Academic Promotion: The Malaysian Perspectives

Ibrahim Che Omar, UMK
Ahmad Nurulazam Mohd Zain, USM
Aida Suraya Mohd Yunus, UPM
Norzaini Azman, UMT/UKM
Introduction

Academic promotion in Malaysian Universities is characterised by:

i. Promotion from lecturer (DS45) to senior lecturer (DS51) to associate professor (DS54) to professor VK7 to professor VK6 to professor VK5.

ii. Promotion from DS51 to Vk7 may be possible for extraordinary cases

iii. Promotion from VK7 to Vk6 and Vk5 is upon invitation.

iv. All levels of promotion can be decided by the academic staff themselves (blank cheque)

v. Open throughout the year

vi. Rules and regulations set by each university may vary from one institution to another

vii. Highly dependent on the performance/credentials of the academic staff

viii. No age or gender factor and/or political influences/intervention

ix. Promotion must reflect academic excellence

x. Promotion in Malaysia is not filling up vacancy but based on fulfilling requirement and criteria.
Guideline on Appointment and Promotion Exercise to Professor at Institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia (Second Edition, 2012)
Features of an academician

- Continuous contribution in the field of specialization
- Display scholarship through significant contribution with impact to the community
- Demonstrate intellectualism through strategic thinking and actions
- Embrace the culture of scholarship

Scholarship must also include: ethical, integrity, discipline and innovation
Promotion Criteria

* Criteria may be the following: all or less required, may vary in the quantity and quality based on the position or vary with institutions or fields (sciences, medicine, engineering, social sciences) or sub-fields.

* Seniority (experiences) – least important
* Teaching and learning: number of courses or number of credits taught, workload, undergraduate student supervisory, evaluation on teaching made by students
* Publication: quantity and quality (refereed journals, ISI journals), local or international & books writing, chapter in the book, H-index may be used, number of citations
* Research: number of research grants and quantum (RM), main or co-researcher, research impact, patents, technology transfer or commercialization
Promotion Criteria

* Post graduate supervision: Master/PhD, number supervised and graduated, main or co-supervisor

* Academic recognition (national or international levels): examiners of theses, evaluation panels for research grants manuscripts, papers and promotion exercise for lower positions, plenary or keynote presentations, external examiners, awards, visiting professor, editor of index journals,

* University and Community services – chairman or committee members, national or international level

* Consultancy and industrial linkages – numbers, quantum (RM), quality (discipline), number of industries involved

* Administrative roles/contributions to university and country – university leadership, Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Director, Dean, Head of Department or Head of Programme – Extent of consideration.

(Evaluation may be based on quantity, however quality are now given emphasis, including personal qualities)
### Weightage based on criteria (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position &amp; Roles</th>
<th>DS51</th>
<th>DS54</th>
<th>VK7</th>
<th>VK6</th>
<th>VK5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; innovation and supervision</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and Community Services</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic recognition and academic leadership</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy and industrial linkages</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 80% must be obtained before submission of application
- Minimum marks for teaching & learning and Research & Innovation and supervision
- For promotion to VK6 and VK7, achievement after VK7
- Flexibility in implementation – may be decided by the Senate, Board of Directors or University Board of Governance
Procedures for Promotion

- Ministry of Education (MOE) – provide the guidelines for academic promotion

- All public universities follow the general guidelines, however, there are deviations particularly in establishing the set of criteria used in the promotion (institutional autonomy in promote and reward).

- Criteria vary due to requirements of an institution to quickly fulfill the number of positions, or mainly to attract staff from other institutions to join in, as a form of incentive.

- Easier promotion can also be seen in critical areas such as medicine, dentistry and highly demanded fields (preventing brain drain)

- New universities offer higher positions for reasons of increasing the number of experienced academic staff.
General or Routine procedures and mechanism for promotion exercise at Malaysian institutions I

Application forms from HRD. Submission of completed Application forms for promotion by candidates to faculty (Dean): Application forms with CV & evidences enclosed; self-evaluation

Processing of applications, promotion Committee, short listing of candidates/ranking, evaluation made by committee, verify claims made by candidates, identification of external reviewers (Faculty may provide 3 or 4 names of reviewers)

Short listed list – CV and other documents submitted to internal and/or external evaluators (must be appointed prior to submission of document) (For professors, 3 international evaluators required)

Evaluators reports – Committee discuss the quality of applicants based on reports and made recommendation for potential candidates for promotions

Candidates with poor external reports will be excluded and declared “unsuccessful”
Routine procedures and mechanism for promotion exercise at Malaysian institutions II

Candidates with good reports and strong recommendation will be called for interviews. For professor appointment, all external reviewers must indicate positive reports.

Interviewing Board – for professor appointment
(representative from Board of Directors, senior professor and the Vice Chancellor)

Recommendation for successful candidates to The Board of Directors or Board of Governance

Validation of disciplinary problems of candidates

Announcement of results: unsuccessful, KIV cases and successful
Issues and Challenges related to Academic Promotion

In the eyes of academics

- Transparency of the promotion exercise, policies and rules or guidelines, criteria
- Uniformity within institutions on salary scheme, brain drain & brain gain vs incentives
- Inconsistency of criteria, within disciplines, changes with time and management
- Reliability of mechanism and process, including the committees involved and compliances
- Quality academics - promotion must be reflected by features expected of and institution’s reputation
- Large variation between institutions (old and new universities) on the criteria and mechanism for promotion
- Selection based on teaching and research - research & publication inclined criteria
- Impact of internationalization on the promotion exercise, English vs local knowledge

Criteria - highly debatable, biggest issue, strong source of dissatisfactions
**Additional information**

i. Office of Registrar is responsible for providing information through road shows to academics on promotion exercise in their respective institutions.

ii. Deans may or may not be responsible in providing recommendation for any candidates.

iii. Academic Promotion must be part of the institution’s strategic planning for talent management programme.

iv. Unsuccessful candidates may appeal to the institutions for reconsideration to the Appeal Committee.

v. KIV cases refers to candidates who are given time to fulfil certain requirements to qualify or one of the external reviewer’s report indicates indecisiveness. A new reviewer will be appointed.

vi. The process from application to results may vary at Malaysian universities from 3 months to 2 years.
Promotion Exercise for academics who are seconded to government agencies or industries

* Academics must continue to excel in the culture of knowledge and scholarship – academic roles (10-30%)

* 5 criteria used for promotion exercise (70-90%):
  i. Implementation of main job specification (outcomes of job (30-50%)
  ii. Innovation and creativity (20-30%)
  iii. Knowledge generation and skills (20%)
  iv. Consultancy and expertise (5-15%)
  v. Services to the institution where we are seconded (5%).
Promotion Exercise for staff from industries at universities

- Staff from industries who indicates inclination towards academic functions
- Criteria for appointment/promotion
  i. Implementation of main job specification (outcomes of job (10-40%))
  ii. Innovation and creativity (20-30%)
  iii. Knowledge generation and skills (30-40%)
  iv. Consultancy and expertise (5-15%)
  v. Services to the institution where we are seconded (5%).
Features:

i. Open to Professor in the category VK5 with minimum H-index between 8 – 12.

ii. Extraordinary academic achievements

iii. Research and contribution based on the concept of academic based public advocacy with significance and high impact

iv. Recognition in the form of prestigious awards at national and international levels.

Criteria

i. Academic Recognitions (prestigious awards from learned organisation)

ii. Research and publication with high impact for global prosperity (policy or establishment of institution or centre of excellence)

iii. Quantum leap from VK5 to distinguished professor (expert to scholar) – strategic arena or formation of policy,

Procedure

i. Application submitted to Ministry of Education after endorsement by the Board of Directors/ Board of Governance

ii. Application evaluated by Technical Committee which is appointed by the Ministry, who will make recommendation to Selection Committee chaired by Ministry Chief Secretary or Minister
The ideal model/best policy/best practices for academic promotion in Malaysian Institutions (comparable to international practices/standards)

- Will it be good to have salary differentiation between institutions? An Associate professor in University A has the same salary in University B, although the criteria used may vary remarkably (issue of dissatisfaction).

- Competition between universities for excellent faculties should be encouraged, need to devise a mechanism where mobility is about excellence not positions/numbers.

- Role of central agencies (MOE/JPT or JPA) – create conformity and uniformity but excellent focus and academic scholarship.

- Measurement of quality of professors (concept of referred, respect and relevant) – institutional identity.
THANK YOU