Advancement Beyond the Merit Bar and Accelerated Advancement in the Assistant Professor Grade

1. Scope

1.1. To define the University’s procedures for advancement beyond the Merit Bar.

1.2. To define the University’s procedures for accelerated advancement in the Assistant Professor Grade.

1.3. To define the University’s procedures for an approved supplementary Junior Academic Progressions Call.

2. The Committees

2.1. Probationary accelerated advancement recommendations (from Faculty Final Review Panels) and progression/promotional reviews are conducted by the academic promotions and progression committees. These Committees have responsibility for maintaining an overall consistency and coherence in procedure. They may also make recommendations to the University Council on matters of policy and procedures.

For the purpose of review the work is divided across three Committees.

The Junior Academic Progression Committee reviews recommendations for accelerated advancement made by the Faculty Final Review Panel on completion of probation; conducts the review for Assistant Professors at the Merit Bar, and assesses applications for accelerated advancement at the Assistant Professor grade.

The Senior Academic Promotions Committee reviews applications for promotion to the grade of Associate Professor and for the award of Professor In, and
Professor Of (Personal Chairs). It also assesses applications for accelerated advancement in the Associate Professor grade.

When a supplementary call is approved a sub-committee of the Senior Academic Promotions Committee may be formed (2.2.2 below). The Committee membership is outlined below. The Committee will review applications for accelerated advancement for junior academic progressions under the procedures and criteria outlined in this policy.

2.2. Membership of the three Committees is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2.1 Senior Academic Promotions Committee</th>
<th>2.2.2 Senior Academic Promotions Sub-Committee</th>
<th>2.2.3 Junior Academic Progression Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost (Chair)</td>
<td>Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)</td>
<td>Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer</td>
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<td>Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies</td>
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<td>Dean of Faculties</td>
<td>Deans of Faculties</td>
<td>Dean of Graduate Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members appointed by the University Council (2)</td>
<td>Members appointed by the University Council (2)</td>
<td>Members appointed by the University Council (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members appointed by Non-Fellow Academic Staff (1) / Academic Staff Association (2)</td>
<td>Member appointed by the Academic staff Association (1)</td>
<td>Members appointed by Non-Fellow Academic Staff/Academic Staff Association (3)</td>
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<td>Director of HR or nominee</td>
<td>Director of HR or nominee</td>
<td>Director of HR or nominee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quorum – 6 (excluding HR Director)</td>
<td>Quorum 4 (excluding HR Director)</td>
<td>Quorum – 5 (excluding HR Director)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Term – 3 years</td>
<td>Membership Term – 3 year</td>
<td>Membership Term – 3 years</td>
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</table>

Where any member of the Committee is a candidate for promotion in any year (whether a member ex-officio or otherwise) then that member will withdraw from the Committee for the full year in which their case is to be considered.
Due consideration will be made to ensure both gender and Faculty balance on the Committee.

A schedule of meeting dates shall be published and it is expected that members of the Committee will attend all meetings on the dates listed.

Committees make their recommendations to the University Council and to the Board of Trinity.

2.3. An ad hoc Appeals Committee shall be established to hear appeals arising from the decisions of the University Council and Board. The only ground for appeal shall be failure of any committee to observe due process. Failure of due process is defined as:

- Failure of the Promotions Committee duly to follow the University policy and procedures for the consideration of applications for promotion or confirmation of a probationary appointment;
- Denial of natural justice;
- Biased or inconsistent application of the criteria for the granting of promotions or confirmation of a probationary appointment.

Membership of the Appeals Committee shall be:

- Senior Dean (Chair)
- IFUT/ASA Representative
- One member appointed by the University Council

No person may be a member of the Appeals Committee who is currently a member of the Committees listed in 2.2 above. The appellant may not be a member of the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee shall determine its own procedures and its decision shall be final.

2.4 All Committees shall be fully briefed in the exercise of their functions including the evaluation of academic performance, equity and freedom of information issues. All
Committees shall maintain adequate records including reasons for their decisions in each case.

3. Definitions

3.1. Research is any or all of the following:
- the discovery, creation or critical development of new facts, ideas, theories or processes that advance knowledge in the relevant discipline or field of study or result in works of artistic accomplishment;
- the integration of the above into new syntheses;
- the application of new discoveries, creations, developments or syntheses to activities outside the University that are in consequence conducted differently;
- the publication or dissemination by other methods of any of the above for the purposes of education or informing a wider public.

3.2. Teaching is:
- the conversion of knowledge in the relevant discipline or field of study derived from research as defined above into a reciprocal process of education and learning. It may include any or all of the following:
  - the introduction of the concepts, methods, and subject matter of the discipline or field of study in a manner which stimulates those taught and enables them to engage with the knowledge in a critical and independent manner appropriate to the level at which they have been taught;
  - curriculum design, course management, instruction, assessment, and the creation of a social and academic environment that promotes learning;
  - initiation into research by supervision of dissertations or other research projects at the appropriate level.

3.3. Service to the University includes:
- administrative and management activities at the level of a discipline, school, centre, faculty, or University-wide committee or working party;
- pastoral role as a University tutor;
• management role such as Head of Discipline or School, Dean or University Officer.

3.4. Service to the Discipline or Community includes:
• external examining;
• invited appearances before academic or public audiences;
• organization of workshops, seminars, conferences or other collaborative intellectual activity;
• service to the intellectual infrastructure of the discipline or field of study (editing research journals, conference proceedings, other scholarly publications, or web sites, refereeing submitted materials, etc.);
• contribution to academic and professional bodies;
• contribution to national and international bodies;
• consultancies;
• professional advice to government and public organizations;
• service to the community relevant to the University’s mission statement.

Services unrelated to the mission statement of the University shall not be counted. Activities shall not be double counted. Postgraduate supervision shall be included under teaching. Scholarly publications relating to teaching innovation shall be counted as a contribution to research.

4. Procedures for Application

4.1. Advancement Beyond the Merit Bar

4.1.1. Not later than the end of November each year, the Secretary to the Junior Academic Progression Committee will inform Assistant Professors reaching the Merit Bar of these procedures. Assistant Professors will be required to complete the relevant portions of Application Form B. The Head of Discipline will complete the remaining portion, which will be shown to the candidate before being forwarded with the candidate’s application to the
Head of School for review and endorsement. The Head of School, having
countersigned the Head of Discipline’s report, will send it with the
candidate’s application to the Secretary of the Junior Academic Progression
Committee.

Assistant Professors will not normally be permitted to present for review at
the Merit Bar until at least one full year of service on the staff of the
University has been completed.

4.1.2. During Hilary Term the Junior Academic Progression Committee will
consider the application, will interview the Assistant Professor and may
interview the Head of Discipline.

The Junior Academic Progression Committee will recommend to Council
that:

(a) the Assistant Professor proceed beyond the Merit Bar or
(b) the Assistant Professor not proceed beyond the Merit Bar

The decision of the Committee, following confirmation by the Council and
the Board, will be communicated to the Assistant Professor and their Head
of Discipline and School by the Secretary to the Committee in writing. The
Chair of the Committee or their nominee shall provide feedback to
unsuccessful candidates and make recommendations which may assist them
in applying again.

4.1.3. The advancement beyond the merit bar shall have effect from 1st October
(or next increment due date in line with public sector pay provisions)
following confirmation of the promotion/progression.

4.2. Accelerated Advancement

4.2.1. The Junior Academic Progression Committee shall review recommendations
for accelerated advancement received in respect of:

(i) Assistant Professors for review at the Merit Bar
(ii) Assistant Professors who have attained the 10th point of the Assistant Professor scale, have completed not less than two years’ service in the grade, have been confirmed in appointment and are seeking accelerated advancement beyond the Merit Bar.

(iii) Assistant Professors who have achieved 2 years’ service on the Assistant Professor Scale irrespective of their position on the scale. This criterion will take effect from 1st June 2016, for a period of two years, and two progressions cycles.

4.2.2. Accelerated advancement will only be awarded where especially distinguished performance has been demonstrated. Recommendations for accelerated advancement will be made by the Promotions Committee to the University Council and the Board.

4.2.3. Recommendations may be made by Heads of Discipline as part of the formal procedures required for the Merit Bar Review.

4.2.4. Recommendations may also be made in respect of Assistant Professors at the 10th point of the Assistant Professor scale who conform to the criteria described above.

4.2.5. If a Head of Discipline wishes to recommend accelerated advancement then he/she, after discussion with the Assistant Professor, should indicate the reason for such a recommendation with reference to teaching, research and administration in the form provided.

4.2.6. Application Form B will be used in both cases.

4.2.7. This form will be furnished routinely to candidates at the Merit Bar, and is available on request to Assistant Professors at the 10th point of the scale who believe that they meet the prescribed criteria. The form must be completed by the Assistant Professor and his/her Head of Discipline.

4.2.8. The Junior Academic Progression Committee will interview all candidates recommended for accelerated advancement. The Committee may also, at its discretion, interview Heads of Discipline.

4.2.9. The decision of the Committee, following its ratification by the University Council and the Board, will be communicated to the candidate and his/her
Head of Discipline and School by the Secretary to the Committee in writing. The Chair of the Committee or his/her nominee shall provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates and make recommendations which may assist the candidate in applying for accelerated advancement at the next opportunity.

4.2.10. The accelerated advancement shall have effect from 1st October (or next increment due date in line with public sector pay provisions) following confirmation of the promotion/progression.

4.3. Approved Supplementary Call

4.3.1. The Senior Academic Promotions Sub-Committee shall review recommendations for accelerated advancement received in respect of:

(i) Assistant Professors who have achieved 2 years’ service on the Assistant Professor (Lecturer) Scale irrespective of their position on the Assistant Professor scale.

4.3.2. The Junior Academic Progressions Committee will, in addition to 4.3.1 above, interview candidates when their application and award will move them through the merit bar.

4.3.3. Accelerated advancement will only be awarded where especially distinguished performance has been demonstrated. Recommendations for accelerated advancement will be made by the Committee to the University Council and the Board.

4.3.4. Recommendations will be made by Heads of Discipline, endorsed by the Heads of School. If a Head of Discipline wishes to recommend accelerated advancement then, after discussion with the Assistant Professor, they should set out the reason for such a recommendation with reference to teaching, research and administration in the form provided.

4.3.5. The Committee will agree the appropriate process for assessment and review of applications. The process will be advised at the time of the call.

4.3.6. The Committee will publish a guidance document on the consideration/application of criteria.
4.3.7. The Committee will agree the appropriate feedback mechanism for the call.

4.3.8. The Committee will agree the role of external assessors reports in the process. Where an external assessor is to be appointed the Vice Provost, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Dean, and other appropriate parties, will seek a reference from an independent external assessor who are internationally recognised leaders in the field of the applicant.

4.3.8.1. The following rules apply to the selection of external assessors:

- they should not normally be current or recent (in the past 7 years) collaborators or co-authors with the applicant.
- they should not be, or have been, the applicant’s PhD supervisor, or vice versa.

4.3.8.2. Applicants will not be involved in the selection of external assessors.

4.3.8.3. The independent role of External Assessors is to focus on research and scholarship, contribution to discipline and international profile. They assess and differentiate the applicant in their field and should comment on their standing in their field.

4.3.9. The Committee will agree, where applicable, the methodology of scoring at the commencement of the call. All Committees members will be briefed.

4.3.10. Where a scoring methodology is agreed the following weightings will apply:

- Teaching - 40%
- Research – 40%
- Contribution to the College and Discipline/Community – 20%

4.3.11. The decision of the relevant Committee, following its ratification by the University Council and the Board, will be communicated in writing to candidates and their Head of Discipline and School by the Secretary to the Committee. The Chair of the Committee or their nominee shall provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates and make recommendations which may assist the candidate in applying for accelerated advancement at the next opportunity.
4.3.12. The accelerated advancement shall have effect from 1st October (or next increment due date in line with public sector pay provisions). The date of implementation will be set out in the letter of confirmation.

5. Criteria

5.1 Assistant Professors who have been confirmed in post but who have not reached the Merit Bar work increasingly independently in research and teaching and should be making a contribution to curriculum development. They may be supervising research students. Their own research should be beginning to produce high quality outcomes. They should not normally be expected to undertake the roles of Course, Year or Programme Coordinator. They are normally expected to undertake the role of Tutor and may be beginning to be involved in other activities at University level. They shall not be appointed as Head of Discipline or School, Dean or University Officer. They may be contributing to their discipline or to the community. They should also be developing their own professional competencies.

5.2 Assistant Professors having passed the Merit Bar work independently in research and teaching and should be making a contribution to wider curriculum development. They may be supervising research students. Their own research should be producing high quality outcomes. They may be expected to undertake the roles of Course, Year or Programme Coordinator but not normally at postgraduate level. They are normally expected to undertake the role of Tutor and may be involved in other activities at University level. They shall not be appointed as Head of Discipline or School, Dean or University Officer. They may be contributing to their discipline or to the community. They should also be developing their own professional competencies.

5.3 In order to proceed beyond the Merit Bar an Assistant Professor shall demonstrate good performance in both teaching and research. He/she shall also provide evidence of satisfactory performance of University administrative

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1 See 4.3.6 above for reference to published criteria. All criteria will be published at the same time as the call and should be reviewed by candidates in advance of application.
duties and may provide evidence of contributions to the discipline and/or the community.

5.4 Assistant Professors seeking accelerated advancement within the Assistant Professor scale shall demonstrate exceptional performance in both teaching and research and in contributions to the University, the discipline or the community.