Some helpful pointers on how to complete your forms for academic promotion (to grade 8 and above)

- Read the form carefully and follow the instructions! You don't need to complete all sets of criteria, just the ones relevant to your case (but so many people don't read the form and follow instructions).

- In your promotion papers you have to show that you meet the criteria set out for that grade, just as you would do in a job application. However, unlike a job application you don't have the opportunity to expand upon your document in a face-to-face interview, unless you are applying for promotion to grade 10. It is very important that your application forms contains sufficient information for the promotion panel to judge that you meet the required criteria.

- Remember that some members of the promotion panel will be academics from other schools across the university, often in very different disciplines (e.g. imagine that you are writing for someone in the Faculty of Arts). You need to ensure that they can understand your text so explain your case clearly and simply. Set the scene, do not use technical terms and explain acronyms etc.

- It is a good idea to have an introductory sentence to introduce yourself (put it in the first part of the form, above the core teaching part). Mention your discipline training, your expertise and teaching topic etc. Two sentences are enough.

- Your CV and application form should complement each other – details about what you have done in the CV and reflections and achievements in your application form.

- Lists of detailed info (e.g. publications, lists of PhD students, conferences attended – who you have done) should be in your CV, not on the application form. You can cross-refer from your CV to the application by, for example, using numbers to refer to specific publications but do not list the publication details again.

- On the application form you need to reflect on your achievements and the impact you have made. Don't repeat the lists in your CV but use one or two specific examples to illustrate how you meet certain criteria. A good format to use to explain an example is the three-part approach: outline what the problem was, what you did about it and what the outcome was. Then finish the story with something like ‘As a result,…” – this will help you bring out the impact of your achievements.

- Tell the story of your contribution under each of the criteria headings - give clear examples of your work as evidence that you have met the criteria. Add enough detail to explain the context clearly and tell a story that everyone can understand.

- Don't waffle. Focus and provide evidence to show that you meet the criteria.

- If you don't write about your work the reviewers won't know about it – don't assume that other panel members will provide evidence for you at the meeting. Take time to consult diaries, notes, and jog your memory to collate important information that you might have forgotten. Take time to fill the forms in properly – often important points will come back to you over time.

- Core teaching – provide details about module feedback. This could be data from questionnaires or specific comments from students or external examiners.
Give specific examples of, for example, innovative teaching, how your research has informed your teaching, how you have used feedback to improve your teaching and what happened as a result of your improvements.

- Core research – explain your research expertise and what you do. Explain the main problems that you address and the research questions you seek to answer. Explain what you have done, what your results were and why they are important – what did you achieve and what was the impact (“As a result,...”). Explain your role in research projects and value of funding etc.

- The panel members from other disciplines probably won't know about important things in your discipline. For example, if you publish in the top journals in your field then you need to tell them that they are the top journals and add the impact factor of the journal. If it is common to have many authors on a paper explain why this is so and explain the role that you normally take in a multi-authored paper.

- PhDs – explain how you obtained funding for your PhD projects, mention PhD publications, prizes etc.

- Core academic leadership – explain your leadership role and what you did, what you achieved and the impact. Give suitable examples at school level, faculty, university or externally, as relevant.

- Enhanced criteria. In these sections you need to add more detail and clearly explain how you meet the topics listed under each criterion. Try not to repeat the basic information from the Core section but expand and add more detail or different examples. Reflect on your achievements. Write about your work, not about generalities. Always explain how your research has made a difference to your discipline – what do we know now that we did not know before you did your research and why does it matter?

- Your Head of School will have to sign off the form to simply agree (or not) that the evidence you present is correct. They cannot not make any subjective comments about your application on the form.

- Seek advice while you are preparing your application. Heads of Schools sit on a lot of promotion panels and can be a good starting point for advice; they can also advise you on who else to talk to.

- For promotion to Grade 10 your forms will be reviewed by experts outside the university, often overseas. They may be roughly in your area of expertise but may not know the details of your work. Again you need to explain things clearly and simply. Tell the story and highlight the impact.

Promotion applications often fail because:

- They don’t contain enough detail for the reviewers to understand what you are writing about and so they cannot make a judgement.

- The text is written for specialists (e.g. someone in the same school) so the panel cannot understand the technicalities and therefore cannot make a judgement.

- The form contains a mass of detail about what you have done but no reflection on what you have achieved or the impact made.

- The text does not match the criteria or the information requested or information is missing so the panel cannot make a judgement.
• The applicant has clearly not sought advice, resulting in a poor application with the above faults.

• People sometimes apply when they have just taken on a new role but this is too soon - you cannot provide evidence that you have made an impact until you have been in that role for a while.

Failed applications normally have to wait one year before re-submission.

Procedures

• Your SRDS reviewer, mentor, Head of School, or others may recommend you apply for promotion or you may be self-motivated – all are fine (but ensure that you seek good advice).

• Download the relevant forms from the University’s HR web site and study the required criteria carefully.

• Complete the forms - application form and CV - and then seek good advice to ensure that you are on the right track. (Your application may show that there are gaps in achievements that you need to fill by completing additional activities before you are ready to apply for promotion).

• Submit your forms to the Faculty HR office. Your forms will be passed on to your Head of School to sign that the evidence you have included in your form is correct.

• HR will arrange the promotion panel, which normally includes the Dean or nominee, Head of School, another member of the Faculty, Faculty HR representative, and one or two members of other faculties (depending on the grade) who have received training for participation in promotion panels. It takes time to find suitable dates for all panel members to meet so do not expect your application to be reviewed as soon as you submit it.

• During the panel meeting each member will be asked if they consider that your application meets the individual elements of the relevant sets of criteria. After further discussion a decision will be made about whether promotion is passed or not.

• The outcome will be communicated to you through a formal letter and more informally by your Head of School, who will also provide feedback.

• For further information about procedures please contact the Faculty HR staff.

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