

## **POLICY ON THE PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES**

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## **POLICY ON THE PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES**

Against the background of the dream to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care, the Council of the North-West University adopted this policy on 18 November 2021 to replace all previous policies on academic promotion.

The University endeavours to create an environment and a framework within which all academic and designated academic support employees can realise their true potential.

### **1 Interpretation and application**

1.1 This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the:

- 1.1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 1.1.2 Higher Education Act, No 101 of 1997;
- 1.1.3 Statute of the North-West University (2017) ("the Statute");
- 1.1.4 Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995;
- 1.1.5 Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998;
- 1.1.6 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No 75 of 1997; and
- 1.1.7 Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS).

1.2 This policy must be interpreted and applied in conformity with all other relevant policies, guidelines and rules of the University, and specifically the Recruitment Policy, the Integrated Policy on Teaching-Learning, Policies for the Management of Research and Innovation Contracts and External Investments/Stake Holding, the Performance Management Policy, the Training and Development Policy, the Remuneration Policy and the Community Engagement Policy.

1.3 The Procedure for the Promotion of Academic Employees ('the Procedure' – P&C034G) is incorporated in and must be read subject to, but as an integral component of this policy.

Academic support employees are staff with specialised skills (i.e. HEMIS category 3 – Specialist/support profession) defined as:

A position in which (a) the primary function is the provision of academic or institutional or student support services, and (b) the position requires an educational attainment equivalent to at least four years of higher education study.

### **2 Policy statement**

It is the policy of the NWU to –

- 2.1 provide for a comprehensive institutional policy, procedure and guidelines for the North-West University that provide for uniform standards for the promotion of academic and designated academic support employees, and that are applicable across all faculties and related entities;
- 2.2 accommodate disciplinary differences with specific reference to the professional and creative disciplines where criteria may differ, but the same comparable level of excellence is expected;
- 2.3 use criteria equal to those applicable to the promotion of academic and designated academic support employees when making appointments;

- 2.4 require that everyone involved in any aspect of the promotion process of academic employees be guided by considerations of fairness, equitability, consistency, objectivity, legitimacy, confidentiality and transparency, and to strive for the achievement of consensus, and
- 2.5 base the promotion of academic and designated academic support employees on merit, evidence, and a high and sustained level of performance in the various areas for evaluation contemplated in clause 4.

### **3 Scope of application**

This policy applies to the promotion of all permanently appointed academic employees in the positions of junior lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor and professor, as well as all fixed-term appointed academic employees (with benefits).

This policy applies to the promotion of all designated academic support employees (HEMIS category 3), with prior affiliation to a faculty. Upon successful promotion to the academic level of adjunct lecturer, adjunct senior lecturer, adjunct associate professor and adjunct professor as indicated in par. 4.3 below, they will retain their substantive support positions, conditions of service (including leave positions) and pay grades and remuneration associated with their support level.

## **4 Rules**

### **4.1 Evaluation**

- 4.1.1 Consideration and evaluation of applications and nominations for promotion must be undertaken against specific criteria relevant to the position concerned and must be both merit-based and evidence-based, supported where applicable by external peer reviews.
- 4.1.2 Proof of excellent performance according to the norm of the current level, assessed and rated in terms of the candidate's key performance agreements, is required before promotion to a next level may be considered.
- 4.1.3 Consideration for promotion must be based on the achievements of the candidate since the last promotion or since the date of appointment.
- 4.1.4 Whereas the evaluation and appraisal of an academic employee or designated academic support employee is aimed at judging the employee's career and performance overtime, evidence is required that a candidate for promotion meet the criteria set for the level to which the promotion is considered.
- 4.1.5 Promotion requires a balanced profile of achievement in the areas of evaluation contemplated in 4.2
- 4.1.6 Where evidence exists that a candidate for promotion performs significantly higher than required in one or more areas of evaluation, an exception may be made regarding the requirement of a balanced profile as is contemplated in 4.1.5.
- 4.1.7 The diversity of scholarly disciplines must be recognised in the evaluation of candidates.
- 4.1.8 For candidates working in a faculty where teaching and learning and research and innovation take the form of creative work, Specific criteria and requirements for the appropriate acknowledgment of the achievements concerned may be approved by Senate.
- 4.1.9 The impact of the various scenarios of disciplinary action on pending, *sub judice* and finalised disciplinary hearings on an application for academic promotion, as stipulated in the Procedure, must be taken into consideration.

### **4.2 Areas of evaluation**

The following are the areas, as defined in the Procedure, in which the performance of a candidate for promotion is evaluated:

- 4.2.1 Teaching and learning, including postgraduate supervision
- 4.2.2 Research, innovation, and/or creative outputs
- 4.2.3 Academic leadership, management and service to the University
- 4.2.4 Social responsiveness

### 4.3 Criteria for promotion

- 4.3.1 To be considered for promotion, a candidate must meet or exceed the required level of performance indicated in the performance management system.
- 4.3.2 To qualify for a promotion, a candidate must comply with the following minimum requirements for the respective positions:

#### 4.3.2.1 Promotion to lecturer

- a master's degree;
- clear evidence, as described in the Procedure, of strength in teaching and learning and research and innovation and/or creative outputs; and
- evidence of excellence in ONE of the areas for evaluation based on the requirements of the relevant faculty as approved by Senate.

#### 4.3.2.2 Promotion to senior lecturer

- a doctoral degree, or a master's degree with an appropriate professional qualification as approved by Senate;
- clear evidence, as described in the Procedure, of strength in teaching and learning and postgraduate supervision and research and innovation and/or creative outputs;
- evidence of excellence in ONE of the areas for evaluation based on the requirements of the relevant faculty as approved by Senate;
- the candidate's profile must reflect a sustained academic performance that is of a high quality, and the potential to maintain it at such level; and
- research achievements or other relevant outputs must form an integral part of the candidate's academic profile.

#### 4.3.2.3 Promotion to associate professor

- a doctoral degree or, in exceptional cases, national recognition for outstanding initiative and performance in the candidate's field of expertise;
- clear evidence of standing and recognition appropriate to the level of associate professor;
- clear evidence, as described in the Procedure, of strength in teaching and learning and postgraduate supervision and research and innovation and/or creative outputs; and
- the candidate must exhibit a balanced profile regarding the areas of evaluation, but a candidate exhibiting extraordinary competence in one of the areas of evaluation may also be considered for promotion.

#### 4.3.2.4 Promotion to professor

- a doctoral degree;
- academic leadership appropriate to the level of professor according to national and international norms;
- clear evidence, as described in the Procedure, of strength in teaching and learning and postgraduate supervision and research and innovation and/or creative outputs;
- evidence of a continued record in excellent achievements in relation to what is expected of a professor according to national and international norms relative in at least TWO of the areas for evaluation; and
- the academic profile of the candidate must attest to performance of a high quality and international recognition.

### 4.4 Revision

Where it is decided that a candidate is not to be promoted, the candidate may request a revision of the process on the grounds of evidence that –

- 4.4.1 a defect in, or deviations from, the application of the procedure and process provided for by this policy occurred;
- 4.4.2 the promotion criteria provided for in this policy were not duly applied; or
- 4.4.3 the outcome was substantively unfair.
- 4.4.4 In terms of the Procedure for the promotion of academic employees (P&C034G, par. 7.2.2, Step 3c on page 35), the Promotions Revision Committee (PRC) is the final step in addressing the matter and its decision is final.

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