



POLICY ON THE PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES

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POLICY ON THE PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES

Preamble

Against the background of our vision to discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, thereby advancing our relevance and impact, the Council of the North-West University (“NWU”, “university”) adopted this policy on 19 November 2025.

The University endeavours to create an environment and framework in which all academic employees can fulfil their 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 Statue 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; and
 - 1.1.6 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No 75 of 1997.
- 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.

2 Policy statement

It is the policy of the NWU to –

- 2.1 provide a comprehensive institutional policy, procedure and guidelines for the North-West University that establish uniform standards for the promotion of academic employees and that apply across all faculties and related entities;
- 2.2 accommodate disciplinary differences, particularly in the professional and creative disciplines, where criteria may differ but the same or comparable level of excellence is expected;
- 2.3 use criteria equal to those applicable to the promotion process of academic employees when making appointments;
- 2.4 require that everyone involved in any aspect of the promotion of academic employees be guided by considerations of fairness, equitability, consistency, objectivity, legitimacy, confidentiality, and transparency, striving for consensus; and

- 2.5 base the promotion of academic employees on merit, evidence, and a consistently high level of performance in the various areas of evaluation contemplated in clause 4.

3 Scope of application

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

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 by external peer reviews where applicable.
- 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 the next level may be considered.
- 4.1.3 Consideration for promotion must be based on the candidate's achievements since their last promotion or since the date of appointment.
- 4.1.4 Whereas the evaluation and appraisal of an academic employee aims to judge their career and performance over time, evidence is required to show that a candidate for promotion meets 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 there is evidence that a candidate for promotion performed significantly better than required in one or more areas of the evaluation, an exception may be made regarding the requirement for a balanced profile as contemplated in 4.1.5.
- 4.1.7 The diversity of scholarly disciplines must be recognised when evaluating candidates.
- 4.1.8 For candidates working in a faculty where teaching and learning and research and innovation take the form of creative work, the Senate may approve specific criteria and requirements for acknowledging the relevant achievements.
- 4.1.9 The impact of the various disciplinary action scenarios on pending and finalised disciplinary hearings in relation to an application for academic promotion, as stipulated in the Procedure, must be adhered to.

4.1.10 Areas of evaluation

Procedure must be adhered to.

- 4.1.10.1 Teaching and learning, including postgraduate supervision
- 4.1.10.2 Research, innovation, and/or creative outputs
- 4.1.10.3 Academic leadership, management, and service to the University
- 4.1.10.4 Social responsiveness

4.2 Criteria for promotion

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

4.2.2.1 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.

4.2.2.2 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 demonstrate sustained high-quality academic performance and the potential to maintain it at this level; and
- research achievements or relevant outputs must form an integral part of the candidate's academic profile.

4.2.2.3 Promotion to associate professor

- a doctoral degree is required, 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 across the evaluation areas, though exceptional competence in one area may also lead to promotion.

4.2.2.4 Promotion to professor

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

4.3 Revision

Where it is decided that a candidate is not to be promoted, the candidate may request a revision of the process if they can provide evidence that –

- 4.3.1 a defect occurred in, or there were deviations from, the application of the procedure and process provided for by this policy;
- 4.3.2 the promotion criteria provided for in this policy were not duly applied; or
- 4.3.3 the outcome was substantively unfair.

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