Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions

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HEMIS classification	
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1. SUBSTANCE AND FORMAT OF THE PROCEDURE

1.1 The Mandate of the Appointments and Promotions Committee of Senate ('the Mandate') informs the content of this Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions ('the Procedure').

1.2 The Procedure sets out the processes to follow for the appointment and promotion of academics, as well as other matters relating to it.

1.3 The Procedure aims to consolidate all processes that deal with the appointment and promotion of academic staff (C1 staff). Some of these processes are dealt with specifically in the Procedure, while others are referred to by way of links.

2. STATUS OF THE PROCEDURE

2.1 All academic appointments and promotions must be made within the framework of the Higher Education Act and the Stellenbosch University (SU) Statute. Various functions and powers have been appropriately delegated to certain persons and bodies to ensure that the different processes are legally compliant, transparent and fair, as well as flexible and agile.

All academic appointments and promotions must adhere to the Higher Education Act and the Stellenbosch University (SU) Statute. To ensure legal compliance, transparency, and fairness—while maintaining flexibility and agility—specific functions and decision-making powers have been appropriately delegated to designated individuals and governing bodies.

2.2 The Appointments and Promotions Committee of Senate (APCS) is authorised by Senate to establish appropriate procedures, processes and rules to give effect to the Mandate of the APCS. To this end, the Procedure provides a comprehensive set of processes and rules that must be followed in dealing with the appointment and promotion of academic staff.

2.3 The APCS may amend the Procedure from time to time, as needed.

2.4 The APCS may develop further instruments to give effect to the Mandate and the Procedure, as required.

3.   POINTS OF DEPARTURE

By focusing on the following points of departure, the aim is to create a more equitable and inclusive environment for the appointment and promotion of academic staff, thereby fostering a diverse and thriving academic community.

3.1   Transparent criteria and standards

Clearly defined criteria and standards for appointments and promotions are accessible to all stakeholders, including candidates, evaluators and administrators. Transparency helps mitigate ambiguity and ensures that everyone understands what is expected.

Faculties may develop faculty-specific guidelines for academic appointments and promotions, using the institutional criteria as a guiding framework. New faculty-specific guidelines, as well as amendments to existing faculty-specific guidelines, must be approved by the APCS before implementation.

3.2   Managing employment equity and diversity

The SU Employment Equity (EE) Policy and Plan as well as the Code for Employment Equity and Diversity must guide academic appointments and promotions.

Each faculty must develop and implement their own EE plan that aligns with the institutional plan.

3.3   Diverse and representative committees

Selection committees must reflect diversity in terms of race, gender, discipline, seniority and, where possible, disability. Such diversity helps ensure a broad range of perspectives and reduces the likelihood of bias. In certain instances, committees should also include members from outside the immediate department or institution to provide external perspectives.

3.4   Training and development

It is important to provide training to committee members on themes such as implicit bias, conflict-of-interest management and inclusive evaluation practices. This training should be

made mandatory and be regularly updated to keep pace with best practice in academic evaluation.

3.5 Conflict-of-interest policies

Members of selection committees are required to disclose any relationships or connections between committee members and candidates. Faculty-based academic appointments and promotions committees (AAPCs) must manage potential conflicts of interest.

3.6 Candidate support and feedback

Provide candidates with clear guidelines on the evaluation process and opportunities for feedback on their applications and promotion outcomes. Constructive feedback can help candidates improve their performance and understand the decision-making process.

3.7 Equity in opportunities

Ensure that opportunities for advancement are equitable, irrespective of demographic group or career stage. Monitor and address any disparities in rates of appointment and promotion through proactive measures such as mentorship programmes and targeted support.

3.8 Engagement and consultation with academic staff

Engage the academic community to ensure that policies reflect diverse perspectives and needs.

3.9 Continuous review and improvement

Regularly review processes for appointment and promotion to assess the extent to which they promote procedural fairness, effectiveness and efficiency, maximum participation, employment equity, and inclusivity. Use feedback and data to adjust and improve processes over time.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACULTY AAPCs

The faculty AAPCs play a crucial part in the various processes described in this Procedure.

4.1 Roles of the AAPC

4.1.1   The AAPC handles all academic appointments and promotions at faculty level *(including those at job levels 9 to 5, from junior lecturer/researcher to full professor)*.

4.1.2   The AAPC makes recommendations via the APCS to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, who has been delegated by Council to consider and approve such recommendations. Appendix A outlines the different approval routes.

4.1.3   The AAPC obtains advice and support from Human Resources.

Where an AAPC's recommendations deviate from the EE obligations of the relevant faculty staff plan, the AAPC must provide a full explanation to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor who is the approving authority. The APCS, in the case of professorial staff and the consultative body, in the case of lecturers, may express their support or otherwise of the explanation, in their recommendations.

4.2   Responsibilities of the AAPC

The AAPC makes recommendations to the APCS with regard to the following:

4.2.1   The recruitment and selection of new staff in line with the appointment criteria, the faculty's staff and EE plans and the relevant appointment procedure

4.2.2   The faculty's nominations for promotion, as put forward by departments

4.2.3   The conferment of an academic rank

4.2.4   The appointment of departmental and divisional heads (which accommodates various routes of appointment)

4.2.5   Extraordinary and honorary academic appointments

4.2.6   The bestowal of the title of distinguished professor

4.2.7   The appointment of vice-deans

4.2.8   The conversion of professional administrative support services (PASS) positions (C2) to academic positions (C1) (see Appendix B)

5.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE APCS

The APCS, too, is a crucial role-player in the processes described in this Procedure.

5.1   Roles of the APCS

The APCS fulfils the following primary roles:

5.1.1   It serves as an advisory body, making recommendations to other bodies or offices.

5.1.2   It serves as an approval body in respect of defined matters.

5.1.3   It serves as an oversight body, monitoring and evaluating the role of AAPCs and other relevant structures.

5.2   APCS recommendations to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor

The APCS makes recommendations to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor in respect of the following:

5.2.1   New appointments, with due regard to the faculty AAPC's selection decisions

   a) In the case of professorial staff, all members of the APCS consider the AAPC recommendation via a discussion board or other electronic means, and their advice is provided to the Rector.

   b) In the case of non-professorial staff, the mandated AAPC Senate member from a different faculty (see paragraph 7.3.5 of this procedure document) provide their advice to the Rector in a separate recommendation.

5.2.2   Candidates put forward for promotion by faculty AAPCs

5.2.3   The conferment of an academic rank

5.2.4   The appointment of departmental and divisional heads

5.2.5   Extraordinary and honorary academic appointments

5.2.6   The bestowal of the title of distinguished professor

5.2.7   The appointment of vice-deans

5.2.8   The conversion of PASS positions (C2) to academic positions (C1).

5.3   APCS recommendations to the Institutional Oversight Committee

The APCS makes recommendations to the Institutional Oversight Committee in respect of the following:

5.3.1   Continued service by academic staff beyond the age of 65.

5.4   APCS approvals

The APCS approves:

5.4.1   the University's criteria for appointments and promotions;

5.4.2   faculty-specific guidelines for appointments and promotions, as well as amendments to these;

5.4.3   the bestowal of the titles of emeritus professor and emeritus associate professor;

5.4.4   the bestowal of the title of distinguished professor; and

5.4.5   any matter delegated to the APCS by Senate.

To enable it to fulfil these responsibilities, the APCS may, where necessary, develop specific instruments that deal with the establishment of institutional as well as faculty-specific criteria for appointments and promotions.

5.5   APCS monitoring and evaluation

The APCS's monitoring and evaluation responsibilities include the following:

5.5.1   Implementation of employment equity in academic environments

The APCS plays an important part in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of employment equity in academic environments. This includes the diversification of academic environments towards achieving the University's employment equity imperatives.

Without limiting the generality of this role, the APCS shall inquire into the recruitment, appointment and promotion of candidates from the designated groups to advance employment equity by:

a)   reflecting on, and making recommendations to faculties regarding, systemic barriers impeding the vertical career advancement of academic staff (with a special focus on academic staff from the designated groups);

b)   considering issues of parity and contextuality (such as the requirements of different positions) in the AAPCs' recommendations about academic appointments and promotions; and

c)   monitoring and evaluating progress with the implementation of institutional EE plans for academic environments. To this end, academic environments will be required to submit biannual progress reports to the Director: EE. Contextual factors such as joint appointments should be taken into consideration. The APCS will consider the consolidated qualitative and quantitative reports from the Director: EE and provide its input for a consolidated report from the Director: EE to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor.

5.5.2   Consistent application of the University's appointments and promotions criteria

Based on an assessment of recommendations made to it, the APCS shall advise the Rector and Vice-Chancellor on whether candidates for academic appointments and promotions possess the appropriate competencies required for their positions. This includes evaluating qualifications, experience and contributions to the field to ensure that candidates meet the specific academic and professional standards expected by the University.

The APCS shall also make recommendations to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor regarding the applicable guidelines for various appointments and promotions.

5.5.3   Review and improvement of policies and procedures

The APCS shall regularly review and recommend improvements to policies and procedures relating to academic appointments and promotions. This involves staying up to date with best practice, emerging trends and feedback from faculties to continuously enhance the effectiveness and fairness of the appointments and promotions process. The APCS shall determine how often such reviews are necessary, and the way in which these will be conducted.

When conducting any review, the APCS will engage with all stakeholders in an appropriate manner, consider any inputs, and make recommendations to Senate where Senate has the authority to decide on any changes. Where the APCS itself has the authority to approve changes to procedures, guidelines and instruments, it may only do so after it has provided all stakeholders an opportunity to engage on the proposed changes.

6.   ROLE OF THE RECTOR AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

6.1   The Rector and Vice-Chancellor chairs the APCS.

6.2   The Rector and Vice-Chancellor has been delegated by Council to approve all academic appointments and promotions, as recommended by the APCS.

6.3   The Rector and Vice-Chancellor has been delegated by Senate to approve the following matters, as recommended by the APCS:

6.3.1   New academic appointments

6.3.2   The conferment of an academic rank, considering the faculty AAPC's input

6.3.3   The appointment of departmental and divisional heads

6.3.4   Academic promotions

6.3.5   Extraordinary and honorary academic appointments

6.3.6   The appointment of vice-deans

6.3.7   Conversion of PASS positions (C2) to academic positions (C1).

7.   COMPOSITION OF AAPCs

7.1   Each faculty and Type 3 academic entity (school) must constitute an AAPC as a subcommittee of the APCS.

7.2   A faculty AAPC must reflect diversity based on factors such as race, gender and disability.

7.3   The faculty AAPC must be constituted as follows:

7.3.1   The faculty dean (or designate), as chair for all academic appointments and promotions

7.3.2   One or more vice-deans

7.3.3   Two chairs of academic departments or disciplines, elected by the members of the faculty board

7.3.4   One non-professorial academic staff member

7.3.5   An academic member of Senate from another faculty may act as the consultative body as envisaged by the Institutional Statute and the Higher Education Act in the appointment and promotion of academics. This is in addition to other roles as a member of the AAPC. An academic member of Senate appointed pursuant to this provision, is mandated to act as the consultative body, without the need for further formalities.

7.3.6   The Human Resources practitioner for the specific faculty (in an advisory capacity)

7.3.7   A C1 EE representative for the faculty, with the mandate to contribute to the AAPC's recommendation report to the APCS

7.3.8   Where relevant, additional internal or external members with voting rights

7.4   The AAPC for schools must reflect diversity based on factors such as race, gender and, where possible, disability. It must be constituted as follows:

7.4.1   The director of the school

7.4.2   A dean or another school director

7.4.3   Two chairs of academic departments or disciplines, or a director from another Type 1, 2 or 3 entity

7.4.4   A discipline-specific member from the professorial staff

7.4.5   Any additional member(s) on the advice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies as well as the director of the school

7.4.6   An EE representative of the school who is not a member of the management team

7.4.7   The Human Resources practitioner for the specific environment (in an advisory capacity)

7.4.8   Where relevant, additional internal or external members with voting rights

7.5   Faculties and schools may, depending on their specific context, expand their AAPCs with additional discipline-specific members from either the faculty concerned, or other SU environments, or other universities, partner employers and experts.

7.6   Faculties and schools determine the term of office of members of their AAPCs.

7.7   Where faculties do not have a procedure to deal with unsuccessful applications for promotion, the guideline contained in Appendix C must be followed.

8.   CODIFICATION OF ALL PROCEDURES, RULES, PROCESSES AND GUIDELINES

8.1   This Procedure incorporates all other procedures, guidelines and rules relating to academic appointments and promotions. Such other documents must be read in conjunction with the Procedure, and in the event of conflicting content, the Procedure shall prevail.

8.2   The APCS is mandated to approve and implement any measure to address any situation not covered by the Procedure, but only in so far as it relates to academic appointments and promotions.

8.3   The APCS may, if required, establish protocols, practice notes, instruments, forms and templates, and standard operating procedures.

8.4   The APCS must review the regulatory framework in respect of academic appointments and promotions at least every three years.

Appendix A

Academic appointment categories: Draft		
Appointment type	**Authority of approval**	**Comments**
Professor	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS via SharePoint	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Associate professor	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS via SharePoint	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Distinguished professor	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, upon recommendation of APCS	Procedure for the Appointment and Re-Appointment of Distinguished Professors
Senior lecturer	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Lecturer	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Junior lecturer	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Chief researcher	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Senior researcher	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Researcher	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Junior researcher	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Procedure for Academic Appointments and Promotions (under revision)
Academic rank (professorial levels)	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS via SharePoint	
Academic rank (lecturer levels)	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	
Adjunct (professorial levels)	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS via SharePoint	Rules on the Appointment of Adjunct Lecturers
Adjunct (lecturer levels)	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Rules on the Appointment of Adjunct Lecturers
Extraordinary appointments (all levels)	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Rules for Extraordinary Appointments and for the Appointment of Honorary

		Professors and Research Fellows
Honorary professor	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Rules for Extraordinary Appointments and for the Appointment of Honorary Professors and Research Fellows
Research fellow	DVC: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies	Rules for Extraordinary Appointments and for the Appointment of Honorary Professors and Research Fellows
Emeritus professor and emeritus associate professor	APCS, as delegated by Senate	Rules and Procedures for Conferment of Emeritus Professorships and Emeritus Associate Professorships
Vice-dean	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, after consulting APCS	Rules on the appointment and of Vice –Deans and Acting Deans
Executive head of department	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, as delegated by Council, upon receiving recommendation from APCS	Rules for the Appointment of Executive Heads
Head of department/ division	APCS, upon recommendation of electoral college	Rules for the Appointment of Departmental Chairs; Rules for the Appointment of Acting Departmental Chairs; Rules for the Appointment of Divisional Heads: FMHS
Conversion of PASS to academic (professorial levels)	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, upon recommendation of APCS	
Conversion of PASS to academic (lecturer levels)	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, upon recommendation of APCS	
Continuation of service beyond the age of 65 – academic staff	APCS considers nomination against criteria and makes recommendation to Institutional Oversight Committee (IOC)	Regulation for Appointment and/or Continuation of Service after the age of 65

Appendix B

Conversion of professional academic support services positions (C2) to academic positions (C1)

Stellenbosch University is committed to the career progression of its staff in both academic and professional academic support services (PASS) environments. For some staff members, conversion of their positions from PASS to academic, coupled with appropriate education and development opportunities, constitutes a mode of career progression. These guidelines for conversion are to be read, among others, within the framework of career progression. Naturally, the particular environment's needs are also a crucial criterion for considering conversion.

1. Criteria for conversion of PASS positions (C2) to academic positions (C1)

The following guidelines are applied when conversions from C2 positions to C1 positions are considered:

- Operational requirements – Do the objectives of the department or faculty necessitate an academic position?
- Staff/employment equity plan and budget – Can the department accommodate an academic position?
- Job activities of the incumbent – Is the work that the incumbent performs predominantly of an academic nature?
- Does the incumbent qualify to be considered for an academic position if measured against the institutional and faculty-specific criteria for academic appointment and promotion? The level of the C1 position is initially determined by the relevant faculty's Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee (AAPC).

2. Process for conversion of PASS positions (C2) to academic positions (C1)

- Conversions must be considered and approved as per the academic appointments process.
- The AAPC recommends to the APCS, who, in turn, recommends to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor for approval.

3. Lecturer positions in relation to researcher positions

C2 positions may be converted to C1 positions at either lecturer levels or researcher levels. The same guidelines (generic or faculty-specific) are used in both instances.

Job levels of lecturer positions in relation to researcher positions:

Job level 9: Junior lecturer/Junior researcher

Job level 8: Lecturer/Researcher

Job level 7: Senior lecturer/Senior researcher

Job level 6: Associate professor/Chief researcher*

Note: A chief researcher does not receive the academic title of professor when appointed/promoted. The academic title of associate professor or full professor can be conferred to the incumbent in a personal capacity. The appointment, however, will still be as chief researcher. Should faculties wish to award the academic rank of professor or associate professor, a separate motivation should be submitted to the APCS.

Appendix C

Procedural Challenges Against an Unsuccessful Promotion

This process provides a streamlined approach for employees to challenge an unsuccessful promotion application. All challenges will be reviewed by a designated Faculty Promotion Review Panel who must ensure a fair and timely outcome. This review will be limited to challenges of any errors or omissions in the assessment process and will not consider the merit of the decision.

1. Submitting a Challenge

An employee whose promotion application has been denied at the Faculty Academic Appointments and Promotion (AAPC) level, may challenge the decision.

Step 1: Written Challenge Submission

The employee must submit a formal written challenge within **five (5) working days** of receiving the promotion decision. It must be submitted via email to the chairperson of the Faculty AAPC.

The challenge must include:

- Specific reasons for disagreement with the decision pertaining to any errors or omissions in the assessment process.
- Additional relevant supporting documentation, if applicable.

The challenge must be brief and no more than three (3) written pages.

2. Review by Faculty Promotion Review Panel

Step 2: Review and Deliberation

The Faculty AAPC can call for nominations or appoint of its own accord, a panel who will review unsuccessful promotion challenges. The Faculty AAPC can decide to have a fixed Faculty Promotion Review Panel ('the Review Panel") or to constitute

ad-hoc panels as the need arises, that is, when a challenge is brought. The Review Panel should consist of no less than three (3) persons who are senior academics. At least one member of the Review Panel should be from another Faculty.

No person who was party to the decision not to promote the employee, can be a member of the Review Panel. All other potential or actual conflicts of interests must be managed accordingly.

The Review Panel, comprising senior academic staff and an independent representative, will review the challenge. The panel may seek additional information from the applicant, the Faculty AAPC, or other relevant parties.

Step 3: Decision

The panel will convene and issue a final decision within **ten (10) working days** of receiving the challenge. The panel may:

- Uphold the original decision, providing a clear rationale.
- Overturn the decision and support the promotion.

The outcome will be communicated in writing to the employee by the chair of the AAPC.

3. Finality of Decision

The decision made by the Review Panel is final within the institution's internal processes.

If the promotion remains denied, the employee may elect to refer a dispute to the CCMA.

4. No Retrospective Promotions

If a promotion is granted following a challenge, it will only take effect from the date of the final decision.

No backdated benefits or salary adjustments will apply.