

Academic Staff Development Policy

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With the approval by Senate and Council of criteria for ad hominem promotion on 2 July 1997, the procedures which have been proposed to implement the [staff development policy \(approved in November 1995\)](#) and the ad hominem promotion procedures (approved in April 1997) can now be put into immediate effect.

The document "Implementation of Staff Development Policies", and its annexures (as listed above), summarises the complete package of procedures, and academic staff are urged to familiarise themselves with the proposals. Information on faculty specific guidelines for extended CV's or portfolios, and faculty specific promotion procedures, are available in the latest Principal's Circular (06/97) or in Faculty Offices, and staff are also asked to make themselves familiar with these.

Two aspects of the proposal will be put into effect immediately. These are the development interviews between staff and Heads of Department, and the ad hominem promotion round which was delayed from the first to the second semester. Deans will shortly be calling for nominations or applications for ad hominem promotion up to the rank of full professor.

The Panel of Counsellors referred to in the description of procedures will be announced at the beginning of the second semester.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Introduction

Proposals for the implementation of the series of decisions that were approved in December 1995 by Senate and Council under the broad heading of Staff Development Policies are now in place.

This document is intended to provide background information on the proposed procedures.

An important feature of the system is the proposals which were approved by Senate and Council in March/April 1997 and which are attached as [Annexure 1](#). This proposal sets out procedures for staff recruitment and promotion. There are two important recommendations within these procedures:

- posts which become vacant through resignation or retirement must be filled at the entry level unless the faculty concerned provides a motivation to the appropriate working group of the Strategic Planning Committee for advertising the post at a more senior level;
- the ad hominem promotion system will be implemented more consistently and objectively; ad hominem should be on personal merit rather than competitive, and the criteria for promotion to full professor should be more consistent with those for appointment at professorial level.

The consequences of these proposals, if they are accepted by Senate and Council, are that the primary route for staff to advance through the hierarchy will be through ad hominem promotion rather than through application as internal candidates for advertised posts. The criteria for promotion and the criteria for appointment for an advertised post should be broadly similar, right up to the level of full professor. Each staff member should be promoted at the time that they can show that they qualify for promotion; the notion of annual fixed amounts for promotion will be discarded, so that there will no longer be competition for a limited number of promotion slots.

Staff Development Policy

The central feature of the November 1995 policy was the notion that each staff member should annually review his/her own activities with their Head of Department. The policy also spelled out the responsibilities of Heads with respect to the career development and opportunities open to staff members.

The present proposals suggest that these reviews should take place each year in the period between 1 June and the end of the mid-year vacation. The purpose of doing this over a particular period is in part to ensure that a regular time is recognised for the reviews to take place, and in part to provide the opportunity to link the review to performance assessments of various kinds **when these are necessary**. This provides the opportunity to focus all these activities at one time of the year, with the benefit that heads and academic staff will not be asked to provide such assessments at various times of the year as at present.

The kinds of performance assessments which may arise are assessments for barrier notches, assessment for ad hominem promotion, assessment for merit awards for professors and associate professors, and assessments for augmentations which are based on merit. Most of these exercises have taken place in the second half of the year, the exception being ad hominem promotion; GPC has agreed to move the ad hominem promotion meetings to the second semester to fit in with the proposed procedures.

The agenda of annual review between Heads and individual staff members will clearly depend significantly on the staff member involved. The review process for a senior professor of long standing and a newly appointed junior staff member will focus on different topics. In addition, the nature of the activities of the faculty and indeed the department will also be a factor. [Annexure 2](#) gives a guideline for the kinds of topics which might be discussed; this would be adapted to the needs of the Department.

It is suggested that the annual review should take place in the context of a staff member's portfolio (or, if preferred, an extended c.v.). A guideline for the content of a portfolio will be provided for each faculty in a faculty specific form. The portfolio should cover all work, including extension and private work as well as teaching, research and departmental and university contributions. The portfolio is intended to be updated on an annual (or more frequent) basis, and not recreated each year. The purpose of the portfolio or extended c.v. is specifically to encourage the inclusion of material which demonstrates the staff member's activities in teaching.

Accomplishment in teaching, and the scholarship of teaching, must be given proper recognition.

The role that Heads of Department play in the process is critical, particularly in the encouragement and guidance of junior staff and staff in developmental posts. To assist in this, the University will institute a series of short courses for Heads, Deans and section heads on a regular basis. A significant part of these courses will focus on the responsibilities which Heads have, and sensitivities which they should develop, towards the needs of academic staff in their departments.

Performance Assessment

Performance assessment will not form part of the annual review exercise unless there is a need for it to do so. It is only when the Head of the Department will be called upon to make a recommendation based on performance, generally for one of the purposes referred to above, or when the Head is concerned about inadequate performance on the part of a staff member, that the issue of assessment will arise. It should be noted that the various exercises in which merit is a criterion are voluntary; staff members who do not wish to be assessed, or who do not wish to be assessed at that time, may decline to be assessed and therefore not be a candidate for a merit award, a barrier notch increase, an augmentation where appropriate, or a promotion.

Where, however, the staff member does wish to be considered, and the Head in consequence has a responsibility to make an assessment and report it to the relevant committee, the review will give the opportunity for the staff member to bring to the attention of the Head of Department any special features, and will also give an opportunity for the staff member to explore what the result of the assessment would be. In particular, there will be the opportunity to explore areas of

strength and weakness, and the opportunity to discuss what an appropriate assessment rating would be in his or her case.

It is for this purpose that the proposals put forward a framework for a set of criteria which could be used to give a degree of consistency across the university. The framework consists of a list of attributes in the areas of teaching, research and university contributions (including administration, professional contributions, extension work) by which levels of performance and achievement can be recognised. The list of attributes is adapted for each faculty. There is a scale attached to the list of attributes which serves to provide a set of milestones; it must be emphasised that this "measure of distance travelled along the development path" is simply a guideline, and that judgement needs to be exercised in addition to the use of the list of attributes. This method has been used in the Faculty of Science with success. It provides a more objective set of criteria in making comparisons from candidate to candidate, and from year to year, and will assist individual staff members in guiding their career path and development. Again, it should be emphasised that these criteria must be adapted to each faculty, so that the criteria are appropriate, and that the criteria will only be used at the wish of the staff member, when he or she wishes to be considered for an award of some kind, or at the request of the Head of Department when issues of poor performance are raised.

One question which has arisen in this context is that of the period which an assessment covers. In mathematics there is a concept referred to as a convolution integral. An integral implies a sum. However, a convolution integral has a kernel which weights recent events more heavily than those further in the past in computing the sum; it introduces the idea of a fading memory. This is what the assessment should cover. It is not only the last year's work, but an assessment of a career in which recent performance is weighted more heavily than past performance.

A second question is that of the balance between the groups of attributes; this is a question which each Faculty must resolve. Should, for example, a professorship be conferred on a candidate who excels in research but is a poor teacher and makes no administrative or professional contribution? Or should promotion to professor, when the candidate's greatest strength is research, require also at least competence in teaching and the ability to provide academic leadership in his or her discipline?

A third question is the way in which the criteria are used for newly appointed staff. While some newly appointed staff will already have partly or fully developed academic careers, many staff will be joining UCT at the entry level, or be making a career switch from a professional or business position. In such cases it would seem clear that no attempt should be made to apply the criteria until the new staff member has been in the UCT post for at least a three year period.

Another part of the system is a proposal which was approved by Senate and Council in 1996 regarding payment for cross departmental teaching and private work. This proposal noted the concern about private work, and teaching in other departments for additional income (whether taken as income or placed in a research account), in relation to teaching loads and workloads in different areas of the university. It was proposed that Deans should meet annually with Heads, including two outside Deans, to discuss the issues of a teaching load norm and workload norm in the Faculty. The two outside deans provide a means of keying any one faculty into others. The authority to approve private work (including cross departmental teaching) has been delegated to Deans, and they would use the experience of this meeting to ensure that private work is approved only when the individual staff member is carrying an appropriate load. While this will add some additional procedures at the faculty level, it can be best handled where there is a more intimate knowledge of what is being done, and help allay widespread concern that there are areas of the university where issues such as research or other university contributions are neglected in favour of income-generating private work or teaching. As importantly, the meetings will contribute towards the understanding of a fair teaching load and work load within and across faculties.

The process of self assessment is a difficult one, and it is appreciated that individual staff members do not always feel comfortable in discussing issues of their own development with senior colleagues who are, or who may be in future, in line management relation to them. For this purpose, the Staff Development Policy of 1995 proposed a Panel of Counsellors who would be available to staff members to discuss individual development issues in confidence. Such a panel has already been formed, made up of senior staff members throughout the university who will advise and reflect on broad developmental issues. In addition, a second mechanism will be set up

to advise on teaching and curriculum development; precisely how this mechanism should operate is being considered by a CUE subcommittee.