultimately the Vice Chancellor.

Summary

The prime role of the Head of an Academic Department is to provide strong academic leadership.

The Head of Department is required to lead, manage and develop the department to ensure it achieves the highest possible standards of excellence in all its activities. They will be supported by the FPVC, and by colleagues from within the Department, Faculty, and Professional Services.

All Heads of Department are required to exercise leadership, demonstrate vision, and empower others in order to deliver the agreed departmental strategy within the Faculty. It is recognised that the methods by which Heads of Department carry out their duties and the extent of delegation, will depend on such factors as the size and make-up of the Departments and the personal approach of the individual Head of Department.

Specifically, the role will include:

1. Leadership and Management

1.1 Responsibility and accountability for setting and advancing the academic strategy of the Department in line with Faculty and University strategic plans and direction.

1.2 Active membership of and contribution to the Faculty Executive Board and the overall leadership and management of the Faculty: it is expected that Heads of Department will carry functional responsibility for specific agreed cross-cutting activities.

1.3 Development and sustainment of appropriate structures for management, consultation, decision-making and communication with staff and students.

1.4 Promotion and representation of the University both internally and externally.
2. Responsibility for Teaching and Students

2.1 Provision of the best possible student experience through:

- the fulfilment of the University’s responsibilities concerning students in respect of their admission, instruction, progress and examination;
- the availability of pastoral assistance, and
- adherence to the regulations and procedures of Faculties and of the Senate

2.2 Review and develop new programmes in order to attract new students and markets.

3. Responsibility for Research

3.1 Ensuring the highest levels of quality, integrity and ethics in all research undertaken.

3.2 Creating a dynamic and forward looking research environment for both staff and students.

4. Knowledge Transfer

4.1 Creating and exploiting new opportunities for knowledge transfer activity to secure additional income streams and new areas of teaching and/or research.

4.2 Contributing to University-wide initiatives in order to improve understanding and communication of this area.

5. People Management

5.1 Ensuring that University HR policies and procedures are implemented.

5.2 Ensuring that staff performance is managed appropriately and that fair workload allocation processes are in place.

5.3 Ensuring all staff have access to the necessary support to enable them to contribute fully and develop their skills and experience.

5.4 Engendering and fostering a culture of excellence, cooperation and respect both within and beyond the department.
5.5 Make effective use of all staffing resources and seeking out opportunities for collaboration and joint working with others beyond the department and beyond the Faculty.

5.6 Ensuring students are included as appropriate in the various decision making for a within the department.

5.8 Ensuring a safe and healthy environment for both staff and students, to include full compliance with health and safety requirements and visa regulations.

6. **Financial Management**

6.1 Taking responsibility for devolved budgets and comply with University financial regulations.

6.2 Managing income and expenditure in order to promote financial sustainability.

6.3 Ensuring adherence by all Departmental members, with University Financial Regulations and other financial operating procedures and regulations.

6.4 Ensuring that University equipment/facilities under the department’s control are properly maintained and serviced as required.

7. **Quality Assurance**

7.1 Ensuring all activities are carried out to the highest possible standards and put in place the necessary evaluation and monitoring procedures to ensure both compliance and improvement: such procedures will include teaching, research and management of all resources.

7.2 Maintaining compliance with auditing, quality assurance and risk management procedures both internal and external.

8. **Development of Academic/Research Standing**

8.1 Continuing to develop as a leading academic researcher; including publication, securing of external funding and the pursuit of other relevant indicators of standing in the field.

8.2 Giving due consideration to ways of retaining connections with teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
8.3 Giving due consideration to the status of the Head of a Department as a role model for other members of staff in the pursuit of academic excellence.

9. Background and Experience

It is essential that candidates will:

- have a very strong academic record and standing
- normally be at professorial level - although skills and aptitude will be more important
- have a very good understanding of the academic disciplines within the department
- have the ability to engage constructively with people
- have excellent communication skills
- have very good ambassadorial and diplomatic skill
- have the ability to manage a number of competing demands
- have excellent delegation skills
- be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances
- be able to develop their skills and seek advice from a variety of sources
- be willing and able to exercise judgement and take risks

10. Terms and Conditions of Office

- Heads of Department will normally hold office for 4 years in the first instance renewable for up to a further 4 years by joint agreement.
- Heads of Department will normally be required to undertake a shadowing period prior to taking up office.
- Heads of Department will be required to attend the necessary briefings and training as agreed by the UEB and/or FPVC.
- At the end of their 4 year period of office, Heads of Departments will be entitled to apply for up to two semesters of study leave, for approval by the FPVC.
- In recognition of the significance of these roles a guaranteed annual allowance will be paid through Academic Leaders Reward.