PROMOTION REVIEW EVALUATION COMMITTEE HANDBOOK
Guidance for the Conduct of Promotion Reviews

1ST EDITION
APRIL 13, 2016

Version 1.4

Editor: Dean of Faculty Affairs
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1. Introduction

Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor marks an important stage in an academic career. The criteria for promotion concern the performance in research, teaching and administration while at OIST. There is a need to ensure, insofar as it is possible, consistency in criteria and standards between those promoted to and those recruited as Full Professors with tenure. The procedures and criteria are outlined in Appendix A.

This Handbook is designed to be read by both candidates for promotion and members of the Promotion Review Evaluation Committee (PREC), so that the process is understood consistently. Departure from these procedures requires the consent of either the President or the Dean of Research on the recommendation of the Dean of Faculty Affairs.

Given the importance of the decision, it is essential that the Promotion Review Evaluation Committees follow precisely the procedures outlined in the Handbook, and that the task is carried out objectively and is fully documented. If difficulties are encountered or if there are other questions, these should be addressed through the Chair to the Dean of Faculty Affairs.

The Faculty Handbook states that these Evaluation Committees “are made up of members of the Assembly. These are non-standing committees that are established independently for each individual action”. The PREC will be appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Dean, and the candidate will be informed of the membership of the Committee.

1.1 General conditions

There are a number of circumstances under which the promotion or tenure review date can be moved automatically, i.e. the “clock” is paused. For example maternity and paternity leave, Medical, Extended and Administrative leave (PRP 33.3.5), subject to the provisions of PRP 33.3.9.5.

Normally, the promotion will become effective from the beginning of the Academic Year (September 1st) following the date of submission of the initial dossier by the candidate. Exceptionally, the President may set a different effective date.

1.2 Conduct of the Evaluation Reviews and the need for Confidentiality

Given the importance of the review, it is essential that the Promotion Review Evaluation Committees keep careful note of actions and decisions. Opinions and decisions should be based on objective facts from the documentation, and should not be attributed to individual members of the committee but based on consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Chair of the Committee should summarize and record the different views and hold and record a vote, but not participate in the vote; in the event of a tie, the Chair should vote. The result of the vote should be recorded, and referred to in the report to the President.

It is also essential that the process is completely confidential. This means, for example, that Research Administrators should not attend meetings or take minutes, but may organize meetings. If administrative support is needed, it will be provided through the Faculty Affairs Office. Likewise, requests for letters of reference should come from the President at the request of the Chair.

The review should be based solely on objective information directly from, or derived from, the submitted dossier and external letters. In particular, there should be no formal or informal contacts between the Committee and the candidate. If there is need for clarification or further input, this should be communicated through the Dean of Faculty Affairs or the Dean of Research.

Administrative support for the PREC will be provided by the Faculty Affairs Office.
1.3 Before the Evaluation Review Evaluation Committee is formed

The Promotion Review is commissioned by the Dean of Faculty Affairs. The candidate will have been informed about the date of the forthcoming review by the Dean of Faculty Affairs, a few months before the deadline for submission of the dossier. Given its importance, if there are doubts about the state of readiness for the review (perhaps some crucial piece of work is not yet accepted for publication but might be accepted with a small delay) it is important to discuss with the Dean of Faculty Affairs, the Dean of Research or the President to see whether a short delay should be considered, it is essential that the promotion review process is both rigorous and fair. In such a case, the Dean of Faculty Affairs will review the information available and write a report to the Dean of Research, who will decide if there is a good reason for a short delay and if so set a new, and final, submission date for the dossier. Since there is always ongoing research, and since the review of research can sometimes stretch to years, publications under review cannot be used routinely as a mechanism for delay.

1.4 The Criteria for Promotion to Professor

The Faculty Handbook does not give separate criteria for Promotion to Professor from the criteria for initial appointment as Professor. Both scholarship and teaching are important because the University is dedicated to excellence in both.

Scholarship: The first criterion for promotion is that the individual's scholarship and research ranks among the top 5 or 10 percent in their world-wide cohort at his or her level of professional development for the proposed appointment level. The appraisal of the scholarship will be based on the letters received from the referees, and on the quality of the three nominated papers for review, and their impact and originality.

Teaching and mentoring: The second criterion for appointment is a record of high quality teaching that clearly establishes that the candidate can plan and sustain a quality teaching program. The appraisal of teaching performance will be based mainly on the experience at OIST. Teaching is defined to include the classroom and laboratory, as well as advising, mentoring, program building, and curricular development. In evaluating teaching, testimonials from students, postdoctoral scholars and OIST faculty will be important. As part of the CV and Academic Service Record, the candidate can provide relevant, yet objective, feedback from students attending courses presented by the candidate, and/or examples of mentoring practice. The Dean of the Graduate School and others may be consulted for an appraisal.

Academic Service: Supporting the University in its widest sense through committees and other service work, and the international scientific community through, for example, service on conference organizing committees, editorial boards and peer review committees is an important part of the academic duties. The Dean of Research, the Dean of Faculty Affairs and others (for example, Committee Chairs) may be consulted for an appraisal.

There is no fixed weighting of these aspects. However, excellence in scholarship and teaching is required, and the performance in service work must be, at least, assessed as good. It will not be possible to be promoted if the performance in either teaching or service work is unsatisfactory.

2. Promotion Reviews

The criteria for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor closely resemble those for an initial appointment to a Professorship, and involve an evaluation of both scholarship and teaching. The purpose of the promotion review is to appraise, on the basis of the record while at OIST, the standing and potential in the relevant scholarly discipline, broadly defined, and the quality of teaching and mentoring.
2.1. Initiating the Review

As set down in the Faculty Handbook (Section 3.4.2.3), the review for promotion should take place in the 4th year after appointment. In principle, it is open to Associate Professors to request an earlier review date through the procedure outlined in Appendix B. It should be noted that a failure to be promoted would mean that no new promotion review could take place for at least three years.

2.2 Formation of the Promotion Review Evaluation Committee

Just after the submission date, the Promotion Review Evaluation Committee (PREC) will be formed, as discussed in section 1.3. The Committee will be called the Promotion Review Evaluation Committee for Associate Professor X. Where there is insufficient internal expertise in the field, an external expert might be appointed to assist in identifying suitable letter writers. A member of the committee should be assigned the responsibility of ensuring that the diversity standards for the evaluation are met. The Terms of Reference of the Committee are given in Appendix C. A member of the committee should be assigned the responsibility of ensuring that the diversity standards for the evaluation are met.

2.3 Submission of a dossier by the candidate

By the due date, the candidate for should submit a dossier on a USB memory stick containing:

1. A CV and Academic Service Record on OIST template (Appendix D);
2. A description by the candidate of three of their peer-reviewed papers, together with PDFs of those papers;
3. Names and contact information for 6 external candidate reviewers.

2.4 The review process

It is essential that the PREC complete its task in a timely fashion, typically within 2 months of being formed. This allows time for the proper consideration of the recommendations by the President and the consent of the Board of Governors. This would also allow further input to be gathered without delaying the process unreasonably.

It is important to understand the role of the PREC, which is to gather, review and evaluate the evidence from the letters received, and to make a recommendation based on this evidence. It is not the role of the PREC to add its own judgment on the case under review.

Letters from external referees are essential for an objective process and, in general, carry more weight than internal letters. At least 6 letters from external referees are required for promotion to Professor. The majority of the external referees should neither be close collaborators of the candidate nor have served as mentors of the candidate. When soliciting the opinion of internal or external referees, the PREC should use the sample letters of request in Appendix E.

The first criterion for an appointment is that the individual's scholarship and research ranks among the top 5 or 10 percent in their world-wide cohort at his or her level of professional development. Letters from referees should support this assessment in an unequivocal fashion.

The second criterion for appointment is a record of high quality teaching that clearly establishes that the candidate can plan and sustain a quality teaching program, particularly at OIST. Teaching is broadly defined to include the classroom or laboratory, advising, mentoring, program building, and curriculum development.

The third criterion is the record of service to the University (Committee work, promotion of OIST, selection of students...).
Week 1: Check for completeness

Within one week of receiving the dossier, the Committee must meet and review the dossier to verify that it is complete; if the dossier is incomplete, the Dean of Faculty Affairs should be informed, and the candidate given two weeks to provide the relevant material or correct the submission.

Meanwhile, the Faculty Affairs Office will provide a standard publication and citation analysis from a standard source (e.g. Web of Science), which will be checked by the candidate before being submitted to the Committee. This will form part of the dossier. This is important because it is quite likely that some reviewers will wish to see these and, if they are not provided, will seek them from alternative sources (e.g. the Science Citation Index). This information should be used with care, but can be an important indicator of where to probe in greater depth.

Weeks 2-3: Preliminary review by the Committee and discussion with the Dean of Faculty Affairs

During the first two weeks, whether more information is required or not, the members of the Evaluation Committee should review the dossier. The Chair of the Committee should gather the opinions of the other members of the Committee in one-on-one discussions, and then discuss the case with the Dean of Faculty Affairs.

Week 4: Selection of Reviewers

The next task for the PREC, which should be completed in week 4, is the selection of distinguished experts in the field from whom an opinion will be sought. A minimum of 6 letters is required. Once a referee letter is requested, the action becomes part of the official record. The absence of a response or a refusal to write is a possible red flag: therefore such instances must be understood and recorded. Given the possible implications of refusal or obfuscation to write a letter, great care must be taken in selecting the referees to avoid obviously inappropriate choices, such as referee-candidates who cannot reasonably be expected to give an informed opinion.

The referees should not be co-authors, mentors or close working colleagues of the candidate. Exceptionally, and where this is declared, the field might be so constrained that this requirement has to be abated, in which case the number of letters required might need to be increased to 8. The candidate will have nominated six candidate referees. It is the responsibility of the PREC to decide which, if any, of the candidate’s recommendations they will use. The candidate’s referees must conform to the independence criteria above. Even if they do, while it is convenient, it would be unusual for the PREC to use all six recommendations. Experience shows that the response rate to referee requests is around 60%, so to receive 6 letters, 10 requests should be sent – a letter template is given in Appendix E. Draft letters of request to referees should be sent to the President for dispatch.

At the same time, the Dean of the Graduate School should be asked for a written assessment of the teaching performance, and the Dean of Research and the Dean of Faculty Affairs should be asked for written assessments of the service work for the University. The Committee may also wish to consult with some members of the faculty, students or postdoctoral scholars about the quality of the teaching and mentoring, and Chairs of some of the University Committees on service work; any such discussions should result in an agreed note of the meeting.

Week 6: Follow reviewers who have not replied, or refused to comment

It is important that at least 6 letters from independent referees are obtained. The Chair needs to pursue referees who are non-responsive or have asked to be excused from writing so as to document accurately the reasons behind the action. A note, to be included in the Committee’s report, must be kept of those referees who failed to reply or who replied and refused, with a summary of the reason for refusal. There may need to be a second round of letters to more referees. There should also be a check on the evidence
obtained about the performance on teaching and service work, and a decision taken about whether there is a need for more information to be able to reach a robust conclusion. The Chair of the PREC should give a short oral report on progress to the Dean of Faculty Affairs.

Week 8: Review of letters and compilation of the report

This must be completed thoroughly and quickly.

All voting should be by secret ballot; the Chair should not vote, except in the case of a tie, which usually requires at least one abstention. The results of all votes must be recorded.

The Chair should think carefully about the Agenda for this meeting. All three aspects need to be reviewed – research, teaching and service. The requirements are clear – research and teaching must be excellent, and service to OIST must at least be good. The longest discussion is likely to be about the research and in particular the evidence from the external letters. One approach to establishing a balanced decision may be to take a straw poll on each of these aspects, of the form “How do you rate the performance in research/teaching/service?” After assessing the opinions of the Committee, the Chair should attempt to reach a consensus on whether to recommend promotion. After a thorough discussion of the evidence, the Chair should organize a secret ballot of the members of the PREC on the question “On the basis of the evidence, should the Committee recommend promotion to Professor?” Since a unanimous decision is strongly preferred, it may be appropriate to do this in two (secret) steps; the first being a “straw” poll. If it is clear that the vote is unlikely to be unanimous, the Chair should delay the vote and perhaps adjourn the meeting for further reflection or gathering of additional information.

If the recommendation is to promote, the remaining work of the Committee is to write the report.

If the recommendation is against promotion, the Chair should then ask the PREC to conduct a vote on the question “Are there any grounds for extraordinary considerations that should be taken into account?” If the answer to this is “Yes”, there should be a thorough discussion of these extraordinary circumstances, and the vote on promotion repeated. This is the final step of the procedure.

2.5 The Report

The report needs to make a very clear recommendation, with strong objective evidence in support of the recommendation. The dossier passed to Dean of Faculty Affairs on a USB memory stick with a hard copy of the covering letter contains:

1. A covering letter from the Chair of the Committee, containing:
   1.1. A description of the process, including any consultations with the Dean of Faculty Affairs, the Dean of Research or the President
   1.2. The recommendation
   1.3. A statement about the degree of consensus in the Committee about the recommendation; if possible, the recommendation should be unanimous, and if so, this should be noted, otherwise the number of dissenters and the reasons for dissent should be discussed
   1.4. Extracts from the letters justifying the recommendation
   1.5. Any other relevant observations
2. The original submission and any further information from the candidate
3. The bibliometric summary from the Faculty Affairs Office
4. A list of those to whom requests for letters have been sent and, for those declining to comment, some indication of the reason for declining to comment
5. The letters received
6. A diversity report
7. Any other relevant material used in the evaluation

At this point, the work of the PREC is complete. It is vitally important that the recommendation of the PREC is kept confidential to the PREC itself and Dean of Faculty Affairs.

2.5 After the Promotion Review Evaluation Committee has completed its work
The Dean of Faculty Affairs will check that the dossier is complete and confirm that the proper procedures have been followed and, if satisfied, will forward the dossier to the President. The President will review the letter from the PREC Chair and the supporting evidence within two weeks. If the President agrees with the Evaluation Committee’s report, the dossier will be sent with a covering letter from the President to the Board of Governors for a final decision. If the President disagrees with, or is uncertain about, whether an objective review of the evidence justifies the conclusion, he/she may reconvene the PREC for further consultation prior to reaching his/her decision. The President will forward the file to the Board of Governors with a cover letter discussing fully his/her recommendation. The decision of the Board of Governors will be final.

2.6 After the Board of Governors decision
The President will inform the candidate of the decision.

If the promotion is granted, the candidate will negotiate with the Dean of Research about the continued support for the research unit, based on an updated research plan which must be submitted within six months.

If promotion is not granted, the candidate cannot reapply for promotion for at least three years. The candidate should work with the Dean of Research and the Dean of Faculty Affairs on a revised program for the research unit for at least the next three years.
Appendices:

A. From the Faculty Handbook on Promotion […] Reviews

a) Process of Determining Rank and Tenure Status at Appointment or by Promotion

Appointments and Promotions follow a rigorous process of evaluation, recommendation and review.

[…]

For a promotion, the evaluation and recommendation phase is carried out by an Evaluation Committee.

These committees are made up of members of the Assembly. These are non-standing committees that are established independently for each individual action. In both search and evaluation, substantial input from external referees is required and the external referee input carries the most weight with regard to the final evaluation. The recommendation of the [...] Evaluation Committee will be reviewed by the President, and a final decision made by the Board of Governors.

[…]

e) Promotion: Structure and Membership of the Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee has the responsibility for gathering data on scholarship, teaching, service and other relevant matters. The Evaluation Committee will comprise three to five members of the Assembly with a senior faculty member serving as chair. Evaluation Committees may include external members, but the Chair should be from the Assembly.

Members of the Evaluation Committee should have no collaborative or mentoring relationship with the candidate, although this may sometimes be unavoidable or preferable to other alternatives. Any mentoring or collaborative relationship between the candidate and either a review committee member or a letter writer should be clearly disclosed in the cover letter from the Chair.

A member of the committee should be assigned the responsibility of insuring that the diversity standards for the evaluation are met [link to 1.3.2].

[…]

The outcome of the Evaluation Committee will be a file containing the Promotion Papers and a cover letter from the Chair of the Evaluation Committee,

The recommendation of an Evaluation Committee will proceed through two levels of review. Taken in order they are:

1) Review by the President

2) If this review is positive the file, accompanied by a letter from the President, goes to the Board of Governors for final approval.

In the case of a positive recommendation by the Evaluation Committee, the review process at each stage functions to validate (or reject) the recommendation.

In the case of a negative recommendation by the Evaluation Committee, the review process functions to endorse the negative decision.
B. Procedure for requesting an earlier Promotion Review Date

If a tenured Associate Professor wishes to have a promotion review earlier than the 4th year, they should write to the Dean for Faculty Affairs requesting an earlier review date, and making the case for such a review. This letter should state clearly that they are confident that their dossier is sufficiently strong that the review decision is likely to be positive and that in requesting an earlier review it is accepted that if it fails, no further review will take place for at least three years. The letter should also include a preliminary version of the dossier (CV and Academic Service Record and the references for the three published papers).

The Dean for Faculty Affairs will review the case and then interview the candidate and offer advice. The interview will concentrate on exploring the state of readiness for the review, and whether the candidate has any doubts about the criteria, the state of readiness or the strength of the case. The advice will contain the same warning that, in requesting an earlier review it is accepted that if it fails, no further review will take place for at least three years.

If, after this discussion, the candidate wishes to proceed, they should write again to the Dean for Faculty Affairs confirming their request for an earlier review; the Dean for Faculty Affairs will add it to the list of current promotion reviews.
C. Promotion Review Evaluation Committee Terms of Reference

The Promotion Review Evaluation Committee for Associate Professor X will:

1. Review the dossier and check that it is complete and if not, request the missing information;

2. Form a preliminary view on the strength of the case and if necessary discuss with the Dean for Faculty Affairs;

3. Identify a list of external referees who will be asked for an opinion, and draft letters for the President to dispatch;

4. When sufficient letters have been received, review the evidence and come to a conclusion, preferably unanimous, about whether to recommend promotion to Professor or not;

5. Agree and submit through the Chair the report to the Dean for Faculty Affairs for transmission to the President;

6. Keep the Dean for Faculty Affairs informed about progress.
D. Template for CV and Academic Service Record

Include the following:

Name: [Firstname LASTNAME]

OIST Position Title: [Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor]

Education:
Institution and Location Degree (Year) Field of Study

Postdoctoral Training:
Institution and Location Research Topic (Supervisor)

Academic Positions:
Year start-year finish Title, University or Institution

Other Positions and Employment:
Year start-year finish Title, Organization, City, Country

Honors and Awards:
Year Title of Award, University or Other Awarding Institution

Professional Memberships and Boards:
Year start-year finish Organization or Society

Publications:
Peer-Reviewed Articles
Books and Book Chapters
Abstracts [Past 5 years only]

Invited Presentations and Lectures:

Currently Active Research Support Funding:
Grant number:
Title:
PI name:
Dates of Award:
Funding agency:
Role:

Completed Research Support Funding:
Same format as above

Teaching and Academic Service History (this should be available from the MEXT accreditation application materials)

OIST Graduate University Teaching Experience
• Teaching in MEXT-approved Graduate School courses
- Course Title, Term, Number of students
  - Mentoring of Graduate Students
  - Rotation students

**OIST Graduate University Service (indicate role and dates of service where applicable)**
- Faculty Council
- Curriculum and Examinations Committee
- Faculty Search Committees and Faculty Candidate Interviews
- Student Admissions Committee and Student Candidate Interviews
- University Accreditation and University Planning Working Group
- Specialized University Committees
  - Workshops and Seminars Committee
  - Scientific Computing Committee
  - IT Service and Support Committee
  - Library Committee
  - Common Resources Advisory Committee
  - Animal Care and Use Committee
  - Biosafety Committee
  - Human Subjects Research Review Committee
  - Radiation Safety Committee
  - Safety and Health Committee
  - Other Specialized OIST Committees and User Groups
- R&D Cluster Development
- Child Development Center
- Other OIST Service

**Other (Non-OIST) University Teaching**
- Undergraduate and graduate lecture courses
- Laboratory and demonstration courses
- Seminar and tutorial courses
- Thesis advising
- Other teaching and academic advising

**Other (Non-OIST) University Service**
- University governance
- Academic programs
- Specialized university committees
- Other university service

**Other (Non-OIST) Academic Professional Service**
- Executive or Advisory Boards and Panels
- Editorial Boards
- Editor for Journals, Books, Reviews
- Reviewer for Journals
- Grant Review Committees
- Major Meeting or Symposium Program Committees
- Other Professional Service
E. Sample letter requesting an evaluation for promotion to Professor

Prof. Goldfinger
Address                     Date

Dear Prof. Goldfinger:

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) Graduate University (http://www.oist.jp/) seeks your assistance in providing a written evaluation of Prof. James Bond who is being considered by OIST for promotion to Full Professor in the general area of Discipline. OIST Graduate University has a tenure-track academic structure much like a typical top level American university.

I am making this request on behalf of Prof. Chairperson who is the Chair of the Promotion Review Evaluation Committee. To assist you in this request, I have included a copy of the candidate’s CV and publication list, along with a description by the candidate of three of their peer-reviewed papers and a citation analysis. Your letter will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

In building the faculty at OIST, the Board of Governors and I are requiring the highest level of qualification. Accordingly, we ask that you evaluate Prof. Bond by the standards of a world-leading, international research university. We are looking for confirmation that Prof. Bond has a record of sustained and outstanding scholarly accomplishment compatible with the top 5-10% of his/her world-wide peer group in the relevant area of research.

Scholarship and teaching are the primary factors in evaluation for promotion because the University is dedicated to excellence in research and education. Service to the University and/or the community is also a relevant consideration. The purpose of the evaluation is to appraise, on the basis of the record to date, the academic standing and potential in the relevant scholarly discipline, the quality of teaching and mentoring, and the quality and relevance of service.

Given the inter-disciplinary nature of OIST Graduate University, I would appreciate any comments that you can make regarding Prof. Bond’s ability to collaborate with scientists in allied fields. Comparison to peers in the field would also be helpful to the Committee.

Please submit your signed letter to as a PDF file to Promotion-Review@oist.jp.

Peer review remains the strongest arbiter of high standards in academia. So, while I realize that this request places very significant demands on your valuable time, I am hopeful that you will respond with a letter and I thank you in advance. I would greatly appreciate receiving your response by day, month, year.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Dorfan,
President and CEO