

## **Procedures for Evaluation of Promotion to Associate Professor**

**July 4, 2022**

### **1. General Principles**

Modul University Vienna is a research university whose goals and mission require that all faculty members continually develop professionally and gain recognition within their respective discipline(s).

Personnel decisions related to reappointment and promotion must be guided by evaluation of the performance of the individual faculty member. The evaluation criteria in all cases relate to the individual's contribution to the University's tri-partite mission of basic (scholarly) research, teaching, and knowledge transfer, plus internal service (self-governance and administration).

The individual faculty member and the University are best served when the criteria and process for promotion decisions are clear as to what are the activities that are valuable and contribute to the missions of the University; the individual faculty member is given regular feedback about the extent of their contributions; that high levels of performance are rewarded with promotion while inadequate levels of performance are not rewarded with promotion.

### **2. Criteria for Promotion to Associate Professor**

Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor recognizes significant accomplishments and contributions to the University's missions in basic research/scholarship, teaching, and knowledge transfer, plus internal service. While a candidate's full record is taken into account, disproportionate weight is placed on the individual's contributions made since becoming an Assistant Professor at Modul University Vienna.

#### **a. Performance in Basic Research/Scholarly Activities**

Research performance is assessed by the following dimensions:

- Demonstrated individual ability to do effective and valued research on topics judged to be significant;
- Demonstrated ability to publish one's research in peer-reviewed academic journals that will advance the diffusion and impact of the individual's scholarly activities to the broader disciplinary community, including sole-authored publications;

- Demonstration of the individual's ability and interest to engage in collaborative research projects with other faculty at Modul University Vienna;
- Demonstration of ability to gain third party funding to support one's research agenda;
- Evidence of ability and motivation to maintain and enhance a high level of research and scholarly productivity *after* promotion to associate professor.

The overall criterion for assessment in research and scholarship is the significance of the contribution to knowledge. An important indicator of this is that the candidate has already made important contributions and provides evidence of *becoming* an internationally known and highly regarded leader in one's chosen area(s) of scholarly research. Thus, while research collaboration and co-authorship are encouraged, the individual faculty member's contributions are central to the assessment of research and scholarship.

#### b. Performance in Teaching

Effective teaching – the transfer of relevant knowledge and know-how from faculty to students – is a central mission of Modul University Vienna. The assessment of teaching performance dimension requires multiple measures. The following are suggested elements to be considered in the individual's assessment as an effective teacher:

- Appropriate course content and course design, including the development of new courses;
- Development of new and innovative teaching materials and methods of delivery;
- Contributions to the development and improvement of effective teaching by other Modul University Vienna faculty;
- Demonstrated skill and effectiveness in classroom presentations and discussion, based upon student evaluations and possibly peer evaluations;
- Contributions to the development of students outside of the classroom including supervision of theses, mentoring, and professional development;
- Evidence of motivation and ability to maintain and enhance effective teaching after promotion.

#### c. Performance in Knowledge Transfer

Modul University Vienna expects all faculty to be engaged with external organizations and constituencies who may benefit from the know-how and other expertise within the university. These can include businesses, NGOs, government organizations, community and advocacy groups. Knowledge transfer can also include providing services and leadership to one's disciplinary/professional organizations, for example serving as an elected officer of an association, as an editor of a journal, or serving on editorial boards. While knowledge transfer activity is less important than high performance in basic scholarship and teaching for promotion

to Associate Professor, the candidate should show some evidence of having the interest and ability to contribute to the university's knowledge transfer mission by having some record of meaningful engagement with external organizations such as businesses, NGOs, government organizations, community or advocacy groups.

The following are suggested elements to be considered in the individual's evaluation in the performance of transfer services:

- Demonstrated individual ability to generate and implement applied research projects funded by industry or government organizations;
- Demonstrated ability to be invited to give presentations to external groups (scholarly or non-scholarly);
- Demonstrated ability to provide know-how, expert opinion, or commentary to external (non-scholarly) audiences in the form of, for example, invited presentations, public talks, commentaries, written publications in newspapers, industry magazines or other public forums;
- Demonstrated ability to provide leadership and service to disciplinary associations;
- Evidence of ability and motivation to maintain and enhance service in the future.

Documentation of activity in transfer services should include a short description of each service, including the name of the organization served, the time period including an estimate of the amount of effort (person-days), and (if feasible) any estimates of impact the service has had.

#### d. Performance in Internal Service and Administration

Universities are organizations that depend upon a high level of self-governance, and hence having faculty who are 'active citizens' in contributing to the common good of the university. Failure of any faculty to serve the 'common good' places an unfair burden on one's colleagues for performing the time-consuming but important duties of self-governance and administration. Elements of service in internal administration include:

- Mentoring students;
- Volunteering to serve on university-wide committees;
- Contributing to the sustainability goals of the university;
- Evidence of motivation in the future to enhance internal service to Modul University Vienna and to serve in leadership roles.

Assistant professors should not be expected to spend a *substantial* amount of their work time in administration in order to focus on building a high level of performance in scholarship and to becoming effective and valued contributors to the teaching mission of MU. However, candidates for promotion to Associate Professors should demonstrate they have contributed effectively to

mentoring students, and serving as active and contributing members of one or more university committees.

### **3. Overall Evaluation Process**

A promotion review is triggered when an Assistant Professor informs the President in writing that they wish to be evaluated for promotion to Associate Professor.

The President will then nominate a Promotion Committee, which will consist of three full professors, one associate professor, and one additional faculty member. The President will also nominate one of the full professors to serve as the chair of the Promotion Committee. The University Senate will vote to approve the President's nominees. One student is elected by the student union to become a member of the Committee. They will participate in all discussions of the Committee, but will be able to vote *only* on the assessment of the candidate's teaching performance.

The committee will have the responsibility to carefully evaluate the evidence assembled about the candidate on each of the areas of basic research and scholarship, teaching, knowledge transfer, and administration. The candidate will give a public scientific presentation at MU that summarizes the candidate's research/scholarship portfolio and reflects on its contribution to the respective area of scholarship. Particularly to help the Committee assess the area of basic research/scholarship, at least three written, detailed, external assessments from recognized leading scholars will be solicited. A minimum of two external assessors' reports received are necessary for the committee to proceed with the evaluation.

*External assessors* will be selected (voted upon) by the Promotion Committee. The candidate will be invited to submit a list of five potential external assessors, but the Committee is *not* obligated to select from among the names on the list. The external assessors cannot include the candidate's Ph.D. supervisor or co-authors. Research collaborators are eligible as external assessors, but have to state in their assessment where and how they cooperated with the candidate, and have to refrain from assessing research output that resulted from such cooperation. Each of the external assessors should be recognized as established senior scholars/researchers in one or more of the respective research specializations of the candidate. The candidate receives copies of the external assessors' reports and is given the opportunity to respond in writing to the assessments within three weeks. The candidate's response (if there is any) will be included in the candidate's file to be evaluated by the committee.

The Committee also has the option of inviting Deans and/or Heads of Schools to provide oral or written *informal* assessments of the candidate's teaching, transfer service, and administration. After considering all of the relevant material in the candidate's file and after internal discussion, each member of the Promotion Committee will assess the candidate across *each* of the four areas

of (i) basic research/scholarship, (ii) teaching, (iii) knowledge transfer, and (iv) internal service and administration, using the following grades: (1) Distinguished, (2) Excellent, (3) Effective, (4) Inadequate. The comparison group to be used for assigning these ratings are understood to be other faculty at comparable research institutions and with similar levels of academic experience. In particular, external assessors will be asked to compare the candidate's scholarship/research record against other faculty at a comparable stage in their academic careers. *As a general guideline, a rating of 'Inadequate' on any performance dimension would be expected to result in an unfavorable overall recommendation for promotion.*

Based upon these grades in the four areas of activities, each member of the committee, except the student member, will vote "Yes" or "No" on an overall assessment of whether the candidate meets the criteria for promotion or not. The student member of the committee can only vote on the teaching performance. The individual committee members' overall assessments as well their assessments on each of the four areas will be documented by the committee chair.

The chair of the committee will write and submit a report to the President summarizing the process followed, copies of the external assessors' evaluations, the results of the grades given for each of the four performance areas by each committee member, and the voting result of the committee members on the overall assessment. All deliberations of the Promotion Committee, including the committee members' summary ratings and the final vote of the Committee, will be kept strictly confidential except in its communication with the President.

The recommendation and a description of the procedures followed by the committee will be communicated in writing to the candidate by the chair of the committee immediately after the committee completes its evaluation and voting. The candidate may initiate a written appeal to the President and the chair of the committee, within two weeks of receiving the recommendation and description of procedures from the committee chair, if they believe there were any violations in the procedure as stipulated in the Constitution. If there is an appeal the chair of the committee will respond to the alleged violations of procedure with appropriate documentation and provide that to the candidate and the President. The President will make a final decision on the appeal and communicate that to the candidate and the committee chair.

The President will make the final decision on whether the candidate will be promoted. In the event the President decides against the recommendation of the committee, they will write a letter to the committee and the candidate providing the reasons for the decision.

Following the final decision, the President will hold a meeting with the faculty candidate and attended by the chair of the Promotion Committee to provide more detailed feedback to the candidate on the evaluation.

#### **4. The task of the External Assessor**

The External Assessor's assessment shall provide input to the evaluation process that is not readily available to the members of the Promotion Committee. The External Assessor is expected to use their knowledge of the respective research specialization to judge the candidate's reputation in this research area and the significance of the candidate's contribution to knowledge of this research area. In particular, external assessors are asked to compare the candidate's scholarship/research record against other faculty at a similar stage in their academic careers. MU expects External Assessors to express their individual assessment of the candidate along these criteria rather than just to report citation numbers and impact factors.

In their written assessment, External Assessors are expected to be transparent about any non-academic factors that may influence their assessment. Moreover, the written assessment should state clearly any aspects of the candidate's portfolio that the External Assessor cannot assess for whatever reason, and it should contain a clear recommendation to MU concerning the candidate's promotion.

The external assessor will be invited to the candidate's presentation.

## **5. The Faculty Candidate's Portfolios**

An integral part of the material to be used in the assessment is a set of portfolios covering each of the four different activities plus other relevant material and information, to be put together by the faculty candidate and submitted to the President and the chair of the Promotion Committee.

The basic research/scholarship portfolio will consist at least of an up-to-date CV, a series of publications that the candidate considers to be the most important in terms of their contributions to scholarship, and an essay that reflects how the individual and ensemble of publications contribute to significant advancements within their area(s) of scholarship. For multi-authored articles the candidate needs to provide co-author statements. There is no specific minimum number of publications, but the collection selected should emphasize publications beyond the PhD-stage while serving as an Assistant Professor at Modul University Vienna. The portfolio of selected articles along with the CV and the essay will be sent to each of the external assessors.

The teaching portfolio will consist of student evaluations, peer evaluations, course syllabi, other relevant material such as teaching awards, and an essay that reflects on the candidate's approach and philosophy towards teaching.

The knowledge transfer portfolio will consist of an annotated list of service activities undertaken, with most emphasis on service during the time the candidate has been an Associate Professor at Modul University Vienna. The candidate should write a statement that describes and discusses the significance and value of the service contributions, as well intentions for future contributions.

The administration portfolio should consist of a list of internal service activities undertaken at Modul University Vienna, and include a short statement of the potential value and importance of the activities as well the intentions for future service.

## **6. Schedule**

The chair of the committee has the responsibility of organizing the evaluation process such that a recommendation can be reached in a timely and efficient manner, but also ensuring that all relevant information is gathered and carefully considered by the committee in order to be able to make a fair recommendation (and subsequent decision by the President). The committee should make every attempt to complete its work no longer than six months from the date of receiving all required documents from the candidate. The President should aim to make the final decision within two weeks from the end of the candidate's appeal opportunity, and within the same time period, to communicate the decision to the candidate.

## **7. Reapplication**

If the result of the assessment is a negative decision to promote to associate professor, the candidate may be re-assessed for promotion. They, however, will have to wait a minimum of two years from the date of the negative decision to when a new assessment process can begin. In such a case, the candidate will receive detailed written feedback from the chair of the Promotion Committee, including excerpts from the reports of the external evaluators, about what areas of performance need to be strengthened in order to increase the chances for a positive re-assessment.