Higher education teaching personnel should enjoy: a) a just and open system of career development including fair procedures for appointment, tenure where applicable, promotion, dismissal, and other related matters, and; b) an effective, fair and just system of labour relations within the institution, consistent with the international standards.


1. Rationale

In Asia-Pacific, access to higher education has increased rapidly over the past two decades. The growing number of higher education institutions has raised important questions about governance and how teaching personnel are recruited, evaluated and promoted. The central importance of these issues was recognized during the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education.

In support of higher education and the central role of teaching personnel, the World Conference called on UNESCO to enhance the attractiveness of academic careers and ensure adequate working conditions in line with international standards. In particular UNESCO, within its five functions as a laboratory of ideas, catalyst for international cooperation, standard-setter, capacity-builder and clearinghouse, should help Member States enhance the status of higher education teaching personnel. The 1997 UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel provides an underlying framework to review these issues.

The 1997 Recommendation describes the importance of a fair system of career development to advance scholarship and attract a corps of talented and highly qualified teaching professionals. In particular, it states that academic personnel should enjoy a just and transparent system of career development. This includes clear procedures for appointment, tenure where applicable, promotion, dismissal, and an effective system of labour relations. The supporting guidelines are important given uncertainty about mechanisms to enhance the status of higher education teaching personnel.

1.1 The status of higher education teaching personnel in Asia-Pacific

Asia-Pacific is a highly diverse world region. However, academic promotion is relevant to the more established higher education systems as well as to the emerging systems. For example, significant inequalities within the region can undermine regional cooperation.

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1 World Conference on Higher Education: The New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research For Societal Change and Development (UNESCO, 2009)
and solidarity. Inequality contributes dramatically to flows of talented staff and students from the less well-endowed systems to those with more resources.

With these issues and fundamental priorities in mind, members of the Education Research Institutes Network in Asia-Pacific (ERI-Net) agreed to focus on academic promotion as a research topic for 2014. The overarching goal of this effort is to gather and analyse best practices and policies to enhance academic promotion in Asia-Pacific. The following section outlines the research objectives in more detail.

2. Research objectives

In Asia-Pacific, the status of higher education teaching personnel has not yet received significant attention in terms of research and analysis. Therefore, ERI-Net developed a common research framework to evaluate career advancement in higher education within the region. The research framework is designed to map best practices and policies and raise awareness of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation and its role to enhance the status of higher education teaching personnel.

The objectives of the ERI-Net research framework are to:

- Collect and analyse innovative policies and regulations impacting academic promotion in Asia-Pacific;
- Assess major issues related to the status and career advancement of academics in the region based on the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation;
- Create a technical document on academic promotion to benefit Member States in the region.

3. Research questions

The following research questions focus on academic promotion in public research-intensive universities. This approach ensures the research framework is sufficiently narrow in terms of institutional types while maximizing comparability in a highly diverse region.

3.1 How do governments think about the issue of academic promotion? What are the related regulations and policy objectives?

This question explores the broader policy context related to academic promotion. Are there centralized policies and regulations or does the government take a decentralized approach and encourage institutional autonomy? What policies govern academic promotion in the target country/system?

Factors to consider include:

- Centralized or decentralized policies (i.e. regulations impacting academic promotion);
• Linkage with broader higher education strategies such as: attracting talent to increase research capacity; establishing a national research culture; enhancing the quality of teaching; and promoting university social responsibility; etc.

• Any other major issues related to implementation of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation such as:
  - **Status and working conditions**: individual rights and freedoms; terms and conditions of employment; terms and conditions of employment of women, disabled, and part-time higher education teaching personnel; negotiation of terms and conditions of employment; and security of employment;
  - **Managerial considerations**: appraisal, professionalism, accountability, discipline, and dismissal;

• How policy may impact teaching staff morale, behaviour, and campus culture.

3.2 Focusing on public research-intensive universities, what are the structures and criteria for academic promotion?

Higher education institutions should ensure that performance evaluations are based only on academic criteria of competence in research, teaching and other academic or professional duties as interpreted by academic peers. However, few countries around the world are known to have effective evaluation systems for academic personnel. Promotion tends to be earned based on seniority, qualifications, and in some cases research productivity. What are the criteria for academic promotion in your country?

Key research areas include:

• **The hierarchical structure for academic promotion**
  - What is the typical career progression and academic hierarchy in public research-intensive universities?
  - Is career advancement in the professional hierarchy open to all faculty?
  - Or, are there limited numbers of senior academic positions within a university that can be filled at any one time?

• **Performance evaluation criteria**
  - What criteria for promotion are used to evaluate performance (e.g. teaching workload, research publications, service, seniority, etc.)?
  - How are core functions of teaching, research and service integrated into the evaluation criteria? How are they weighted?

• **Public and private institutions**
  - How do evaluation criteria differ at public vs. private research universities in your country? While data from the private higher education sector may be unavailable, insights from national experts would be welcomed.

• **Other implications and factors**
  - How do promotion criteria impact morale, professional performance, and the ability of institutions to achieve their stated mission?
3.3 What are the procedures for recruiting, evaluating and promoting higher education teaching personnel? How are decisions made?

Recruitment procedures and performance evaluations are central to higher education management. As such, institutions should ensure that evaluations are based on fair and known criteria. What are the recruitment protocols for new vacancies? For current staff, what are the performance evaluation procedures and who is engaged in the decision-making process?

The 1997 UNESCO Recommendation lists common evaluation procedures, which may help to frame the issue:

1. Evaluations should be based only on academic criteria such as research, teaching and other academic or professional duties as interpreted by academic peers;
2. Evaluation procedures account for the difficulty in measuring personal capacity as well as the fluctuating cycle of productivity;
3. Assessments are objective and the criteria and the results are made known to the individual concerned;
4. Results of appraisal are considered when establishing the staffing needs of the institution and renewal of employment;
5. Higher education teaching personnel have the right to appeal to an impartial body against assessments which they deem to be unjustified.
6. Other procedures to consider

4. Methods and guidelines

The comparability of national data and insights can be enhanced by a common evaluation framework. However, the diversity of Asia-Pacific and the fact that the academic profession remains embedded in national circumstances may limit comparability. By focusing on public research-intensive universities, some of these limitations may be overcome. In addition, a common outline for national reports will help guide case studies where applicable (see Appendix).

Broadly, each national report includes:

- An overview of the national context and policy objectives related to academic promotion (Question 3.1)
- The structure and criteria for academic promotion (Question 3.2)
- Analysis of recruitment and evaluation procedures based in part on the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation (Question 3.3)

Potential sources of data and insights include government regulations, institutional case studies, primary sources, etc. For example, in a centralized system the arguments may be based on national regulations or ministry circulars. In a decentralized system, the
analysis would be based on regional regulations or institutional rules. ERI-Net experts may also take note of unintended consequences of policy measures or the lack of full implementation.

5. Expected outcomes and timeline

Undertaking a study on recruitment, evaluation and promotion practices can stimulate awareness of the central role that teaching personnel play in higher education and research. This discussion can be facilitated by a common understanding of the rights and status of higher education teaching personnel as outlined in the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation, a unique instrument to promote academic freedom and enhance the status of the academic profession. As such, academic promotion should advance a balanced approach to teaching, research and service and enable educators to carry out their professional tasks. The ERI-Net research group can contribute to the goal of deepening our understanding of these issues in Asia-Pacific at a time when the academic profession is confronting new challenges and opportunities in shaping universities for the 21st century.

Timeline for national reports:

- ERI-Net Experts Meeting, 20-21 May 2014
- Share draft reports, end of September 2014
- Finalize national reports, end of December 2014
- Publication and delivery of final synthesis report, September 2015
Appendix: Outline of Country Reports

Academic Promotion of Higher Education Teaching Personnel

COUNTRY

I. Context and background of academic promotion
   - Overview of the national/system context of academic promotion
   - Highlight major milestones and developments

II. National/system policy objectives and their impact on academic promotion
   - Current national and/or institutional policy goals aimed at public research-intensive universities
   - Mapping significant issues related to academic promotion:
     - Status and working conditions: individual rights and freedoms; terms and conditions of employment; terms and conditions of employment of women, disabled, and part-time higher-education teaching personnel; negotiation of terms and conditions of employment; and security of employment;
     - Managerial considerations: appraisal, professionalism, accountability, discipline, and dismissal.
   - Implications for teaching staff morale, behaviour, and campus culture;

III. Structure and criteria for academic promotion
   - Structure: Description of typical career progression and academic hierarchy in public research-intensive universities;
   - Criteria for academic promotion: What are the criteria for academic promotion? Are criteria for promotion differentiated by professional grade?
   - Implications of evaluation criteria: Impact on teaching staff morale, professional performance, ability of institutions to achieve their mission etc.

IV. Evaluation and recruitment procedures
   - Analysing evaluation procedures such as:
     - Evaluation based only on academic criteria;
     - Procedures account for the difficulty in measuring personal capacity;
     - Assessments are objective and criteria and the results are made known;
     - Results of appraisal are considered when establishing institutional staffing needs;
     - Higher education teaching personnel have the right to appeal to an impartial body;
     - Other issues to consider.

V. Concluding remarks