

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

PROCEDURES FOR *AD HOMINEM* PROMOTIONS, MERIT AND EXCELLENCE AWARDS

ACADEMIC STAFF

1. Introduction

Current procedures for assessing the performance of academic staff require that Heads of Departments make such assessments, and on the basis of an assessment recommend:

- a) that the staff member be recognised as a high achiever, and if eligible, be a candidate for promotion, merit award or excellence payment; or
- b) that the staff member is a solid achiever; or
- c) that the staff member has been under-performing, or has demonstrated unsatisfactory performance.

The details of the assessment procedures are given in the document “Performance Management Processes for Academic Staff” which is available at www.hr.uct.ac.za/hr/performance/promotion/academic .

Staff members will be considered for promotion either as a consequence of the assessment by their Heads (that is, if they fall in category (a) above), or if they believe themselves to be strong candidates for promotion, notwithstanding being assessed by their Heads as solid achievers; in such cases the written support of two colleagues of equal or higher rank is required.

This document gives details of the process for deciding the promotability of academic staff members.

2. Eligibility for promotion

Staff on standard academic conditions of service

All permanent academic staff on standard academic conditions of service at the ranks of Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor whose appointments have been confirmed are eligible for ad hominem promotion.

Staff on academic teaching conditions of service

All permanent academic staff on ‘academic teaching’ conditions of service at the ranks of Assistant Lecturer or Lecturer whose appointments have been confirmed are eligible for ad hominem promotion.

Research staff

All permanent research staff on academic conditions of service at the ranks of Research Officer, Senior Research Officer or Chief Research Officer are eligible for promotion. The cost of promotion of ‘soft-money’ research officers is borne by the grant holder.

Grant holders must first consult with the Dean if they wish to nominate a ‘soft-money’ research staff member for ad hominem promotion, for advice on the financial implications and UCT policy.

Chief Research Officers may apply for promotion to the status of Associate Professor. Likewise, Principal Research Officers may apply for promotion to the status of Professor. Successful candidates may then use the title 'Associate Professor' or 'Professor', respectively, although their salaries will continue to be paid from the same source as their post of Research Officer.

The Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee will normally not consider an application for *Ad Hominem* promotion by a candidate who, on 30 June of the year of application, has been in his/her current academic rank for less than three years. An exceptional case will have to be made to the Dean by the applicant's Head of Department, at least one week in advance of the closing date for applications, in order for this rule to be waived.

3. Process

Heads of Departments are required, in terms of the university policy on performance management processes for academic staff, to conduct a biennial performance assessment with each staff member in the Department. However, such assessment can take place in mid-cycle with a view towards promotion or merit or excellence awards. Assessments of Heads of Departments will be carried out by the Dean.

As a consequence of the assessment process, members of academic staff may be nominated for *ad hominem* promotion. This would be the conventional route to being considered for promotion. Alternatively, a staff member may be nominated for *ad hominem* promotion by at least two staff members of equal or higher rank. An academic staff member has the right, even if not nominated, to make application for promotion. In such a case the application will be subject to a preliminary assessment by a member of the Core Group of the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee (see Section 7). The assessor will form an independent opinion of the appropriateness of the application, and will advise the staff member accordingly.

Note: All applications and nominations for promotion to Full Professor must first be assessed by the Dean (or a Core Committee member), who will advise the staff member accordingly.

Promotion of the above categories of staff is not subject to budget or Faculty quotas.

4. Criteria for promotion

The points system as outlined in Section 8 will form the basis for performance assessment of academic staff, and will in particular be used as the key mode of assessment for promotion.

5. Submission of nominations and applications for promotions

Guidelines for the compilation of academic staff portfolios are given in Attachment I. It should be noted that the Faculty has adopted the student evaluation template and the Faculty-agreed template for student evaluations must be used. Alternative evaluation systems may be submitted in addition if an applicant so wishes.

Submissions must be made directly to the Dean, and must be accompanied by the names and contact details of three referees, together with brief biographic sketches indicating the academic standing of the referees. At the senior levels, international recognition of scholarship is a prerequisite, and it would therefore be advantageous to nominate at least two respected, international external referees.

It is essential that all referees' reports arrive well before the meetings scheduled for the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee, in order to allow for a proper assessment of candidates. Only current referee reports will be accepted in an Ad Hominem promotion application.

Applicants for promotion to Full Professor must ensure their availability for an interview at the relevant meeting.

The onus is on an applicant or nominee to establish the willingness of prospective referees to provide reports, and to do so within the timeframe required, to inform the Faculty Office of referees' email addresses, and to ensure that referees are provided with all relevant documentation, including a copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae and portfolio.

A candidate who is unsuccessful in an application for *Ad Hominem* promotion will normally not be permitted to apply again in the following year. A minimum interval of two years between applications is required and this rule will only be waived if an exceptional case is made to the Dean by the Head of Department (or other nominator(s), where applicable). An unsuccessful applicant should consult his/her Head of Department on an appropriate timeframe for his/her next submission.

6. Merit and Excellence Awards

Staff in categories Lecturer through Associate Professor who have been confirmed in their appointment are eligible for Merit Awards. Excellence Awards are available only to Full Professors who have been confirmed in their appointment.

To qualify for a Merit Award, a staff member would normally be expected to achieve an overall points score within the 2 to 3 points of the score required for promotion to the next rank. In addition, excellent performance must be demonstrated in at least one of Teaching or Research. Merit awards are competitive in the sense that a limited number, constrained by budget, will be awarded each year.

To qualify for an Excellence Award a candidate would need to score a minimum of 9/10 in at least two categories, one of which must be Research, with an overall score above 80.

7. Relevant committees

The Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee

The purpose of the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee is to give effect to, and make decisions arising from, the policy on performance management, including the ad hominem promotion of staff in the Faculty.

Composition

The Dean

A Deputy Vice Chancellor, nominated by the Vice Chancellor

Two Deans from other Faculties, nominated by the Vice Chancellor

The Dean of CHED as a non-voting member

Other members as determined by the Faculty Board.

The Faculty Board has given the Dean the authority to nominate members to the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee. The agreed structure of this 'Core Group' is six academic staff in the Faculty of Science, nominated by the Dean, comprising two each from the discipline groupings of Life, Earth & Environmental Sciences; Mathematical, Physical, Computational and Statistical Sciences; and Chemical, Molecular and Cellular Sciences, including a Deputy Dean, plus a Senior Lecturer representative of the Lecturer – Senior Lecturer constituency. The Dean may nominate up to two additional members to ensure diversity.

Chairperson: The Dean of Science

Deputy Chairperson: A member of the Core Committee as designated by the Dean

Servicing Officer: The Faculty Human Resources Practitioner

Terms of Reference: The Committee receives applications and nominations for ad hominem promotions and proposals for academic staff to be considered for Merit Awards or Excellence payments and is to:

- a) consider these
- b) recommend to the Vice Chancellor the ad hominem promotion of a staff member
- c) recommend awards for Excellence payments or Merit Award to the DVC responsible for academic matters, for approval by a meeting of the Deans.

Procedures

- ❑ The Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee meets once every year.
- ❑ The Committee is served by four Working Groups (see below).
- ❑ The Working Groups meet as frequently as necessary prior to the meeting of the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee.
- ❑ Recommendations for ad hominem promotion require a two-thirds majority vote of the Faculty Promotions and Remuneration Committee in support. In addition, it requires the support of two from the group consisting of the Deputy Vice Chancellor and the two other Deans.
- ❑ Recommendations to the Vice Chancellor on ad hominem promotions must contain a copy of the candidate's Curriculum Vitae or Portfolio and the names and addresses of the referees consulted. In the case of a promotion to the rank of a professor, the recommendation must contain the Committee's assessment that it is satisfied as to the international standing of the candidate's scholarship.
- ❑ The Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee must arrange for feedback to be given to successful and unsuccessful candidates and the relevant Heads of Departments. An unsuccessful candidate should be given reasons as to why his/her application was not successful.
- ❑ The decision of the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee is final. If a candidate believes that there is evidence of unfairness, bias, prejudice or irregularity, an unsuccessful applicant may request a review of the decision by the relevant Deputy Vice Chancellor via the Faculty Dean. However, unsuccessful applicants are reminded that the process by which the original decision was reached is extremely rigorous, the latter having been reiteratively reviewed in a series of meetings, the final one of which is attended by a Deputy Vice Chancellor and two Deans from Faculties other than that of the applicant.

Membership: Details of the membership of the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee, and of the Core Group, and Working Groups will be published annually in a Dean's Circular by not later than mid-year.

THE WORKING GROUPS

There are four Working groups reporting to the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee, viz:

- a) Working Group for Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- b) Working Group for Mathematical, Physical, Computational and Statistical Sciences
- c) Working Group for Chemical, Molecular and Cellular Sciences
- d) Working Group for the Rank of Professor

The three discipline-based Working Groups consider applications and nominations for promotion to ranks up to and including that of Associate Professor. These Working Groups comprise the Core Group together with the Heads of the constituent Departments of each discipline grouping, plus a Senior Lecturer representative.

The Working Group for the Rank of Professor comprises the Core Group together with the Heads of Departments in which candidates for promotion to Professor are located. Heads attend meetings of the Working Group only for the candidate or candidates from their Department, plus a Senior Lecturer representative chosen from amongst those serving on the discipline-based Working Groups. The Working Group for the Rank of Professor will conduct short interviews with candidates for promotion to Professor.

In the event that a Head of Department is a candidate for promotion, the Dean shall appoint a replacement to serve on the relevant Working Group.

If there is a situation of conflict between a candidate and his or her Head of Department, the Dean shall nominate a senior member of staff in the same Department or discipline as the applicant, to participate as a member of the Working Group in the consideration of that applicant, and to present the candidate's case.

Membership of the Working Groups

Where a Working Group, initiated by prior motivation from the Head of Department, feels it is warranted, any of the four Working Groups may agree to co-opt an additional senior academic staff member from another Faculty or Department.

(a) Life, Earth & Environmental Sciences

Head, Archaeology
Head, Biological Sciences
Head, Environmental & Geographical Science
Head, Geological Sciences
Head, Oceanography
Senior Lecturer representative
plus the Core Group

(b) Mathematical, Physical, Computational and Statistical Sciences

Head, Astronomy
Head, Computer Science
Head, Mathematics and Applied Mathematics
Head, Physics
Head, Statistical Sciences

Senior Lecturer representative
plus the Core Group

(c) Chemical, Molecular and Cellular Sciences
Head, Chemistry
Head, Molecular & Cell Biology
Senior Lecturer representative
plus the Core Group

(d) Working Group for the Rank of Professor

The Core Group
Senior lecturer representative
Heads of Departments of candidates (attending only for a candidate in his/her Department)

The Dean serves as Chair of all Working Groups.

8. The points system

The Faculty of Science's points system for the assessment of academic staff provides clear criteria that are applied consistently for the purposes of assessing academic staff for *ad hominem* promotions, Merit Awards, Excellence payments and performance-related salary reviews.

The system adopted by the Faculty of Science makes provision for assessment in four categories:

- (a) University Teaching
- (b) Research
- (c) Leadership, university administration, and contributions to the enhancement of science; and
- (d) Social Responsiveness & Engaged Scholarship.

Performance is scored on a ten-point scale for each category. The guidelines for scoring in each of the categories are attached.

Provision is made for weighting of categories (a - d, above) so that members of staff may choose, within limits, how they would like their academic performance to be judged. In addition, staff on Standard Academic conditions of service may separately score and weight their "course teaching" and "student supervision" within the overall category of University Teaching in the range 0.7 to 0.3 (total = 1). Thus members of staff can 'play to their strengths' by choosing their weights accordingly. Staff members are required to indicate their choice of weights, but weightings will nevertheless be optimized in order to arrive at the maximum possible total points score during the assessment of portfolios.

The chosen weightings must add up to a total of 10. The points score in each of the three or four categories chosen is then multiplied by the weighting for that category, resulting in a rating scale from 0 - 100. Members of staff may in particular decide to exclude the category of 'Social Responsiveness & Engaged Scholarship' in their assessment by choosing a weighting of zero for this category. Staff on Academic Teacher conditions of service would normally weight research at zero.

The following minimum scores (out of a maximum of 100 points) for promotion to the relevant ranks will be applicable:

For promotion to	Lecturer	50
	Senior Lecturer	60 (65 for Academic Teacher track – see below)
	Associate Professor	70
	Professor	80

In addition, promotion to Associate Professor requires a minimum score of 6/10 for Research. A score of 7/10 or more is required for promotion to the rank of Professor. For both ranks a minimum score of 6/10 for University Teaching is required. A subminimum of 7/10 for University Teaching is required for staff on Academic Teacher conditions of service (see below).

Minimum and maximum weightings are given in respect of each performance category in Tables 1 through 4 below, for each appointment category.

Staff on standard academic conditions of service (Table 1): the majority of academic staff in the Science Faculty fall into this category

Table 1

Category	Weighting: for promotion to	
	Lecturer through Associate Professor	Professor
Teaching	3 - 5	3 - 5
Research	3 - 5	3 - 5
Administration and leadership	1 - 3	2 - 3
Social Responsiveness	0 - 3	0 - 2

Note: An Associate Professor holding a SARChI chair who seeks promotion to Full Professor will be considered against the same guidelines as for regular academic staff in the Faculty, but with the following qualifications:

- a) Teaching – since undergraduate teaching is not a requirement of such posts, only the performance bands relating to postgraduate teaching will be used, taking cognisance of their NRF agreement. A minimum score of 6/10 is required for University Teaching.
- b) Weightings applicable to the different categories of performance (Teaching; Research; Leadership and Administration; Social Responsiveness) will be the same as those applicable to Principal Research Officers seeking promotion to the status of Full Professor (see Table 4 below). A minimum score of 7.5/10 will be required for research.

Staff on academic teaching conditions of service (Table 2): by prior agreement and contractual arrangement

For promotion of staff on Academic Teaching conditions of service to Senior Lecturer a minimum score (out of a maximum of 100 points) of **65** is required. Secondly, given the focus on undergraduate teaching, a minimum score of 7/10 for University Teaching is required.

Table 2

Category	Weighting for promotion
Teaching	4 - 7
Research	0 - 3
Administration and leadership	3 - 5
Social Responsiveness	0 - 3

Note: Since postgraduate supervision is not a requirement for staff on academic teaching conditions of service, in assessing University Teaching scores for staff in this category, the “University Teaching” point scoring guidelines for Academic Teachers must be used.

Staff on Research Officer conditions of service (Table 3)

Research officers who are candidates for promotion within the ranks will be expected to satisfy the same set of criteria as those applicable to academic staff but may choose a weighting of zero for teaching. Promotion to Chief Research Officer will require, in addition to an overall score of 70, a score of 7/10 for research. Promotion to Principal Research Officer will require, in addition to an overall score of 80, a score for research of 7.5/10.

The following minimum scores (out of a maximum of 100) for promotion to the relevant ranks will be applicable:

For promotion to	Senior Research Officer	60
	Chief Research Officer	70
	Principal Research Officer	80

Table 3

Category	Weighting for promotion	
	Research Officer through Chief Research Officer	Principal Research Officer
Teaching	0 - 5	0 - 5
Research	4 - 8	4 - 8
Administration and Leadership	1 - 3	2 - 3
Social Responsiveness	0 - 3	0 - 3

Criteria for promotion of Chief Research Officers or Principal Research Officers to the status of Associate Professor or Full Professor, respectively

For Chief or Principal Research Officers to be eligible for promotion in this category, it is expected that teaching will be a tangible component of their activities, and should constitute of the order of one third of a normal academic load, with a focus towards postgraduate teaching. In addition, candidates are expected to have a good record (relative to the field) as primary supervisor of graduated PhD students. Conditions of service remain those of Research Officer.

An applicant would be expected to have a strong research record, particularly with respect to published (refereed) articles or books, be of international standing as a researcher, be NRF rated, and hold a PhD degree. A Chief Research Officer wishing to move across to the rank of Associate Professor will require a weighted score of 70 or more, and a minimum of 7/10 for research. Principal Research Officers seeking promotion to the rank of Professor will require a points score of 80 or more, and a minimum of 7.5/10 for research. For both ranks a minimum score of 5/10 for teaching is required. Permissible weightings are given in Table 4.

Table 4

Category	Weighting for promotion	
	Title of Associate Professor	Title of Professor
Teaching	2 - 5	2 - 5
Research	3 - 6	3 - 6
Administration, leadership	1 - 3	2 - 3
Social Responsiveness	0 - 3	0 - 2

9. Guidelines in the use of the points system

- (i) The points system is for the guidance of the relevant assessor or committee. It serves as a check-list of academic attributes (cf. guidelines for 'staff portfolios'), allows comparisons of academic staff at different levels of seniority and from different disciplines, and it facilitates consistency in assessments from one year to the next.
- (ii) The points system is an aid in the assessment of academic excellence which is manifested through achievements in scholarship (mainly teaching and research) and in leadership, administrative skills and community involvement. Scholarship consists of the mastery of a particular discipline which expresses itself most clearly in significant publications and/or in a deep and lasting influence on students. Scholarship is measured by the intellectual impact of the candidate's work on students and on the community of scholars engaged in a cognate activity.
- (iii) The scores for the four categories, each out of a maximum of 10, are weighted in accordance with a set of weights chosen by the staff member, and which fall within the prescribed ranges given in the above tables. In arriving at a University Teaching score for staff on standard

academic conditions of service, course teaching and student supervision may be scored separately and individually weighted in the range 0.7 to 0.3 (total = 1). The weighted scores for each category (Teaching; Research; etc) are then added together to obtain the staff member's points score, which will be out of a maximum of 100. This score is used to gain an overall perspective and assessment of academic performance.

- (iv) Points in each category are assigned relative to the most accomplished senior academics in the Faculty, that is; the 'champion' in the Faculty in any one category may be expected to score 9 or, rarely, 10, and the performance of a particular candidate is compared and scored according to that standard. Thus, junior academics will almost always achieve lower absolute scores than those of their more senior colleagues.
- (v) The absolute scores attained are compared relative to those of other candidates at the same academic rank and judged according to the comparative scores achieved by other candidates in the past. Several years' experience in the Faculty during the *ad hominem* promotions exercises suggests guidelines for minimum points scores which, if achieved, would indicate that candidates are competitive for promotion from one rank to the next. These minima are given in Section 8.
- (vi) It is implied from paragraphs (iii) – (v) above that a strong performance in teaching, research and administration/leadership/social responsiveness is a Faculty expectation for academics at the senior ranks (Associate Professor and Professor). In the category of Research, a score of 6 or more is an additional prerequisite for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, and a score of 7 or more is required for promotion to the rank of Professor, since '... the candidate must have demonstrated a level of scholarship that is recognised by the leading workers in the field at an international level'. Likewise, for University Teaching promotion to either rank requires a score of 6 or more. The Faculty recognises that scholarship, research and innovation can be expressed and internationally respected through significant advances in Science Education, or in research with a focus on academic development.
- (vii) In assessing academic excellence and academic performance, and in assigning points in this system, there should be a thoughtful weighting of the most recent performance over past performance, with relatively little cognisance of achievements dated by more than, say, 15 or 20 years. Thus research output over the last three to five years will be assessed, while for the other categories it is the staff member's performance over the previous few years that would carry most weight. In general, emphasis is placed on achievements since the last promotion.
- (viii) When considering the overall performance of staff members, account may be taken of extraordinary circumstances in their Departments that might have an effect on their performance (for example, staff shortages, which would lead to increased teaching loads)



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