Academic Promotion of University Teaching Personnel in Japan

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1. National Outline, Standards and Guideline

- Academic promotion of teaching personnel at universities in Japan are generally processed through Personnel Committee within Faculty.

- The members of Personnel Committee are appointed by Faculty Council.

- Promotion is decided by the the President, following the related Laws and Acts which are the standards and guideline.
Standards for Establishment of Universities, Chapter IV: Qualifications of Teachers

(Qualifications of Professors)
Article 14. A person who is permitted to be a professor shall be a person falling under any of the following items who is recognized to have the educational abilities suitable for taking charge of the education offered by a university:

(i) a person who has a doctor’s degree (including degrees equivalent thereto that have been conferred in foreign countries) and who has research achievement;

(ii) a person who has research achievement recognized to be equivalent to that of the person set forth in the preceding item;

(iii) a person who has a professional degree prescribed in Article 5-2 of the Degree Regulations (Ordinance of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture No. 9 of 1953) (including degrees equivalent thereto that have been conferred in foreign countries) and who has practical achievement in the major of said professional degree;
❖ (iv) a person who has a career working as a professor, associate professor, or full-time instructor at a university (including a career working as a teacher equivalent to these in foreign countries);
❖ (v) a person who is recognized to have special skills in arts and sports, etc.; and
❖ (vi) a person who is recognized to have excellent knowledge and experience, in particular, in his/her major.
Basic Act on Education, Chapter II: Basics of Education

Provision

(Universities)

Article 7 (1) Universities, as the core of scholarship activities, shall cultivate advanced knowledge and specialized skills, inquire deeply into the truth and create new knowledge, while contributing to the development of society by broadly disseminating the results of their activities.

(2) University autonomy, independence, and other unique characteristics of university education and research shall be respected.

School Education Act, Chapter IX: Universities

Article 93. In universities, Faculty Council (教授会) must be established to deliberate important issues.
Law on Special Treatment of Educational Civil Servants

(Selection / Promotion of Teaching Personnel in University)

Article 3 (5) The President shall decide about the selection as well as promotion of teaching personnel based upon the deliberation of the Faculty Council.
2. Criteria of Academic Promotion

❖ Ph.D. degree or equivalent status

❖ Excellence in academic achievement (esp. in research)
  _ Publication of papers
  _ Citation count of published papers
  _ Patent applications

❖ Career and teaching experience
  _ Courses / Lab
  _ Supervision of Doctoral theses

❖ Specific competences and skills (in architectural design, fine arts, and physical education)
3. Procedures for Academic Promotion

❖ **School Education Act, Chapter IX : Universities**

Article 93. In universities, Faculty Council (教授会) must be established to deliberate important issues.

❖ **Important issues:**

- Selection and promotion of faculty members
- Selection of Dean
- Organization of departments, divisions, committees, units, …
- Budget allocation to departments, divisions, …
- Management of course curriculum
- Entrance exam
Promotion Mechanism of Faculty Member in National University

- Deliberation at the faculty level
- Decision at the university level
- Personnel Committee
- Faculty Council (教授会)
- President

- To appoint the members of the Personnel Committee
- To vote the candidates assessed by the Personnel Committee an approval and send the recommendation letter to the President
- To appoint and assign the candidates a position, e.g. professor, lecturer, etc.

Deliberation and decision are made following the standards/guidelines (the laws/acts)
The most important factor considered to decide academic promotion of teaching personnel

=> achievement / performance in research
Case Study: The number of Professors, Associate Professors, Lecturers, and Assistant Lecturers in National University Corporation Osaka University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Associate Professors</th>
<th>Lecturers</th>
<th>Assistant Lecturers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-34 yrs old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 yrs old</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>1,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 yrs old</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55—64 yrs old</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 yrs old</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- as of May 2014 ([http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/ja/guide/about/data/teacher_data/](http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/ja/guide/about/data/teacher_data/))
4. Problems and Impacts

❖ 4.1 Personnel Assessment
❖ 4.2 Limited Short-Term Appointment
❖ 4.3 Tenure-Track System
❖ 4.4 Amendment of School Education Act
❖ 4.5 Promotion of Gender Equality
4.1 Personnel Assessment

- 2004 All national universities turned into *independent administrative entities* (独立行政法人).

  => Faculty evaluation system introduced, deployed in around 80% of national universities / colleges (Cf. Shimada *et al.* 2009)

- Criteria for evaluating individual performances:
  - Research (paper publication, academic impact, etc.)
  - Teaching (courses, lab. and thesis supervision, etc.)
  - Contribution to institutional administration
  - Social action
Only 3.4% of the national universities / colleges utilize the result of faculty assessment for the purpose of academic promotion while 36.3% of the private universities / colleges actually do.

51.7% of the national universities / colleges do not plan to utilize the result of faculty assessment for the purpose of academic promotion in the future while only 15% of the private universities / colleges do not.

(Shimada et al. 2009: 70)
4.2 Limited Short-Term Appointment

❖ 1997  Act regarding the Limited Term Appointment of University Teaching Personnel

=> legitimates 1-5 year contract employment of teachers / researchers at public and national universities

❖ 2004  National Universities Incorporated into Independent Administrative Entities

=> exempts the application of the Law on Special Treatment of Educational Civil Servants to the teaching personnel of national universities
4.3 Tenure-Track System

- Newly hired university / college teaching personnel are mostly employed as a untenured limited-term (1-5 yrs) employee.

- When renewing a contract, they are supposed to be promoted to the higher ranked positions appointed:
  - either *with tenure* (= permanent contract)
  - or *without tenure* (= another limited-term contract)

- However, the promotion is *not* based on the appropriately well-balanced evaluation of their academic / educational achievement *but* mainly on research performance in the specialized field of study.
4.4 Amendment of School Education Act

“(1) In universities, Faculty Council must be established to comment on the occasion that the President decides about the following issues: Admission, graduation, and completion of academic programs; conferment of degree; and other important issues that the President recognizes it necessary to ask Faculty Council’s opinion.

(2) Faculty Council is able to deliberate and comment on request on issues related to education and research that the President and Dean administer.”
4.5 Promotion of Gender Equality

- The Number of Teaching Staff in Japanese Universities and Gender Balance, 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>National Universities</th>
<th>Public Universities</th>
<th>Private Universities</th>
<th>% of Female Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>172,039</td>
<td>138,509</td>
<td>33,530</td>
<td>61,246</td>
<td>12,402</td>
<td>98,391</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>174,403</td>
<td>139,349</td>
<td>35,054</td>
<td>61,689</td>
<td>12,646</td>
<td>100,068</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>176,684</td>
<td>140,260</td>
<td>36,424</td>
<td>62,702</td>
<td>12,813</td>
<td>101,169</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>177,570</td>
<td>139,850</td>
<td>37,720</td>
<td>62,825</td>
<td>12,876</td>
<td>101,869</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>178,669</td>
<td>139,639</td>
<td>39,030</td>
<td>63,218</td>
<td>12,871</td>
<td>102,580</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Conclusion: For the Future Academic Promotion System
Respecting Academic Freedom and University Autonomy

❖ Respect the *deliberation* of Faculty Council.

❖ Link the faculty assessment system with promotion.
  - Emphasis should be placed on the evaluation of teaching performance.

❖ Ensure the right of the university teaching personnel to renew contract.
  - Stop repeating short limited-term contract.
  - Switch newly hired young university assistant professors and lecturers from untenured to tenured positions when renewing contract.