FACULTY OF SCIENCE

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

ACADEMIC STAFF

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1. Introduction

This document is designed to provide transparency around the procedures and processes of ad hominem promotions, merit, and excellence awards. The Faculty of Science wishes to appropriately reward academic staff for excellence and achievement, and as such looks for reasons to promote a candidate, rather than reasons not to do so. In this respect it is essential that candidates provide all the necessary information (refer to *Guidelines for Academic Staff Portfolios*), in a concise manner that speaks to the criteria (refer to *Points System for the Performance Assessment of Academic Staff*). All candidates should familiarise themselves with the material presented here, and in the documents referred to above, to ensure that their portfolios are presented in a manner that maximises their chance of success.

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-funded' research officers is borne by the grant holder. Grant holders must first consult with the Dean if they wish to nominate a 'soft-funded' 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 candidates who, on 30 June of the year of application, have been in their 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 month in advance of the closing date for applications, in order for this rule to be waived.

3. Criteria for promotion

The criteria presented in *Points System for the Performance Assessment of Academic Staff*, and further elaborated on in Sections 9 and 10 of this document, will form the basis for performance assessment of academic staff, and the key mode of assessment for promotion. It is important that all candidates read that document carefully and design their promotion portfolios in a manner that speaks clearly to these criteria.

4. Pre-submission 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. Based on this assessment Heads of Department (or Deans) 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 here:
www.hr.uct.ac.za/hr/performance/management/academic_staff/performance_planning

As a consequence of the assessment process (i.e. if they fall into category (a) above), members of academic staff may be nominated for *ad hominem* promotion by their Heads of Department, 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 also has the right, even if not nominated, to apply for promotion. In such a case there will be a preliminary assessment of the candidate 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 potential candidates 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.

5. Submission process

To apply for promotion, academic staff portfolios must be compiled by academic staff members (see *Guidelines for Academic Staff Portfolios*) and must be submitted directly to the Dean.

These must be accompanied by the names and contact details, including email addresses, of three referees, together with brief biographic sketches indicating the academic standing of the referees. The applicant must establish the willingness of prospective referees to provide reports within the timeframe required, and ensure that referees are provided with all relevant documentation, including a copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae and portfolio. 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. All referees' reports must be current and arrive well before the meetings scheduled for the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee, in order to allow for a proper assessment of candidates.

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

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). Unsuccessful applicants should consult their Head of Department on an appropriate timeframe for their next submission.

6. Post-submission process

The Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee, described further in section 8, will consider the portfolios submitted by candidates for promotion. This involves a multi-step process:

- The Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee, which meets once a year, is served by four Working Groups (see section 8).
- These Working Groups initially consider the applications for promotions, and score the portfolios, in a series of meetings. A key part of this process includes the presentation of candidates by their Heads of Departments or other nominated staff member.
- For the Working Group for the Rank of Professor, this process will also include conducting an interview of the candidate.
- Following this, scoring is moderated as necessary in a separate meeting(s) of the Core Group, to ensure that criteria were applied consistently across ranks (accounting for discipline-specific differences).
- The case for each candidate, and reasons for recommending promotion (or not) are then considered by the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee. Approval of recommendations for ad hominem promotion requires the supportive vote of a two-thirds majority of the Faculty Promotions and Remuneration Committee. In addition, it requires the support of two from the group consisting of the Deputy Vice Chancellor and the two other Deans.
- Supported recommendations for promotion, along with the Committee's assessment and other supporting materials (e.g., portfolio, references), are then considered by the Vice Chancellor. In the case of a promotion to the rank of professor, the recommendation must contain the Committee's assessment that it is satisfied as to the international standing of the candidate's scholarship.
- Constructive feedback will be given to both successful and unsuccessful candidates and the relevant Heads of Departments.

The Faculty of Science is committed to eliminating gender, racial and other bias that might affect this process, from potential biases that may affect portfolios (e.g., known gender bias in teaching evaluations) through to the possibility of unconscious bias carried by individual committee members. This is therefore, by design, a rigorous process that attempts to minimise bias and apply criteria equally, fairly and with compassion, by carefully considering the merits of each candidate through reiterative review in a series of meetings. Importantly, at any stage in the process the decision on whether to promote can change, due to the nature of this process, which is one of the reasons that all deliberations must be kept confidential in order to protect the candidates.

The decision of the Faculty Promotion and Remuneration Committee (Faculty Committee) is final. However, any persons aggrieved by the final decision of a Faculty Committee may submit an appeal to the Appeal Committee via the HR business partner affiliated to the affected Faculty.

7. 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 point 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.

8. Relevant committee composition

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, 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 Awards to the Vice Chancellor.

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. The groups will also consider the merit awards and excellence payments. These Working Groups consist of the Core Group described above, 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.

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

NOTE: Any candidate can choose to have another senior academic staff member present their case, without prejudice, in lieu of their Head of Department, should the candidate deem that appropriate. This person could be in the same Department, but does not have to be, so long as they are familiar with the candidate's performance. This HOD substitute would participate as a member of the Working Group in the consideration of that applicant, and present the candidate's case.

Composition 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 their Department)

The Dean serves as Chair of all Working Groups.

9. Further details on 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 provided in the *Points System for the Performance Assessment of Academic Staff*,

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 always be optimized during the assessment of portfolios in order to arrive at the maximum possible total points score.

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.

For the category Social Responsiveness & Engaged Scholarship, members of staff have two options. They can either put all of their SR/ES activities into this separate category and provide it with a weight; this is recommended for staff with an exceptionally strong SR/ES record. Alternatively, members of staff may decide to exclude the category of 'Social Responsiveness & Engaged Scholarship' in their assessment by choosing a weighting of zero for this category. In this latter case, applicants should still present any SR/ES activities relevant to Teaching, Research, and Leadership/Admin in each of these categories as appropriate.

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 for each performance category and appointment category are as follows:

STAFF ON STANDARD ACADEMIC CONDITIONS OF SERVICE (the majority of academic staff in the Science Faculty fall into this category)

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 (by prior agreement and contractual arrangement)

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

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. Additionally, given the focus on undergraduate teaching, a minimum score of 7/10 in the category University Teaching is required.

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 system scoring guidelines for Academic Teachers must be used.

STAFF ON RESEARCH OFFICER CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

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

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

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 as follows:

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

10. <u>Guidelines in the use of the points system</u>

(i) The points system aids the candidate in preparing their portfolio, and ultimately provides guidance for the relevant assessor or committee. It serves as a checklist 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 research outputs, including but not limited to 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 9.

(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. Moreover, the Faculty aligns with UCTs support of the principles of the Declaration on Research Assessment (http://www.researchsupport.uct.ac.za/research-outputs/assessment), which values research productivity in terms of scientific content and recognises the value of all research outputs (publications, creative works, datasets, software).

(vii) The Faculty of Science is committed to transformation, in alignment with UCT's transformation agenda (https://www.uct.ac.za/main/explore-uct/transformation). Where promotion criteria include activities and practices relevant to equity, diversity, and inclusion, these should be clearly articulated by the candidates, and will be considered by the relevant assessor or committee. This applies across all aspects of the portfolio (teaching, research, administration, social responsiveness).

(viii) In alignment with UCT (http://www.socialresponsiveness.uct.ac.za/), the Faculty of Science recognises the value of social responsiveness/engaged scholarship across all aspects of the portfolio. Therefore, these activities should be clearly articulated by the candidates, either in their respective categories, or, where the candidate has a particularly strong SP/ES portfolio, separated into its own category and given separate weighting for consideration by the relevant assessor or committee.

(ix) 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.

(x) When considering the overall performance of staff members, account may be taken of extraordinary circumstances in their Departments that might influence their performance (for example, staff shortages, which would lead to increased teaching loads)

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