

Promotion of internal candidates to Professor

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While the current tenure-track policy within the FEB sets a well-defined six-year path for new, internationally recruited research staff from assistant professorship to a tenured associate professorship, there exists no such well-defined policy for the path from Associate Professor to Full Professor.

This document tries to fill this gap by laying out the ASE's policy regarding the requirements for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. The document is based on the findings of a commission installed for this purpose.¹ Obviously, the ASE's policy has to be compatible with the relevant University and Faculty policies. However, that still leaves a substantial degree of freedom for the ASE to develop its own specific promotion policy. This document does not deal with appointments on extraordinary or sponsored chairs. Hence, it deals exclusively with professorships financed from first-stream money.

The ASE adheres to the principle that promotion to Professor should be "merit based". More specifically, this means that the existing pool of Associate Professors will be closely monitored and compared, to ensure an equitable assessment of the potential candidates. Individuals in this pool will be assessed on the basis of their performance. Financial constraints are at this stage ignored. The best-performing and most promising members will be candidates for promotion to full Professor. While the number of full professorships is not fixed, some rivalry among the candidates is deemed healthy to foster excellence.

General considerations

The following *general considerations* are relevant:

- The envisaged chair fits ASE's profile and constitutes a recognizable value-added to the other chairs at the ASE.
- In principle should have spent a sufficient number of years as Associate Professor, and the past years as Associate Professor 1.
- A candidate for promotion to Professor should be someone who has a real impact in her/his field and who should thus be seen as an authority in her/his field.
- Seniority of the potential candidate will only play a limited role. In particular, the candidate should have been able to realize a number of good publications in the last five to ten year and be active as researcher.

¹ The commission consisted of the ASE members of the ASE Promotion and Tenure Committee: prof. Roel Beetsma (chair), prof. Massimo Giuliadori, prof. Frank Kleiberger and prof. Joep Sonnemans.

- Account will be taken of the need to preserve an appropriate balance across the fields. That is, the relative size of the field, in particular in terms of teaching, needs will be taken into account.
- A severe imbalance of the numbers of Professors across fields should be avoided.
- Account should be taken of the fact that the requirements in terms of publications may differ substantially across areas within economics. These differences in requirements are eventually attributable to differences in the net supply of good people in the various areas, e.g. because the university has to compete against policy institutions for good people in some areas. Hence, the outside market may play a role.
- Promotion to Professor can never be automatic on the basis of numerical criteria. As a result, the ASE chooses not to write down minimal numerical criteria for promotion to Professor.

It may be the case that someone cannot become Professor and, as a result chooses to leave the UvA to become Professor elsewhere. This should not be considered a threat but rather as a matter of upholding standards.

The criteria

The following *criteria* are inputs into the decision to promote a candidate to Professor:

- Good track record in terms of publications in good field to top general interest journals.
- Sufficient authority / visibility in the field, e.g. as measured by the number of citations, keynote speeches at conferences, editorships of leading journals, and the like.
- Good teaching, both in terms of evaluations of individual courses and in terms of design and organization of programs.
- Success in generating external money.
- Success in attracting (good) Ph.D. students.
- Success in (co-)supervising PhD students.
- Good management
- Valorization
- Good academic citizenship

There are no concrete numerical minima formulated on each of the abovementioned aspects. One reason is to avoid the perception that if all minima have been met, a candidate would automatically be nominated to be promoted to Professor. In addition, if a candidate scores exceptionally on one aspect (for example, on publications), the requirements with respect to the other aspects (e.g., valorization) could be less strict. Even so, a candidate always needs to have a good track record in terms of publications and teaching.

The procedure

Promotion to Professor comes down to a two-stage decision problem:

- The quality/suitability of the candidate, also in comparison to his/her peers at the ASE and recent appointees at other relevant universities.
- The availability of the financial resources at the section level.

Both criteria should be met for a candidate to become Professor. The procedure for the selection and appointment of internal candidates for a professorship is:

- Based on the annual evaluation meetings between the section head and section members (roughly in January), as well as between the department chair and the section head (roughly in January / February), the section head may submit one or more proposals for the promotion of Associate Professors to Professor.
- The P&T Committee judges and compares these proposals with each other and with the c.v.'s of recent appointees at other relevant universities, and selects which candidate(s), if any, will be admitted to the next step. The selection takes into account the abovementioned considerations and criteria.
- The selected candidate(s) are presented in an ASE-MT meeting, which should confirm the suitability for promotion and the availability of sufficient financial resources for promotion. If a candidate is deemed of sufficient quality, but turned down for financial reasons, (s)he may be next in line for promotion, e.g. if one of the current professors leaves or the financial resources become available in some way.
- The candidate(s) that passes this step returns to the P&T committee, which solicits the opinions of the regular Professors in the department. This consultation should not serve as a popular vote on the candidate, but rather the views of the existing Professors constitute input for the P&T committee.
- The input from the regular Professors of the Department combined with the files submitted by the section head constitute inputs for the P&T committee to decide whether to move on with a candidate.
- If the answer is a yes, the P&T committee chooses whom to solicit reference letters from. Professors who are co-author, or in some other way closely related to the candidate, are not eligible.
- In a follow up meeting, on the basis of all the inputs received so far combined with the reference letters, the P&T committee will formulate a formal advise to the Dean of the Faculty.

Which are the “other relevant” universities?

It is ASE’s strategic ambition to become one of the top-10 economics departments in Europe, where top-10 is measured department-wide (so not on the basis of any specific field). This has the following implications:²

- Candidates for internal promotion to Professor should at least have publication records comparable to those of recent appointees in the same field at universities ranked at around place 10 in Europe.³
- Reference letters will be solicited from recognized experts in the relevant field preferably working at universities comparable to ours or ranked somewhat above us. Referees may be asked whether the candidate would be eligible for appointment to Professor at their own university.

Ranking European departments

Various rankings of European economics departments exist. An example is the “Ideas” ranking based on a number of criteria including publications and citations of individuals who have registered with the RePEc Author Service (see <https://ideas.repec.org/top/top.eurecondept.html>):⁴

1. Department of Economics, Oxford University
2. Paris School of Economics
3. Toulouse School of Economics
4. University College London
5. Barcelona Graduate School of Economics
6. London School of Economics
7. University of Warwick
8. University of Cambridge
9. Aarhus Universitet
10. Université Catholique de Louvain
11. University of Zurich
12. University of Nottingham
13. University of Amsterdam
14. Aix-Marseille School of Economics
15. University of York

² Hence, the following operational aspects arise: (1) We need to establish a ranking of universities for comparison; (2) We need to keep a record of publication c.v.’s of recent appointments to Professor at these universities.

³ One might argue that we should also make a comparison with rankings based on criteria other than research. However, it would for the P&T Committee be hard to judge whether a candidate’s teaching is at the standard that a university high in a ranking based on teaching would demand. Also, the writers of reference letters often know only little about a candidate’s teaching qualities.

⁴ We will try to find other rankings as well. However, which one to choose remains a bit arbitrary. Generally, the best institutions are high on all the rankings.