

Draft

BENCHMARK GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

1. Introduction

In furtherance of the mandate of the National Universities Commission (NUC) to set standards and assure quality in university education, and its overall regulatory function, the Commission is desirous to lead stakeholders to develop benchmark guidelines for appointment and promotion of academic staff in the nation's rapidly increasing universities. The goal is to be sure of the competence and quality of all academic staff, which apart from its intrinsic value to the system, guarantees international recognition and respect for the Nigerian University System. Furthermore, the benchmark guidelines seek to make the criteria for assessing the performance of academic staff quantifiable and objective and thus minimise arbitrariness and subjectivity.

There exists at present, a standard national hierarchical nomenclature for academic staff in all Nigerian universities; viz Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer II, Lecturer I, Senior Lecturer, Reader or Associate Professor and Professor. Responsibility and emolument are largely dependent on these defined ranks. While some universities have well-developed guidelines for appointment and promotion to each rank, some, particularly the newly established ones do not. Hence, it is proposed that a national benchmark on appraisal and assessment for the appointment and promotion of academic staff in Nigerian universities be established, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the senate and council of each university. A national benchmark would ensure that minimum standards are maintained for appointment and promotion of academic staff across all universities in the system. This will also strengthen comparability as well as facilitate quality assurance since staff mix is a key indicator in the accreditation process.

2. The System

The benchmark guidelines for the appraisal and assessment of academic staff of Nigerian universities shall be a point-based system. Candidates shall be assessed on a set of criteria and shall be awarded points per criterion. Candidates shall be deemed appointable or promotable if they obtain the corresponding individual as well as the total minimum score.

3. Categories of Academic Staff

The categories of academic staff (teachers and equivalent in the Library) covered under the benchmark are:

- Assistant Lecturer
- Lecturer II
- Lecturer I
- Senior Lecturer
- Reader or Associate Professor
- Professor

4. Minimum Academic Qualification

4.1 All academic staff are expected to have the terminal degree of Ph.D. For academic staff in the clinical departments of faculties/schools/colleges of medicine, the fellowship of the National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria and/or the West African College of Surgeons/Physicians is currently accepted as the terminal qualification, instead of the Ph.D. However, no promotion shall be made to the level of senior lecturer and above even for those in the clinical departments of faculties/schools/colleges of medicine without a Ph.D. from 2025.

4.2 Under no circumstance should a candidate with a first degree, be appointed to any position higher than Graduate Assistant, except, holders of MBBS/BDS who may be appointed as lecture II but will be required to obtain the fellowship of the National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria and/or the West African College of Surgeons/Physicians before any further elevation beyond the Lecturer II position. That is, before crossing to Lecturer I position.

5. Eligibility Period

The minimum eligibility period for promotion from one rank to the next shall be three years without prejudice to staff movement from one university to another. The following provisions shall also apply:

5.1 Graduate Assistant: This is a non-career position and minimum academic qualification should be a first degree, normally not below second-class honours, upper division, or its equivalent. The appointment should be on temporary basis, renewable annually. It is to afford the graduate assistant to provide academic support services, such as delivery of tutorials, practical demonstration, technical/field assistantship and invigilation of examinations. The functions shall specifically exclude direct academic engagements and responsibilities, such as teaching of courses, supervision of projects and seminars, setting of examination questions, grading of scripts/projects/seminar and computation of results.

5.2 Assistant Lecturer: On successful completion of a Ph.D, the assistant lecturer shall be upgraded to Lecturer II with effect from the date the Ph.D. degree is

awarded by the senate of a recognised university. In the case of clinical lecturers, on successful completion of a Fellowship Programme of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria (NPMCN) or equivalent, shall be upgraded to Lecturer I, with effect from the date the Fellowship is awarded by the senate of the NPMCN or equivalent body.

5.3: Lecturer Grade 2, 1 and Senior Lecturer: The minimum eligibility period from a lower rank to the next is three years.

5.4 Professorial cadre: A candidate to be appointed Reader or Associate Professor shall have spent a minimum of three years in the Senior Lecturer position in the university system, while a candidate to be appointed full Professor shall have spent a minimum of three years as a Reader/Associate Professor in a recognised university.

5.5. Librarians: Librarians shall be graded according to the format that corresponds to their equivalent positions as academic staff. That is, a Principal librarian candidate should be assessed like a Senior Lecturer.

6. Timeliness of Appraisal

All staff (including those on approved sabbatical/study leave/fellowship) shall be assessed yearly, and such appraisal must be done at the times stated in the statutes of the university to prevent delayed and irregular promotions. In the professorial cadre, appointment and promotion PFQs (prima facie qualifications) must be established in the year of assessment. Assessments shall not be delayed or backdated. Accordingly, senior lecturers should be assessed for promotion to readers/associate professors and not directly to full professors.

7. Criteria for Appraisal and Assessment

The appraisal and assessment of candidates shall be based on the under-listed criteria:

- Qualification
- Teaching and /or Professional Experience
- Intellectual Output and Contributions to knowledge
- Research Impact (Attraction of grants, research leadership, partnerships and patents)
- Supervision of Postgraduate Students (completed and on-going)
- Active Participation in Conferences
- Administrative Experience and Civic Contribution

The scores of the various criteria and the requirements/specifications for each rank, are outlined in Tables 1-8

8. Intellectual Contributions

For the majority of the academic staff in the university, academic output and

productivity will take the form of publications, though the system encourages and shall reward other outputs such as patents, prototypes, products, special medical feats and key contributions to policy. It is important that the input of the candidate be evidently substantial in each of such outputs. In certain disciplines where creative works are the outputs to be assessed, the maximum score for these works should relate to the maximum score for publications, in the ratio of 60:40 for all cadres in such disciplines.

The academic output and productivity of any academic staff can appear in a number of forms, notably the following:

Publications: such as books, monographs, journal articles, book reviews, teachers' guides; refereed conference papers and technical reports.

Creative works: such as exhibitions, paintings, musical compositions and performances, play writing, directing and production; technical inventions including prototypes, products, all forms of original designs and constructions, special medical feats that are considered landmark or extraordinary.

Patents, and key contributions to policy.

9. Minimum Scores

Where a minimum score is indicated for a particular criterion and for a rank, obtaining the specified minimum score is a prerequisite for the assessment to proceed. If a candidate fails to obtain the requisite minimum score for a specified criterion, the case shall be stepped down at that point for that review year.

9.2 Scoring the Various Criteria: The specified appraisal and assessment criteria listed in Table 1 shall be scored according to the manner described for each criterion.

9.2.1 Fairness, openness, transparency, inclusiveness and respect for quality shall be the principles that undergird staff assessment, appointment and promotions. This is why staff reviews should be bottom-up from the department, through the faculty or school or college, and shall be inclusive and participatory, to enable staff defend themselves, if need be.

9.2.2 Assessment of publications shall be determined by the authenticity and reputation of the publication outlets. Universities should subject publications to academic integrity checks to prevent plagiarism, insider publishing and other types of academic/intellectual fraud. Every university should have a dynamic inventory of good quality journals.

9.2.3 Effectiveness in teaching, research and service shall be ascertained partly through the assessment and input of the relevant students.

9.2.4 Academic productivity shall be determined through each annual appraisal exercise to identify staff with no or insufficient teaching load and/or research atrophy or inactivity (break of over four years between publications).

9.2.5 The appointment and promotion of any candidate to the rank of reader or professor, shall be subsequent to the approval of a prima facie case by the A&P Committee of the institution, on the recommendation from the department through the faculty or school or college, as the case may be. The ultimate approval/pronouncement shall be by the Council of the University.

9.2.6 It shall be based on the totality of the assessment of, particularly, the candidate's intellectual contributions, by at least two of three internationally acclaimed external assessors who are professors of not less than 5 years standing in the relevant field/ discipline. For a candidate to be *prima facie* qualified, he/she must have met the minimum condition for community service, administrative duties and teaching competence, in addition to the performance in research publications.

9.2.7 Scoring for journal articles shall be based on the items of the bibliographic checklist, including editorial policy, scope, publisher, regularity, circulation, subscription, accessibility/visibility factor, abstracting/indexing coverage or quotation/ citation and exchange partnership. The input of the candidate shall be evidently substantial in each publication.

Table 1. Maximum score for Categories of Intellectual Contributions

Type of Publication and Creative work	Maximum Score	Score based on Authorship	
		Single	Multiple
Books			
Mainline books, well researched, peer reviewed & published by a reputable publisher	2.0	2.0	1.0
Standard texts at tertiary level, peer reviewed & published by a reputable publisher	3.0	3.0	2.0
Monographs, well researched, peer reviewed & published by a reputable publisher	0.5	0.0	0.0
Chapters in Books	0.5	0.0	0.0
Journal Articles			
Major journal articles	3.0	3.0	2.0
Minor journal articles, e.g. reviews, technical notes, short communications, etc.	1.0	1.0	0.5
Refereed Conference Proceeding	0.5	0.5	0.5
Technical Reports	0.5	0.5	0.5
Creative works, including special medical feats			
Major creative works	2.0	1.0	0.5
Minor creative works	1.0	1.0	0.5
Patents and commercial products	3.0	3.0	2.0
Prototypes and certified designs	2.0	2.0	1.0

Table 2. Scoring of Qualifications

Criteria	Professor	Reader	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer 1	Lecturer 2	Assistant Lecturer
Ph.D	10	10	15	-	-	-
Master's Degree by Research	-	-	-	20	40	60
Master's in Veterinary Medicine	-	-	-	30	55	-
M.Eng, M.Pharm, M.Arch, MFA	-	-	-	25	50	60
Bachelor's Degree/Equivalent: 1 st , 2 nd	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: **Assistant Lecturer:** A candidate should possess a Master's degree with a minimum GPA of 3.5 on a 5-point scale or equivalent. While being on this appointment which is a training position, the candidate would remain ineligible/unqualified for the confirmation of appointment to the status of permanency until he or she obtains a Ph.D.

Table 3. Scoring of the Various Criteria

Criteria	Professor	Reader	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer 1	Lecturer II	Assistant Lecturer
	Min	Min	Min	Min	Min	Min
Qualification. See Table 2	PhD	PhD	PhD	PhD	PhD	Master's
Intellectual Contributions: (Publications, creative works, patents, prototypes, products and key contributions to policy).	60*	45*	30	9	6	-
Attraction of Research Grants, Fellowships and Scholarships. See Table 4	5	5	2	1	-	-
Supervision of Postgraduate Students (completed and on-going). See Table 5	10	5	2	-	-	-
Teaching/Professional Experience. See Table 6	10	7	5	2	2	-
Conferences. See Table 7	7	5	3	2	2	-
Administrative Experience, Academic Leadership and Maturity. See Table 8	8	8	4	1	-	-
Total Minimum Qualifying Score	100	75	46	15	10	-

Key: * 30% of the publication points for the professorial grade shall be scored as sole author or lead/corresponding author.

Notes:

1. The scoring template is motivational and only requires minimum score limits to be satisfied. There are no maximum scores, thereby encouraging candidates to excel and be productive to any limit they set for themselves.
2. As noted earlier, for academic staff in the clinical departments of faculties/schools/colleges of medicine, the Fellowship of the National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria and/or the West African College of Surgeons/Physicians is currently accepted as the terminal qualification instead of the PhD which will come into force in 2025.

Table 4. Scores for Research Grants

Research Grants	Score	Score based on Authorship	
		Principal Investigator	Co-investigator
Successfully executed research grants	5.0	3.0	2.0

Note: Each university senate with approval of council shall determine what constitutes major or minor research grant.

Table 5. Scores for Successful Supervision of Postgraduate Students

Postgraduate Student's Research	Maximum Score based on Authorship	
	Major Supervisor	Co-Supervisor
Successful supervision of Ph.D. research	10.0	5.0
Successful supervision of Master's research and dissertations for the Nigerian or West African Fellowship examinations.	10.0	1.0

Notes:

1. A candidate shall score a maximum of 3 points for the supervision of each successfully completed Ph.D. thesis.
2. A candidate shall score a maximum of 1 point for the supervision of each Research-based Master's research project and dissertations for the Nigerian or West African Fellowship examinations.
3. A non-research-based Master's degree should not be scored.

Table 6. Score for Teaching and/or Professional Experience

Criteria	Professor	Reader	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer I	Lecturer II	Assistant Lecturer
Each Year of Full-time Teaching	10	7	5	2	2	-

Note: 1 year for each full year of teaching

Table 7. Score for Active Participation in Conferences (with evidence of paper/poster presented)

Participation in Conferences	Points per Conference/paper
	1.0

Table 8: Scores for Administrative and Academic Leadership and Maturity

Contribution	Professor	Reader	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer I	Lecturer II	Asst Lecturer
Global, national, professional	3	3	1	-	-	-
University level – committees	3	3	1	-	-	-
Faculty assignments	2	2	2	1	-	-
Department assignments	ALL must be involved in departmental duties					
Total	8	8	4	1	-	-

Junior academic staff should be mentored to grow, and not be over-saddled with assignments that overweigh them.

Scholars in Research Centres and Institutes

Some scholars employed in research centers and institutes are not normally involved with teaching and/or supervision. known as Research Fellows/Professors, such scholars are, by the nature of their work, expected to earn fewer points from the teaching and supervision component and more from the research component. The following criteria apply to them.

10.1 Senior Research Fellow

To be eligible for appointment or promotion to Senior Research Fellow, a candidate must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- a) hold PhD in the relevant area (except that Medical Fellowship suffices for those in clinical areas);
- b) score a minimum of 20 points overall;
- c) score a minimum of 30 points on the basis of publications other than technical reports; and
- d) have a minimum of two conference/seminar paper presentations, at least one of which must be a conference presentation.

a. Associate Research Professor

To be eligible for appointment or promotion to Associate Research Professor, a candidate must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- a) hold PhD in the relevant area (except that Medical Fellowship suffices for those in clinical areas);
- b) score a minimum of 35 points overall;
- c) score a minimum of 45 points on the basis of publication, at least 9 of which must be from journal articles;
- d) score a minimum of 5 points from journal publications in which he/she is the sole/lead/first/corresponding author;
- e) have a minimum of four conference/seminar paper presentations, at least two

- of which must be conference presentations;
- f) score a minimum of 4 points from Administration and Community Service

b. Research Professor

To be eligible for appointment or promotion to Research Professor, a candidate must satisfy all of these conditions:

- a) hold PhD in the relevant area (except that Medical Fellowship suffices for those in clinical areas);
- b) score a minimum of 50 points overall;
- c) score a minimum of 60 points on the basis of publication, at least 12 of which must be from journal articles;
- d) score a minimum of 7 points from journal publications in which he/she is the lead/first/corresponding author;
- e) have a minimum of six conference/seminar paper presentations, at least three of which must be conference presentations; and
- f) score a minimum of 6 points from Administration and Community Service

10. International Recognition of Scholarship

To ensure that Nigerian scholars are globally recognised and not just local players with a high number of journal articles and books that are not referenced by the global academic community, all academic staff are expected to have minimum scores for two of the globally-recognised metrics for scholarship. These are the h index and i10 index. It is noteworthy that scholars to whom publications of Nigerian academics are sent for assessment depend more on these indices than on the number of listed publications. These indices are defined as follows:

- a) **h-index** is an author-level metric that measures both the productivity and citation impact of the publications of a scholar. The index is based on the scholar's most cited papers and the number of citations that they have received in other publications. The h-index is calculated by counting the number of publications for which an author has been cited by other authors at least that same number of times. For instance, an h-index of 17 means that the scientist has published at least 17 papers that have *each* been cited *at least* 17 times. If the scientist's 18th most cited publication was cited only 10 times, the h-index would remain at 17. If the scientist's 18th most cited publication was cited 18 or more times, the h-index would rise to 18.
- b) **i10-index** the number of publications with at least 10 citations.

Candidates are advised to assess themselves on these indices before presenting their publications for internal and external assessment. This can be done by accessing Google Scholar and setting up their profiles on the platform.

Table 9: Minimum scores Full Professors

Index	Score for Science Disciplines	Score for non-science disciplines
h-index	40	10
i10 index	30	18

Note: These indices are obtained from Google Scholar for every scholar being assessed.

Conclusion

The National Universities Commission is empowered by law to ensure the orderly development of university education in Nigeria. Laying down minimum standards to ensure quality delivery of university education is also one of its core mandates. In pursuit of these goals, after extensive national stakeholder consultations, it has provided by way of the guidelines in this document, a set of minimum standards for the appointment and promotion of academic staff in the Nigerian university system. The intention is to establish a framework for Councils of universities to set their context-specific criteria for appointment and promotion.

It is the expectation of the National Universities Commission that, as much as possible and without prejudice to the autonomy of Councils, universities do not go below the minimum standards in these guidelines so as to ensure comparability of appointment and promotion of academic staff across the entire Nigerian university system.