ERI-Net Expert Meeting on the Academic Promotion of Higher Education Teaching Personnel

20-21 May 2014
Traders Hotel, Penang, Malaysia

Concept Note

Introduction

A fair, transparent, comprehensive and merit-based system of academic promotion of higher education teaching personnel is the hallmark of good governance of higher education. Within the Asia-Pacific region, academic promotion of higher education teaching personnel is a topic that has yet to receive significant attention in terms of research and analysis. However, its unscientific, non-transparent and single-faceted criteria and procedures can be the root causes for many deficiencies in higher education systems, and can therefore be regarded as the source of solutions to many persisting challenges that the region faces in higher education. It is an important part of the broader governance issues that are relevant not only to the more established higher education systems, but also to the emerging higher education systems where substantial expansion has taken place in the past decades. Moreover, academic promotion mechanisms could have serious repercussions on the professional morale and behaviours of the higher education teaching personnel, campus culture, and subsequently on the fulfilment of the missions and mandates of higher education institutions.

Thus, recognizing the significance of academic promotion, UNESCO Bangkok and the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN), Malaysia, are co-organising an expert meeting under the umbrella of the Education Research Institutes Network (ERI-Net) to examine the issues more closely. The ERI-Net was established by UNESCO Bangkok in 2009 to encourage and facilitate regional cooperation in conducting analytical and rigorous research on topical education issues that are of particular relevance to the Asia-Pacific region. At the 2013 ERI-Net Annual Meeting held on 17-19 October 2013 in Bangkok, ERI-Net members agreed to focus on academic promotion of higher education teaching personnel as the research topic in higher education for the year 2014.
There are obviously two different approaches to look into the issues involving academic promotion. One approach is to relate them to the status and working conditions of the higher education teaching personnel. In this regard, the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel can provide a research framework, which is more rights-based and aims at providing a good institutional environment for higher education teaching personnel. The second approach is more from the managerial point of view, which focuses on the accountability dimension by introducing assessment-based criteria and mechanisms into the academic promotion process, as were the cases in many Member States in the region. Because performance issues and the status of higher education personnel are deeply intertwined, academic promotion can serve as the entry point and may provide an opportunity to explore the application of the 1997 Recommendations.

For this research study, the term ‘higher education teaching personnel’ is taken to mean ‘all those persons in institutions or programmes of higher education who are engaged to teach and/or to undertake scholarship and/or to undertake research and/or to provide educational services to students or to the community at large’, as defined in Article I.1 (f) of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel. While continuing to monitor the applications of the 1997 Recommendations by its Member States, UNESCO Bangkok will also take stock of the existing policies and mechanisms so that a more complete picture can be consolidated at the regional level, contributing to the development of a technical document to the benefit of all Member States in this region.

**Objectives of the Meeting**

The objectives of the expert meeting are to map the major issues related to academic promotion and come up with a common research framework that can be used to guide the case studies conducted by the ERI-Net member institutions in the year 2014. More specifically, the objectives of the meeting are to:

- Document existing innovative policies, strategies and practices at the national and institutional level from Member States in the region;
- Map major issues related to the implementation of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendations on the Status of Higher Education Personnel;
- Outline key priorities for the 2014 ERI-Net research on academic promotion;
- Discuss the methodological approach of the research, including research questions, data collection methods, and quantitative and qualitative analysis of the research outcomes, etc.;
- Develop the timeline of the 2014 ERI-Net research on academic promotion.

**Expected Outputs**
The expert meeting will be instrumental in developing a common research framework on academic promotion. This will help to sharpen the focus of the research on certain areas that are of common interests to the Member States. More specifically, the expected outputs are:

- A report highlighting key points of the meeting;
- A research framework that will apply to all case studies under this year’s ERI-net research on the academic promotion in the Member States;

**Organisers**

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok, Thailand
National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN), Malaysia

**Participants**

The meeting will be attended by around 20 experts from Australia, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong SAR (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Participants will be asked to do some preparatory work prior to the meeting. More information will be provided upon confirmation of participation.

**Venue**

Pangkor Room, Traders Hotel, Penang, Malaysia

**Dates**

20-21 May 2014

**Tentative Programme**

Day 1 (full day)
- Opening of the meeting
- Briefing by ERI-Net secretariat, UNESCO Bangkok
- Presentations on the existing policies and practices
- Welcome dinner

Day 2 (half day)
- Brainstorming on and finalizing the research framework
- Wrap-up and closing of the meeting
For further information, please contact:

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