Botswana Open
University

POLICY, CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROMOTION AND APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

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POLICY, CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROMOTION AND APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

1. INTRODUCTION

The Botswana Open University (BOU) is an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution dedicated to empowering lifelong learners. To expand access and flexibility, it is increasingly using on-line learning for programme delivery, within a blended learning approach that includes regular face-to-face interaction. As a new university with the legacy of a strong teaching mission, it is also committed to developing its research profile. BOU recognises and values its academic staff and their contributions to the University vision and mission. Accordingly, it seeks to provide its serving academic staff with opportunities for career progression through a transparent, evidence-based promotion process. Furthermore, BOU seeks to recruit well-qualified academic staff to vacancies in the institution and to make appointments based on clear criteria and procedures. In this regard the University has formally adopted the policy, criteria and procedures detailed in this document.

2. POLICY RATIONALE

This policy was developed to ensure clear pre-defined criteria and procedures for the promotion and appointment of academic staff, in order to guarantee transparency, fairness and consistency. The criteria and procedures have been benchmarked with those of other open universities.

The first purpose of the policy, criteria and procedures is to recognise meritorious performance of serving academic staff and address their legitimate career aspirations using an equitable, transparent, and practicable system of staff promotions. The promotion system provides benchmarks that enable academic staff to determine their eligibility for promotion and provides procedures to be followed by academics who wish to apply for promotion to various ranks. The criteria serve to guide decision-making committees in the promotion process. The second purpose is to provide a guide for the assessment of external candidates who apply for advertised posts at various ranks. The stated criteria enable the relevant committees to assess applications for appointment.

The promotion and appointment criteria embody performance standards which encourage the development of high quality academic staff who can contribute to the achievement of the academic aims of the University. It is expected that all Appointments, Promotions and Review Committees established by the University Statutes should use this document as a basis for assessing applications for promotion and appointment.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the policy, the following definitions are provided:

3.1 Academic Staff

As provided for in Paragraph 1.3.1. of the University Statutes: "Academic staff means personnel whose primary function includes instruction, curriculum development, preparation of learning materials, instructional design, programme delivery, assessment, quality assurance, student support, scholarship, research and service, and shall include such persons as may be designated or recognised for such purposes by Council on the recommendation of Senate."

3.2 Promoting Learning

The concept of teaching in an Open and Distance Learning university such as BOU is learner-centred and focuses on the promotion of learning. Hence the pedagogical and andragogical activity of academic staff at BOU embraces a wide range of activities including the design and evaluation of learning programmes, the writing of instructional materials, the delivery of all modes of instruction, assessment of student performance, the implementation of quality assurance, and the provision of student academic support. As a general rule, university teaching is informed by sound learning and teaching theories and methodologies, professional and disciplinary expertise, and current research and scholarship in the field, and this is the expectation of BOU.

3.3 Research and Scholarship

Research refers to systematic inquiry that creates new knowledge or better understanding of phenomena with the potential for application to situations or problems which may lead to enhanced social welfare, improved professional practice, innovations, creative works, and other products and services. On the other hand, scholarship entails the analysis and interpretation of existing knowledge and its transmission through publication or other forms of dissemination, towards enhancing human understanding.

3.4 Service to the University, Profession and Community

Service to the University, profession, and community involves initiatives in which academic staff apply and utilise their expertise, as follows:

3.4.1 **University service** entails active participation in governance and institutional activities through membership of statutory and non-

statutory committees, boards, task forces, project teams and other working groups at various levels of the University.

3.4.2   **Professional service** refers to active engagement in professional activities, including participation in professional bodies or learned societies, presentations at professional forums, conference organisation, consultancies, membership of international organisations and so forth.

3.4.3   **Community service** involves utilisation of expertise through active involvement with external communities and stakeholders in capacities such as advisory work for community projects and membership of private and public sector boards and national commissions.

4. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all serving full-time academic staff (pensionable and contract) employed by BOU and to all prospective full-time academic staff.

5. PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC PROMOTION AND APPOINTMENT

The following principles are used to guide and manage all academic staff promotion and appointment procedures and underwrite the credibility of the decision-making process:

5.1   **Transparency**: the clarity and openness to scrutiny of processes and criteria.

5.2   **Fairness**: the impartiality and evidence-reliance of decisions.

5.3   **Consistency**: the consonance of the stated criteria and decisions made.

5.4   **Merit**: the basis of decisions on a candidate's ability and achievements.

6. STRUCTURE OF ACADEMIC RANKS

The University differentiates between two categories of academic staff, the regular academic whose role combines teaching and research, and the research-focused academic who predominantly undertakes research. It uses the structure of academic ranks shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1:   Structure of academic ranks by staff category

Teaching and Research Academic Staff	Research Academic Staff
Lecturer	Research Fellow
Senior Lecturer	Senior Research Fellow
Associate Professor	Associate Research Professor
Professor	Research Professor

Movement between the two structures is possible both horizontally and in terms of promotion, according to the needs of the University and the interests and eligibility of the individual staff member.

7. PROMOTION ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

All serving academic staff wishing to apply for promotion should note and determine whether they meet the following eligibility conditions:

7.1   All full-time academic staff are eligible to apply for promotion to any rank provided:

   7.1.1   They have completed at least two semesters as an academic staff member of BOU;

   7.1.2   They have successfully completed a course on open and distance learning or can demonstrate equivalent knowledge;

   7.1.3   They have undergone training in on-line teaching or can demonstrate equivalent proficiency;

   7.1.4   They have Botswana Qualifications Authority accreditation as a moderator and assessor.

7.2   Academic staff on sabbatical leave or leave of absence are not eligible to apply for promotion to any rank until completing at least one semester following resumption of duty.

7.3   The minimum academic qualification for a Lecturer is a Master's degree or equivalent professional qualification in a relevant discipline.

7.4   The minimum academic qualification for a Research Fellow is a Master's

degree in a relevant discipline.

7.5 The minimum academic qualification for promotion to the rank of Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow and above is a Doctoral degree in a relevant discipline area.

8. GENERAL POLICY PROVISIONS FOR PROMOTION

8.1 On an annual basis, the University may provide serving academic staff with the opportunity to seek promotion to the next rank on the basis of meritorious performance, depending on budgetary provisions.

8.2 The University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in promotion based on meritorious performance; other considerations such as long service are not grounds for promotion.

8.3 The number of promotions made at each rank in any one year is subject to institutional budgetary provisions.

8.4 Promotion to the new rank will normally be effective from 1st April of each year.

8.5 The University reserves the right to promote to any rank, under exceptional circumstances, candidates whose overall academic and professional profile deems them worthy of promotion to that rank, although they might not meet all normal criteria for promotion to that rank.

9. CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION

9.1 The criteria for the promotion of academic staff to various ranks fall into three assessable areas for which evidence must be provided, as follows:

9.1.1 **Promoting Learning**

Assessment of a candidate's profile in promoting learning in the BOU context of ODL includes but is not limited to the following activities:

9.1.1.1 Curriculum design, development and teaching innovations, including conversion of instructional materials into Open Educational Resources.

9.1.1.2   Origination, adaptation, revision and review of courses and instructional materials, including e-learning content.

9.1.1.3   Writing of textbooks and textbook chapters.

9.1.1.4   Delivery and support of on-line instruction.

9.1.1.5   Delivery and support of face-to-face instruction.

9.1.1.6   Preparation of transcripts for and presentation of audio, visual, on-line and other electronic materials.

9.1.1.7   Assessment of learner performance and moderation of assessment instruments and results.

9.1.1.8   Programme/course coordination.

9.1.1.9   Undergraduate and Masters' external examining – number of externally examined courses, programmes, projects, etc.

9.1.1.10   Doctoral thesis external examining.

9.1.1.11   Undergraduate and Master's research supervision – number of supervised students, their levels, completion rate etc.

9.1.1.12   Educational leadership – programme development team leadership, mentorship, etc.

9.1.2   Research and Scholarship

Assessment of a candidate's research and scholarship considers research outputs such as academic books and journal articles, and other relevant scholarly contributions, including, but not limited to, the following:

9.1.2.1   A peer-reviewed article in a recognised journal.

9.1.2.2   A chapter in a peer-reviewed scholarly book.

9.1.2.3   Author of a peer-reviewed scholarly book.

9.1.2.4   Editor of an edited peer-reviewed scholarly book.

9.1.2.5   A paper in peer-reviewed conference proceedings.

9.1.2.6   A conference paper, keynote speech at an academic conference, or editorship of peer-reviewed journal.

9.1.2.7   A book review in a peer-reviewed journal.

9.1.2.8   Supervision/co-supervision of doctoral degree.

9.1.2.9   Research leadership (e.g. research team management, contribution to research training programmes, membership of grant review panel, mentorship).

9.1.2.10   Research grant awarded.

9.1.2.11   Research prize or award.

9.1.3 Service to the University, Profession and Community

Assessment in this area is based on documented and verifiable internal and external activities involving a staff member's contribution to the corporate life of BOU, to the development of his/her profession, and to engagement with the community through the application of their academic/professional expertise. The value of these activities is assessed by the impact that they have.

9.1.3.1   **University Service**

A candidate is expected to demonstrate good academic citizenship and collegial participation and to have an impact on the corporate life of the University, including but not limited to:

9.1.3.1.1   Quality of contribution to Departmental and School activities, including boards, committees, project teams etc.

9.1.3.1.2   Contribution to University governance, including but not limited to assuming leadership roles in committees and working groups, service as Head of Department or Dean, etc.

9.1.3.1.3   Leadership in public events, including graduation ceremonies, public lectures, seminars, etc.

9.1.2.3.4   Contribution to the development and implementation of University partnerships with government, industry, civil society, stakeholders and other educational institutions, nationally and internationally.

9.1.3.2   Professional Service

A candidate is expected to show an impact on his/her profession, including but not limited to:

9.1.3.2.1   Fostering and developing professional networks.

9.1.3.2.2   Showing active participation and impact in activities of professional bodies, including membership of committees, leadership roles, keynote speaker etc.

9.1.3.2.3   Organising professional conferences, continuing education programmes etc

9.1.3.2.4   Editing professional newsletters and other publications.

9.1.3.2.5   Engaging in approved consultancies and submitting consultancy reports.

9.1.3.3.   Community Service

A candidate is expected to exhibit an impact on the welfare and development of the wider community, including but not limited to:

9.1.3.3.1   Generating favourable publicity for the University through external engagement and contribution to corporate social responsibility activities.

9.1.3.3.2   Involvement in community engagement using professional, academic, leadership and management skills for the benefit of voluntary organisations, community based organisations etc.

9.1.3.3.3   Public media engagements.

9.1.3.3.4   Participation in external service activities such as membership of national commissions, private and public boards, committees of inquiry, etc.

9.2   Assessment

The assessment of the criteria will be based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

9.2.1   For the assessable areas of Promoting Learning and Service, candidates will be evaluated using a 5 point Likert scale as follows:

1   *Unsatisfactory* – inadequate performance that fails to meet minimum expectations for the rank.

2   *Satisfactory* – performance that generally meets expectations for the rank but has significant room for improvement.

3   *Good* – performance that regularly meets all requirements of the rank.

4   *Very good* – performance that is marked by high quantity and quality of work.

5   *Excellent* – exceptional performance that exceeds expectations for the rank.

9.2.2   For the assessable area of Research and Scholarship, candidates will be evaluated according to the number of Research Output Points they have acquired and the number of journal articles within that output. The schedule of Research Output Points is contained in the Appendix.

10. ASSESSABLE AREA WEIGHTINGS

10.1 The weightings attached to each assessable area vary between and within the different categories and ranks, depending on Job Descriptions and assigned responsibilities at any given time. It is recognised that there are varying combinations of academic activity, the balance of which may

change over time for any one staff member. Hence committees responsible for promotion will be responsible for assigning weightings to each assessable area.

10.2 Table 2 presents weight ranges of the three assessable areas for various academic staff. These provide a guide for applicants to allocate weightings which reflect their academic focus and employment assignments. The supervisor is required to confirm whether the candidate's allocation of weightings conforms to their job description and actual workload allocation.

Table 2: Assessable area weightings according to academic staff category

ASSESSABLE AREA	WEIGHTINGS PER STAFF CATEGORY	
	Teaching and Research Academic Staff	Research Academic Staff
Promoting Learning	50-70%	10-20%
Research and Scholarship	20-40%	60-80%
University, Professional and Community Service	10-20%	10-20%

11. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR PROMOTION TO VARIOUS RANKS

To qualify for promotion to a higher rank, academic staff must attain the minimum performance standards for the rank they are applying for, as indicated in Table 3 below. The column for Research Output Points shows in brackets the minimum number of journal articles that are required within the overall output score.

Table 3: Minimum performance standards for various ranks

Rank	Promoting Learning	Research Output Points (cumulative)	Service
Senior Lecturer	Good	40 (minimum 3 articles)	Good
Senior Research Fellow	Satisfactory	60 (minimum 5 articles)	Good
Associate Professor	Very good	100 (minimum 8 articles*)	Very good
Associate Research Professor	Good	120 (minimum 10 articles*)	Very good
Professor	Excellent	160 (minimum 14 articles*)	Excellent
Research Professor	Very Good	200 (minimum 18 articles*)	Excellent

* For professorial ranks, 50% of articles should be co-authored with the candidate as first author.

12. CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT

12.1 Candidates for appointment will be expected to meet the criteria and performance standards stated in Sections 7, 9 and 11 above for the rank to which they are applying.

12.2 The University reserves the right to appoint to any rank, under exceptional circumstances, candidates whose overall academic and professional profile deems them worthy of appointment to that rank, although they might not meet all normal criteria for appointment to that rank.

13. APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTIONS AND REVIEW COMMITTEES

The promotion and appointment of academic staff shall be recommended by an Appointments, Promotion and Review Committee as stipulated in the University Statutes.

13.1 School, Institute and Research Centre, and Academic Centre Appointments, Promotions and Review Committees

13.1.1 The membership of these committees is stipulated in Statute XVI.

13.1.2 These committees recommend the promotion and appointment of academic staff at the level of Senior Lecturer to the Vice Chancellor.

13.1.3 These committees recommend the promotion and appointment of academic staff at the level of Associate Professor and Professor to the Senior Staff Appointments and Promotions Committee of Council.

13.2 Senior Staff Appointments and Promotions Committee

13.2.1 The membership of the Committee is stipulated in Statute 6.6.

13.2.2 The Committee considers recommendations for promotion to Associate Professor and Professor and if it determines there is a prima facie case for promotion, refers the dossier to three external assessors identified by the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic Services on the recommendation of the relevant Dean or Director.

13.2.3 Following consideration of reports by the external assessors, the Committee decides whether to promote the candidate.

13.2.4 The Committee considers recommendations for appointment of external applicants for vacancies at the rank of Associate Professor and Professor and decides accordingly.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

14.1 All those involved in the promotion or appointment process or who handle promotion or appointment materials are expected to treat all deliberations and materials relating to applications with the strictest confidence.

14.2 Committee members and others who have access to or are privy to information, deliberations, recommendations, and decisions are compelled not to discuss or divulge such information outside committee meetings.

15. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

15.1 Applications for Promotion

Applications for promotion will be assessed on an all-of-career basis but with a focus on achievements at the current rank. They must contain the following information:

15.1.1 A self-assessment of performance, not exceeding two pages, highlighting the most significant achievements and making a case for promotion against each element of the criteria for the rank.

15.1.2 Latest CV prepared using the prescribed template on the University website and clearly showing achievements in all assessable areas.

15.1.3 Copies of the two most recent annual PMS assessment reports.

15.1.4 The supervisor's assessment and recommendation statement pertaining to the applicant's performance against the criteria for promotion.

15.1.5 A single page optional commentary in response to the supervisor's statement.

15.1.6 An electronic Evidence Portfolio containing the above documentation and relevant supporting information such as student evaluation of staff, external examiner reports, letters of appreciation for committee service, or professional peer recognition.

15.2 Applications for Appointment

Applications for appointment must contain the following information:

15.2.1. A letter of application providing a motivation for suitability for the advertised post in terms of the discipline and the criteria for the rank.

15.2.2. Current CV presented according to the template on the University web-site.

15.2.3. An electronic Evidence Portfolio containing the above documentation and relevant supporting information.

15.2.4 All applicants for appointment will be interviewed, either in person or by electronic media.

16. EXTERNAL ASSESSOR REQUIREMENTS

16.1 All applications for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor or Professor that have been found by the Senior Staff Appointment and Promotion Committee to have a prima facie case for promotion will be sent to three External Assessors identified by the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic Services on the recommendation of the relevant Dean or Director. External Assessors must meet the following requirements:

16.1.1 Assessors must be experts in their disciplines and capable of providing an independent and balanced opinion on the candidate's achievement measured against promotion criteria.

16.1.2 Assessors must hold a more senior academic rank than that of the applicant.

16.1.3 Assessors are expected to have knowledge of the open, distance and online learning environment.

16.2 Assessors will be furnished with the following documents to facilitate the assessment of applicants:

16.2.1 The University's promotion criteria.

16.2.2 The candidate's job profile.

16.2.3 The candidate's electronic Evidence Portfolio.

16.2.4 Copies of four publications chosen by the candidate which have been produced since their last promotion at BOU or another institution.

16.3 Assessors will be required to give an evaluation of the impact of the candidate's published work.

16.4 Assessments will be requested on the understanding of their confidentiality and the sole purpose for which they would be used.

17. Procedures for Processing Applications for Promotion

17.1   A staff member who feels that s/he meets the minimum criteria of this policy and wishes to apply for promotion should do so in response to an invitation for promotion issued by the University in August of each year. The invitation will stipulate deadlines for different stages of the promotion process.

    17.1.1   Applicants shall submit duly completed applications to the Head of Department (HoD) by the stipulated date in order for the HoD to make an assessment and recommendation on the candidate's application.

    17.1.2   The HoD shall submit the application dossier to the Dean or Director by the due date.

    17.1.3   In the case where the HoD is a candidate for promotion, the Dean or Director shall assume the HoD's responsibilities as outlined in this policy.

    17.1.4   In the case where the Dean or Director is a candidate for promotion, the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic Services assumes the Dean's responsibilities as contained in this policy

17.2   The Dean or Director, as Chairperson, shall cause the School or Institute or Centre Appointments, Promotions and Review Committee to be convened not later than the stipulated deadline. The Committee shall diligently consider the application, including the supervisor's report and candidate's commentary. For the rank of Senior Lecture/Senior Research Fellow, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor. For the ranks of Associate Professor/ Associate Research Professor and Professor/Research Professor, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Senior Staff Appointments, Promotion and Review Committee.

17.3   The Senior Staff Appointments, University Promotion and Review Committee shall receive the recommendation of the School or Institute or Centre Appointments, Promotions and Review Committee and accompanying documentation in order to determine the merit of the applications.

17.4   In the case of the Committee establishing a prima facie case for promotion, it shall request the Department of Human Resources to obtain reports from External Assessors.

17.5 On receipt of assessors' reports, the Committee will consider the assessors' opinions and decide accordingly on the application for promotion.

17.6 All applicants shall be informed by the Department of Human Resources, individually and in writing, of the final outcome of their application.

17.7 Finally, the Department of Human Resources shall publish, through official University channels, the names and corresponding new ranks and titles of all successful applicants.

18. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS FOR PROMOTION

18.1 Unsuccessful applicants shall be provided with written feedback for developmental purposes.

18.2 Feedback shall address identified deficiencies and advise on what unsuccessful applicants could do to address these deficiencies.

18.3 Unsuccessful applicants can request for oral feedback, which would be provided by their Dean or Director, in the presence of their immediate supervisor.

18.4 There is no provision for an appeal against an unsuccessful application other than in cases where the applicant has reason to believe there has been a significant procedural irregularity.

18.4.1 All appeals shall be made in writing and forwarded to the Director of Human Resources within twenty-one calendar days of the date of notification of the outcome of the application for promotion.

18.4.2. Applications for appeal must clearly state the grounds for appeal and demonstrate how the perceived breach of procedure affected the outcome.

18.4.3 All appeals will be considered by the Human Resources Committee of Council, whose decision shall be final.

19. PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

19.1 All vacant posts shall be advertised as stipulated in Section 3 of the BOU Conditions of Service.

19.2 The Department of Human Resources will pass all applications received for a particular post to the relevant School, Institute or Centre.

19.3 The Dean or Director, as Chairperson, shall cause the School or Institute or Centre Appointments, Promotions and Review Committee to be convened as soon as possible. The Committee shall diligently consider the applications assessing applicants according to the criteria and performance standards stated above. The Committee shall draw up a shortlist and interview those shortlisted.

19.4 For the rank of Senior Lecturer, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor who shall decide accordingly.

19.5 For the ranks of Associate Professor and Professor, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Senior Staff Appointments, Promotion and Review Committee which shall decide accordingly. External assessors shall be used if the appointment sought is a promotion for the candidate or if the Committee has concerns about the candidate's current rank.

19.6 All applicants shall be informed by the Department of Human Resources, individually and in writing, of the final outcome of their application.

20. RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW

20.1 The Vice Chancellor has responsibility for the interpretation of this Policy, and the Director, Human Resources is responsible for compliance.

20.2 The Policy shall be reviewed every three years or earlier as necessary.

APPENDIX – RESEARCH OUTPUT POINTS [a]

RESEARCH OUTPUT	POINTS PER OUTPUT [b]
Peer-reviewed article in a recognised journal [c]	10
Chapter in peer-reviewed scholarly book	10
Peer-reviewed scholarly book – points per 30 pages of text	10
Edited peer-reviewed scholarly book	5
Paper in a peer-reviewed conference proceedings	5
Academic conference paper, keynote speech at academic conference or editorship of peer-reviewed academic journal	2.5
Book review in a peer-reviewed journal	1
Supervision of doctoral degree to completion (for BOU or an external institution)	10
Co-supervision of doctoral degree to completion (for BOU or an external institution)	5
Research leadership	5
Research grant	5
Research prize or award	5

(a) Research Output Points are only awarded for works that have already been published and not for works in press or with letters of acceptance from publishers.

(b) For works written by more than one author, proportionate points are to be awarded based on the relative contribution attested to by the authors.

(c) The Centre for Research and Innovation will maintain a list of journals and book publishers that are recognised by the University for the purposes of research output, and it will evaluate other journals and

book publishers as necessary (for example, on the CVs of candidates for appointment). The Centre will also determine points for output types not specified in the Appendix.