

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

**Academic Professional Promotion Program Description:**  
2024-2025

## I. Principles

The overarching theme of the promotion program is to provide a path for career advancement for Academic Professionals in all permanent positions in the Library. The principles that guide this framework include:

- Develop and maintain a well-defined promotional path for Academic Professionals to improve talent development, succession planning, and employee retention at the Library
- Recognize the incremental development of academic professional skills and experience as part of a cohesive framework for professional advancement in the organization
- Provide promotional opportunities that can be recognized by other campus units and institutions
- Demonstrate an organizational commitment to the ongoing stewardship of the professional advancement processes for academic professionals.

This framework outlines the promotion process using the following guidelines related to participation, achievement, and rewards:

- All Academic Professionals have initial rank established for consistency, but seeking promotion is voluntary and up to the individual Academic Professional.
- The promotional accomplishments identified in the framework are based on functional roles and individual professional achievements.
- Promotional salary increases become part of the base salary, and are determined separately from salary increases related to annual performance review.
- There is no promotional clock for the AP Promotion Program, i.e., APs can decide whether or not, and when to request consideration for promotion.
- There is no penalty if the promotion case is declined.

## II. Eligibility

To be eligible for promotion under this program, one must

- Be an Academic Professional in a permanent (non-visiting) role. Visiting Academic Professionals are not eligible for promotion; however, their time in the Library counts toward professional experience if the visiting position becomes permanent. Both part-time and full-time Academic Professional positions are eligible.
- Be in a position that is funded 100% by monies that are managed by the Library.
- Have a minimum of two consecutive full years of annual performance reviews in good standing
- Have an initial rank established (as of January, 2019, all existing Library APs have had their initial rank established and new AP hires have their rank established soon after their start date).
- Not be currently serving on the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee, which reviews promotion applications

It is expected that the standard timeline for promotion requests would be a minimum of three years between promotions from assistant to associate and associate to senior associate. A minimum of five years is anticipated for promotion from senior associate to senior. Requests must follow the

promotional pathway and may not request to skip a promotional level. However, all promotion candidates are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine promotion readiness.

### III. Guidance & Resources

The AP Promotion Process web site, located at <https://www.library.illinois.edu/staff/ap-promotional-process-page/>, has guidance on resumes and personal statements, sample statements and letters of support to use as examples, and links to professional development resources, such as the AP Professional Development Fund.

### IV. Promotion Procedure Overview

This program is intended to be largely self-driven by the Academic Professional, in that each individual can choose if and when to seek promotion via **self-nomination**. Academic Professionals are strongly encouraged to discuss their interest in promotion with their supervisor, who can provide guidance in developing the self-nomination's rationale for promotion and submit an optional (but strongly recommended) letter of support. For the purposes of clarity, the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee defines the supervisor as the person who writes the AP's annual performance evaluation. If the AP has had a recent change in supervisor, they should reach out to the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee (APRPAC) for guidance on how to handle the optional but recommended letter of support from the supervisor or similar concerns. Committee members are listed on the Academic Professional Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee webpage located at: <https://www.library.illinois.edu/staff/committee/academic-professional-peer-review-promotion-advisory-committee/>

The program has an annual cycle. See chart on next page.

## Promotion Procedure Timeline

Timing	Procedural Phase	More Details
Between annual review and submitting self-nomination	Notification and informal conversation between AP and supervisor (recommended)	Before self-nominating, the Academic Professional should clearly communicate their intention to apply for promotion to their direct supervisor. We strongly recommend (but not require) that the Academic Professional and direct supervisor have an informal conversation at this point to confirm the candidate's readiness to apply for promotion.
Mid May	Call for Self-Nominations	The period for Academic Professionals to self-nominate is announced on LibNews with a specific due date.
Early July	Self-Nominations due	The self-nomination is a form that asks the candidate to address the four promotion criteria for the rank (see Section VIII & IX) in the form of brief personal statements, and upload a current resume or CV. Eligibility is verified by the BHRSC and the faculty members of the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee, and self-nominations and accompanying materials are reviewed by the full AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee.
Late September	Committee completes review & submits recommendations	The AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee completes reviews of nominations (see Section VI for more details) and submits recommendations to the University Librarian.
Early October	Dean reviews recommendations & makes promotion decisions	The University Librarian reviews recommendations and makes final decisions. As part of this, the University Librarian consults with the BHRSC to determine the annual Academic Professional promotion budget, and seeks advice to prioritize recommendations if there are not sufficient funds to support all promotion recommendations in a given year.
Late October	Notifications & Appeal window	APs are notified of promotion decisions via email with an option for a follow-up meeting with members of the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee. A 3-week appeal window begins.
Early December	Library submits promotions for campus-level review	The BHRSC works with supervisors to gather documentation to submit those who have received Library approval for promotion for campus-level review.

Timing	Procedural Phase	More Details
Mid February	Promotions effective & announced to the Library	Approved promotions become effective after all campus-level approvals and processes for Banner changes and salary increases successfully complete.

Note: This timeline may be adjusted in future years based on annual review and feedback from Academic Professionals, supervisors, and committee members.

## V. Promotional Ranks

Upon their initial appointment in the Library, Academic Professionals are classified into one of four ranks that represent both the depth and breadth of their career-track achievements. Library units that have non-library-specific professionals (e.g., IT, Advancement, Business, or HR) may articulate additional specific criteria required for promotion within each rank; for these academic professionals, deference should be made to already-established Library and campus-wide promotional criteria, either formal or de facto, as appropriate. Any additional criteria will be vetted by the BHRSC and will be made available for review by prior to being implemented in the subsequent evaluative year. For a comparison chart, please go to: <https://go.library.illinois.edu/appromotioncriteria>.<sup>1</sup>

- **Assistant:** Candidate is at the beginning of their career, developing identity and competence in their area of expertise; beginning professional activities and contributions to library/university community; demonstrates basic skills as a professional in area of expertise; under supervision, contributes in the context of a unit include work that is well-defined and limited in scope.
- **Associate:** Candidate is competent in their area of expertise; contributes to planning and managing within a unit; exerts some influence and impact within the unit and larger organization; works in context of area of expertise doing complex yet well-defined tasks; contributing to professional organizations and activities (editing, co-authoring, member of committees, etc.) and active on committees and service groups in the library/university and broader professional community; demonstrates broader skills, speaking and writing for varying audiences.
- **Senior Associate:** Candidate is experienced, and is recognized for their expertise and contributions to the library; demonstrating well-developed skills in all aspects of their field, in particular as they support the research library community; displays breadth and depth of skills and organizational knowledge, working with an array of audiences and applications; actively participates in unit or organization-wide efforts as part of primary position responsibilities, occasionally assuming leadership roles; contributes to professional, Library, and university service through committee and group participation; demonstrates involvement in projects, career enhancement, grants, research and publication, etc.; works with service groups having a wider scope within the Library, university, and/or community; exerts significant influence and impact within unit, other particular areas of the library, and the profession.

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<sup>1</sup> All professional expertise, service and research required for each rank are cumulative from the previous rank(s).

- **Senior:** Candidate is an acknowledged leader in the organization or a recognized expert or leader in their chosen field and a ‘master’ at their expertise; demonstrates sustained professional accomplishment and outstanding performance as a Senior Associate at the University of Illinois Library or as a professional staff member elsewhere; leads unit or organization-wide efforts as part of primary position responsibilities; contributes to professional service such as chairing committees, initiating activities and leading working groups and task forces in the Library, on campus, and in the candidate’s professional community; mentors colleagues; initiates and is involved in projects, career enhancement, grants, research and publication, etc.

## VI. Review and Evaluation

The *Academic Professional Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee*, an elected committee of four Library Academic Professionals (preferably in Senior or Senior Associate ranks), and one AUL or Director appointed by the University Librarian, reviews applications submitted by Academic Professionals annually, as well as accompanying letters of support from supervisors and other materials, and provides their recommendations to the University Librarian for the final decision.

Beginning in 2021, AP promotion candidates who are recommended for promotion will be submitted by the Library for campus-level review by Illinois Human Resources, the Office for Access and Equity, and the Office of the Provost. See Section XI for more details.

## VII. Promotion Award

Promotion awards are a set increase to the base salary and subject to annual review by the University Librarian. They are currently awarded as follows:

- Assistant to Associate: \$2,000
- Associate to Senior Associate: \$3,500
- Senior Associate to Senior: \$5,000

## VIII. Promotion Review Criteria

This program is intended to recognize sustained excellent performance and accomplishments in an Academic Professional’s area of expertise and professional assignment over the course of their career. As such, in addition to the eligibility requirement of two consecutive full years of annual performance reviews in good standing, the promotion review comprises **four criteria**:

- **Overall Experience**
- **Professional Service**
- **Professional Knowledge**
- **Institutional Leadership or Contribution**

The breadth and depth of each of these four criteria increases with rank. For a description of each rank's corresponding criteria, go to: <https://go.library.illinois.edu/appromotioncriteria>

## IX. Promotion Candidate Supporting Documents

The Academic Professional candidate should prepare and submit the following documents for consideration for promotion (both via the same form).

1. Update resume or curriculum vitae (CV)
2. A personal statement that makes the case for how their professional activities and accomplishment demonstrates readiness for promotion to the next level, in the form of four responses (one for each of the four promotion criteria listed in Section VIII).

In their personal statement, Academic Professionals promotion candidates are strongly recommended to include salient examples of accomplishments and growth when building a case for how they meet the four promotion criteria. Examples may include:

- Additional skills/expertise (including advanced degree or certifications) acquired after last promotion or hiring
- Recognition from a broader community inside or outside of the Library, such as awards, leadership roles, speaker/presentation invitations, etc.
- Particularly strong, sustained performance
- Contributions to the Unit and the Library

In addition to the materials the candidate provides via their self-nomination, the BHRSC may provide the candidate's current and previous job description(s) to the review committee.

An accompanying letter of support from supervisors is recommended but not required. Supervisors may submit these letters to <https://go.library.illinois.edu/APletters> before the candidate self-nomination period ends.

## X. Appeal Process

Candidates whose promotion is declined may

- choose to appeal decision within 21 days of being notified of the decision by writing to the University Librarian and Dean of Libraries. The Dean has final approval.
- reapply in future promotion cycles.

## XI. Campus-level Review

Beginning in 2021, AP promotion candidates who are recommended for promotion will be submitted by the Library for campus-level review by Illinois Human Resources, the Office for Access and Equity, and the Office of the Provost. Those who are ultimately approved for promotion will have the rank appended to their primary title, with the letters "LR" to indicate to campus that it is a Library-specific rank. In addition the following language will be added to the job description:

*At the Associate level:* Demonstrates professional knowledge and exerts leadership at minimally the team or unit level through activities such as seeking out and contributing to committees, conducting presentations, developing proposals, leading team projects, etc.

*At the Senior Associate level:* Demonstrates professional knowledge and exerts leadership at minimally the organization level through activities such as chairing committees, leading organization-wide projects and efforts. Is actively developing an emerging profile of a leader on campus through participation on, and contributions to, campus-wide committees, initiatives, and working groups.

*At the Senior level:* Demonstrates mastery of professional knowledge and expertise through sustained leadership roles and influence at the campus level and broader professional community. Effectively represents the Library through activities such as leading partnerships and collaborations with peer institutions and consortiums, chairing campus committees or working groups, presenting at national conferences, being an invited speaker, etc.

These changes have the benefit of allowing Library APs be able to better reflect their promotion and professional growth in their resumes and CVs and brings us into better alignment with campus-level programs, as part of finalizing the program from its pilot phase and establishing it more permanently.

## Background of Program

A committee called the Task Force to Create Promotional Paths for Academic Professionals formed in 2015 and developed a set of recommendations for an AP promotion program called **Final Report and Recommendations: Library Framework for Academic Professional Promotion** (dated Nov 21, 2016). The subsequent AP Promotion Implementation Team (APPIT) further developed these recommendations, including determining a process for reviewing promotion candidates and conducting an initial review for all appointed APs in the Library to establish baseline ranks. APPIT also submitted a set of recommended next steps for implementing the full program (dated Aug 30, 2017). As part of these next steps, the Business and Human Resource Service Center (BHRSC) became the administrative home of the program, and a new committee for reviewing promotion candidates, the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee was formed in late Fall 2018. The program was launched as a two-year pilot in Spring 2019 with the first and second cycle of promotions taking effect August 2019 and August 2020, respectively.

The original recommendations included open-ended or unresolved questions for subsequent committees to determine, in part through the trial and error process of implementing the program. Furthermore, several of the original recommendations from the 2016 Final Report have been modified by subsequent committees or the BHRSC based on feedback during open sessions and via the Library Committee for Academic Professionals (LCAP, now Library Committee of Academic and Civil Service Professionals, or LCP) and through the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee's review of the program's first year pilot, which included anonymous surveys of APs and supervisors of APs, and feedback about the program from EC, LCAP, and the Dean.

As part of moving out of the two year pilot conducted in 2019-2020, the BHRSC and Dean of Libraries worked with the Office of the Provost, Illinois Human Resources, and Office for Access and Equity to incorporate a campus-level review of our promotion recommendations, which affected the timing and



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some of the steps of the program. Beginning in the third year (2021), promotions became effective in mid-February. This change also helps those promoted be eligible for any annual salary planner program offered in August.

Beginning April 2024 (coinciding with the start of the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the program), the composition of the AP Peer Review Promotion Advisory Committee changed to convert one of the two appointed AUL/Director seats to another elected AP seat to provide greater voice and representation of APs on the committee. The committee now has 1 AUL/Director faculty seat and 4 elected AP seats, all on staggered 3-year terms.