



Scientific and Technical Staff Promotions Process 2026

Introduction

The Scientific and Technical staff at the University of Cape Town provide an invaluable service to the university that spans a wide range of specialist activities. In recognition that each post is somewhat unique in its specialist requirements and to enable upward career mobility the university offers the opportunity for ad hominem promotion to this group of PASS staff. Performance management, career development and retention strategies are managed through this process.

The basis for deciding on promotion performance is captured in a performance standards document, which:

- Differentiates the separate roles of the Scientific Officer (SO) and the Technical Officer (TO) in supporting teaching and/or research and/or management at the University.
- Distinguishes the performance indicators or outputs appropriate for each rank / level.
- The jobs catalogues can be used as a further resource to help both applicants and the committee distinguish between different ranks. This can be found [here](#).

The performance standards document enables the following:

- The candidate's representation of their performance as befits the core functions of their position.
- Objective evaluation of a candidate's performance level by the Promotions Committee, and assessment of whether it complies with an incremental standard.
- Referees' motivations of a candidate's performance against standardised indicators / outputs for a particular rank.

Broader context

Given the role that SO/TOs play in supporting the academic endeavour, performance management, career development and retention strategies need to be explicit and transparent. The elements below show the broader context within which the promotion process resides.

If	Then
the candidate and line manager wish to determine performance and development plans	Apply Development Dialogue (DD) process
the candidate consistently meets criteria for promotion by delivering outputs consistent with that of a higher position level	Follow promotion process
the candidate performs excellently in any particular year	Apply for an Exceeds Award
operational requirements of the position change / grow	Apply for position evaluation

Any candidate applying for Adhom promotion and is successful, will not be eligible for an Exceeds award or discretionary bonus in that cycle (i.e., in the year of application for promotion) should they qualify for one as part of the Development Dialogue process.

Terms of Reference for SO/TO Promotions Committee

General rules and guidelines

The terms of reference should be understood in conjunction with the general rules and procedures for committees, as published in the Principal's Circular, and on the [governance intranet](#).

General Provisions

- The structure, function and powers of this committee, and any sub-committee, must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) with responsibility for faculties.
- The Promotions Committee must consider all applications (i.e., no applications may be suppressed).
- To utilise accepted criteria for the evaluation of SO/TO candidates for promotion.
- Thoroughly review each candidate's submission, applying principles of fair assessment to inform each recommendation for promotion.
- Committee members to declare any conflict of interest in relation to any applicant.
- To maintain confidentiality at each step of the process up until the candidate has been informed of the outcome by the relevant Dean.
- To maintain a confidential feedback process to candidates.
- To adhere to agreed timelines of promotion process.

Purpose

- To evaluate applications or nominations for the promotion of SO/TO staff
- To make recommendations for promotion

Eligibility of SO/TO candidates

- The candidate must have worked in their current position for three full years at the time that any promotion is implemented (usually 1 January of the year following the application) and may thus apply for promotion during the course of their third year. Any candidate applying during the course of their third year must include a motivation for this in their cover letter.
- Candidates that have failed to be promoted must wait for two years before they again become eligible for promotion and may thus apply for promotion during the course of the second year after a failed application.
- In exceptional circumstances the responsible DVC or committee may waive point number 2 above on motivation from the relevant Dean.
- Permanent (GOB or non-GOB funded) SO/TO staff members are eligible to apply for promotion
- Achievements will only be considered and evaluated in services and support provided by the staff member while at UCT.

Documentation

The candidate submits the following documentation, which HR makes available on-line, to all promotions committee members for confidential review.

- Candidate's motivation for, and evidence of, performance in the core functional areas, using the performance standards template to capture this information. See: Performance Standards template for SOs; and Performance Standards template for TOs.
- Nomination letter by the candidate / a senior staff member / the HOD. This motivation should clearly articulate the level of performance against the expectations of the position, and with reference to the past two years' performance evaluations.
- Names and email addresses of up to three job-related referees, one of whom must be the candidate's HOD.
- Position description (on [HR191 template](#)) reflecting current operational requirements of the section (signed by the HOD / Line Manager and the incumbent).
- Current CV.
- Copies of the candidate's 2 most recent performance evaluations.

The above documentation needs to be submitted as one pdf. Incomplete applications (i.e., missing documents) will not be considered. Servicing officer to ensure all submitted documents are uploaded.

Prior to the promotions meeting, the HoD representing the Faculty on the Promotions Committee must convene an ad hoc committee within the Faculty. This committee should include all concerned HoDs and the Scientific/Technical Officers from that Faculty serving on the promotions committee. The purpose of this committee is to evaluate all the applicants from that Faculty with the view to being able to fairly and objectively present each candidate's case to the promotions committee to ensure that the candidate gets the best opportunity possible.

All committee members are expected to review the documentation of each candidate prior to the promotions meeting.

Formulation and composition of the Promotions Committee

Each year the SO/TO Promotions Committee will meet to assess candidates' submissions.

Membership of the Promotions Committee:

Members on the committee	Capacity
1 x Deputy Vice-Chancellor (nominated by the Vice-Chancellor)	Chair with Full Voting Rights
3 x Deans of Faculties (FHS, Science, EBE)	Full Voting Rights
7 x Scientific/Technical Officers nominated by the faculties. Two each from EBE, FHS, FSC and one from HUM. There must be a balance between SOs and TOs. Once finalised reported to all SO/TO staff for information.	Full Voting Rights
4 x HoDs nominated by the Deans: EBE, HUM, FHS, FSC	Full Voting Rights
2 x STOA executive	Full Voting Rights
1 EU executive	Full Voting Rights
1 HR representative	Non-voting, Advisory and Servicing role

Note: SO/TOs should be PC10 and above, and in constituting membership, race, gender, and cultural diversity should be taken into account. HoDs should be from departments with a cohort of SO/TO staff.

Voting

- The committee must vote by secret ballot to finalise their recommendations.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the total membership present at the meeting is required in order to obtain a recommendation for promotion.

Quorum rules

75% of members (14 out of 18) which must include all three Deans

Terms of office

For consistency, it is recommended that the Scientific/Technical Officers and HoDs should serve on the committee for up to 3 consecutive years. The Chair will recommend limited replacements each year to ensure that not every member is new. No person should serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.

Process

Timelines for the ad hominem process are outlined below:

	Description	Timeline
1.	The Deans (Health Sciences, Science, EBE, Humanities) call for applications and nominations for SO/TO promotions.	July
2.	The Deans call for nominations from SO/TO staff for membership of the Promotions Committee. The composition of the Promotions Committee is finalised and SO/TO staff advised.	July/August
3.	The candidate submits all required documentation necessary for evaluation by the Promotions Committee	August
4.	Faculty HR Business Partner collate all relevant documentation submitted by candidates and make it available to the Faculty Sub-Committee and Promotions Committee members for their review prior to the promotions meeting.	September
5.	The Promotions Committee meets to evaluate all SO/TO applications and make recommendations for promotions.	October
6.	Recommendation for promotion is approved and candidate notified by letter.	October
7.	The relevant Dean provides constructive feedback to unsuccessful candidates in writing, and invites each candidate to a face-to-face meeting, which should include the HOD and line manager.	October to 5 November
8.	Any review decision is signed off by the Promotions Committee Chairperson.	November/December
<i>The ad hominem process will be reviewed regularly for fairness and efficiency</i>		<i>Ongoing</i> Last reviewed: May 2021

Process after an unsuccessful application

Every applicant for ad hominem promotion has a right to feedback. The Dean of the relevant faculty is responsible for constructive feedback to the unsuccessful staff member.

The Promotions Committee's decision is final. However, an applicant may request a review of the process if she/he believes that there may have been a significant degree of unfairness in the procedure. The applicant should submit a letter stating the grounds for unfair process on which the review is requested. This to be submitted via the relevant Dean within 14 days of notification of the ad hominem promotion outcome. The applicant may not submit any additional materials in support of their application for review which were not originally submitted to the committee.

A DVC not involved in the ad hominem process, designated by the Vice-Chancellor, must then decide whether the application has merit to be reviewed for unfair process using:

- The relevant Dean's written comments on procedural fairness and reasonableness of the decision.
- The Promotions Committee's decision and the reasons for its decision.
- The applicant's full portfolio including performance representation against SO/TO promotions criteria, and referees' reports, as submitted with the initial application.

If the selected DVC finds the process to be unfair, the DVC remits the matter to the SO/TO Promotions Committee for reconsideration, with written reasons, and a request that the Committee considers the application afresh.

Final update: 29 June 2026