

 AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY الجامعة الأمريكية الدولية	Policy Main Title	Faculty and Professional Staff	Effective Date	14/06/2026
	Policy Subject	Faculty Promotion Policy	Last Review date	
	Policy Number	FAC-009	Next Review date	14/06/2029
	Responsible Entity	Vic President for Academic Affairs	Approved By	President

Overview

Academic promotion is one of the most significant academic decisions an institution makes about its faculty. It shapes the composition of AIU's academic community, signals what the institution values, communicates standards to every faculty member at every rank, and provides direct evidence to Accrediting agency that AIU's faculty evaluation processes formally connect teaching quality, scholarly activity, and service as required.

This policy establishes AIU's framework for faculty academic promotion. It defines the criteria, processes, committees, and appeal mechanisms that govern the advancement of faculty from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and from Associate Professor to Professor. The framework is designed to be rigorous and merit-based, transparent and consistently applied, protective of candidates' rights, and adaptable to the disciplinary diversity of AIU's Schools including Schools where the terminal degree is not a doctorate and where scholarly impact is measured through professional creative output as well as through peer-reviewed publication.

Scope

This policy applies to all full-time regular faculty at AIU holding the ranks of Assistant Professor and Associate Professor who are eligible to apply for promotion under the criteria established herein. It applies to faculty across all Schools, including the School of Engineering, the School of Business Administration, the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, and the School of Architecture and Design. The policy distinguishes where necessary between the standard research publication track applicable to PhD-discipline faculty and the creative and professional output track applicable to faculty in terminal-degree disciplines where the highest recognized degree is not a doctorate.

Purpose

The purposes of this policy are to:

- Establish a rigorous, fair, and consistently applied promotion framework that reflects AIU's mission, academic standards, and the three-domain model of teaching, research, and service
- Define rank-specific promotion criteria that are calibrated to the discipline recognizing that scholarly contribution in Architecture, Graphic Design, and Interior Design is measured differently from contribution in Engineering or Business
- Establish the governance structure of promotion committees at the departmental, School, and University levels, together with the role of external peer review
- Protect candidates' rights through transparent criteria, documented processes, confidentiality, conflict-of-interest safeguards, and a structured appeal mechanism
- Provide the documented basis required for accreditation evidence under relevant requirements
- Ensure that promotion decisions at AIU are comparable to standards at accredited institutions and internationally recognized universities

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Abbreviations and Definitions

PhD-Discipline Faculty: Faculty whose terminal degree is a doctorate (PhD, EdD, DBA, or equivalent) and whose scholarly contribution is measured primarily through peer-reviewed publications, grants, and disciplinary research output.

Terminal Degree Faculty: Faculty in disciplines where the highest recognized credential is not a doctorate, including Architecture (M.Arch), Graphic Design (MFA), Interior Design (MFA or M.ID), Fine Arts (MFA), and comparable applied creative and professional disciplines. For these faculty, scholarly and creative output includes juried exhibitions, commissions, design awards, patents, professional publications, and comparable evidence of disciplinary impact.

Creative and Professional Output: Documented, externally validated creative or professional work recognized as scholarly contribution in disciplines where the terminal degree is not a doctorate. Equivalent criteria are defined for each eligible discipline by the relevant School, approved by the VPAA, and reviewed every three years.

Promotion Dossier: The formal compilation of evidence submitted by a faculty candidate in support of a promotion application, including the curriculum vitae, personal statement, teaching portfolio, research or creative portfolio, service record, and supporting documentation.

External Reviewer: An independent scholar or recognized practitioner of at least Professor rank (or equivalent senior standing for terminal-degree disciplines) from outside AIU, with no conflict of interest with the candidate, who provides a formal written evaluation of the candidate's scholarly or creative portfolio.

Dependent Assessor: A senior academic or practitioner who has interacted professionally with the candidate as a supervisor, collaborator, co-author, or colleague at another institution and who provides a contextual assessment of the candidate's academic standing.

University Promotion Committee (UPC): The standing University-level committee responsible for reviewing all promotion dossiers, evaluating external assessments, and making recommendations to the President.

School Promotion Committee (SPC): A School-level committee appointed by the Dean to conduct the initial review of promotion dossiers and make recommendations to the UPC.

Department Promotion Committee (DPC): A department-level committee appointed by the Department Chair to conduct the first substantive review of a candidate's dossier and make a recommendation to the SPC.

Main/Senior Author: The faculty member who made the primary intellectual contribution to a published work, as recognized by the conventions of the relevant discipline. In cases of joint authorship, the candidate must provide a written statement of contribution, confirmed by at least one co-author.

Class A Journal: For PhD-discipline faculty: a Scopus-indexed journal ranked in the top 20% by SJR metric in the candidate's field of specialization and listed in the ISI database with a qualifying impact factor. For terminal-degree disciplines: the equivalent is determined by the School's publication classification list, approved by the VPAA.

Class B Journal: For PhD-discipline faculty: a Scopus-indexed journal not meeting the Class A threshold. For terminal-degree disciplines: equivalent as determined by the School classification list.

Mandatory Promotion: The institutional requirement that an Assistant Professor must apply for promotion to Associate Professor upon completing five years in rank, as a condition of continued appointment.

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Rebuttal: A formal written response by a candidate, within the designated timeframe, addressing procedural concerns or documented factual inaccuracies in the promotion review. Rebuttals are not a mechanism for contesting scholarly judgments.

Policy

Article 1: Governing Principles

The AIU Faculty Academic Promotion process is governed by the following principles:

- Merit-based:** Promotion is earned through documented achievement, not through years of service alone. Time in rank is a minimum eligibility condition, not a sufficient basis for promotion.
- Evidence-based:** All promotion decisions must be grounded in documented evidence of performance across teaching, scholarship or creative activity, and service. Subjective impressions unsupported by evidence may not form the basis of a committee recommendation.
- Peer-reviewed:** Promotion involves substantive external peer review by scholars or practitioners of recognized standing who are independent of the candidate.
- Discipline-sensitive:** Scholarly contribution is assessed within the norms of the candidate's discipline. This policy explicitly recognizes that the criteria applicable to Architecture, Graphic Design, Interior Design, and equivalent applied creative programs differ from those applicable to PhD disciplines.
- Consistent:** Promotion criteria, processes, and standards are applied consistently across all candidates at the same rank, within the same discipline category. School-level supplementary criteria must be approved by the VPAA.
- Transparent:** All promotion criteria, processes, timelines, and outcomes are communicated clearly to faculty before and throughout the process. No material change to criteria may be applied to a candidate in a cycle where they have already submitted intent to apply.
- Confidential:** All committee deliberations, votes, external assessor identities and reports, and individual recommendations are treated as strictly confidential throughout and after the process.
- Protective of rights:** Candidates have the right to be informed of the reasons for unsuccessful applications, to submit rebuttals on procedural grounds, and to appeal through a structured process. No promotion decision may be influenced by a candidate's exercise of academic freedom, their participation in faculty governance, or any other protected activity.

Article 2: Eligibility and Service Requirements

To be eligible to apply for promotion, a faculty member must meet all of the following conditions:

2.1 Rank and Service

Promotion	Minimum Years in Current Rank	Minimum Years at AIU	Accelerated Track (exceptional output)

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Assistant Professor → Associate Professor	5 years	2 years	4 years (requires double the standard research minimum)
Associate Professor → Professor	5 years	3 years	4 years (requires double the standard research minimum)

All service calculations include years at other recognized universities at the relevant rank, subject to verification. Service in non-academic positions after obtaining the rank is excluded from the minimum calculation. Periods of leave without pay do not count toward the minimum service period. Early application is permitted up to four months before completing the required period in rank, provided all other criteria are met; if approved, promotion becomes effective at the conclusion of the minimum period.

2.2 Annual Performance Rating

A candidate must have achieved a Satisfactory or above rating in their three most recent annual performance evaluations. A candidate who received a Needs Attention or Unsatisfactory rating in any of the three years immediately preceding application is not eligible to apply in that cycle. Eligibility is restored when three consecutive Satisfactory or above evaluations have been completed following the last Needs Attention or Unsatisfactory rating.

2.3 Minimum AIU Service

A minimum period of AIU service is required to ensure that promotion decisions reflect the candidate's contribution to this institution's mission and culture, not only prior service elsewhere. The minimum AIU service requirements are set out in the table above. The VPAA may, in exceptional circumstances, waive the minimum AIU service requirement on the written recommendation of the Dean, where the candidate's external record is of outstanding distinction.

2.4 Mandatory Promotion

An Assistant Professor must apply for promotion to Associate Professor upon completing five years at the Assistant Professor rank. The following mandatory promotion provisions apply:

- a. A first unsuccessful mandatory promotion application is followed by a second mandatory attempt no later than the next immediate year of service. If the second attempt is also unsuccessful, the faculty member receives a terminal contract for one year subject to applicable employment law and University regulations. A tenth year of service, for assistant professor and twelfth year of service for associate professor without successful promotion is the terminal year under all circumstances.

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- b. A faculty member who was on approved maternity, paternity, adoption, or medical leave of three months or more during their Assistant Professor period is entitled to a one-year extension of the mandatory promotion requirement, upon written application to the VPAA.
- c. Faculty members who applied early for promotion and were unsuccessful retain the right to apply again at the standard mandatory promotion point without prejudice.

Article 3: Promotion Criteria: The Three Domains

All candidates are evaluated across three domains. The weight assigned to each domain is governed by the candidate's approved workload profile under FAC-006, consistent with the evaluation weight framework in FAC-007. Promotion requires a minimum overall performance level of Very Good in Teaching and Learning and Good in University and Community Service, as established in the annual performance review. The Research and Scholarship or Creative and Professional Output domain carries the greatest weight in distinguishing promotion-ready candidates from those who are not, consistent with AIU's research mission.

2.1 Research and Scholarship (PhD-Discipline Faculty)

Research contributions considered eligible for promotion include:

- a. Journal articles published (or accepted for publication) in peer-reviewed journals directly related to the candidate's field or a closely related field, meeting the journal standards in Article 5 of this policy.
- b. Books and scholarly monographs with substantive contributions to knowledge in the candidate's field, evaluated by at least two independent specialists before publication, and published by a reputable academic press or international publishing house.
- c. Book chapters in peer-reviewed edited volumes published by reputable academic presses. A maximum of one book chapter may be counted per promotion application.
- d. University textbooks in the candidate's field, evaluated by at least two specialists before publication. A maximum of one textbook per promotion application.
- e. Case studies published in peer-reviewed academic journals. A maximum of one case study per promotion application.
- f. Granted patents with demonstrated academic novelty. A maximum of two patents for promotion to Associate Professor; three for promotion to Professor. Each patent counts as a Class B publication equivalent.
- g. A maximum of one journal articles based on the candidate's master's or doctoral thesis may be considered for promotion to Associate Professor.
- h. Research grants as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator, with evidence of scholarly output arising from the funded project.

All publications submitted for promotion must have been accepted or published during the period at the current rank. Publications used to satisfy requirements for an academic degree are excluded.

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2.2 Creative and Professional Output (Terminal-Degree Faculty)

For faculty in Architecture, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Fine Arts, and comparable applied creative disciplines where the terminal degree is not a doctorate, scholarly contribution is evaluated through a combination of peer-reviewed publication and externally validated creative and professional output. The following categories are recognized:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and book chapters meeting the journal standards in Article 5, using the School's approved equivalent journal classification for the discipline.
- Juried exhibitions at national or international venues, with evidence of the jury process and the venue's standing in the discipline. A maximum of two such exhibitions may count for promotion to Associate Professor; three for promotion to Professor. Each juried exhibition counts as one Class B publication equivalent.
- Professional commissions and built or constructed works that have received critical documentation in peer-reviewed or professionally recognized publications, or have won discipline-recognized awards.
- Design awards from nationally or internationally recognized professional bodies in the discipline.
- Monographs, design books, or practitioner handbooks published by reputable professional or academic publishers and reviewed by at least two specialists in the field.
- Patents and intellectual property registrations directly related to the creative discipline.
- Invited presentations at major discipline-recognized conferences, panels, or forums.
- Funded research projects or commissions from recognized external bodies, where the faculty member is the lead contributor.

The School of Architecture and Design shall maintain an approved Creative Output Classification List, reviewed every three years, that establishes equivalency between each category above and the standard publication tiers used for PhD-discipline faculty. This list is developed by the School Promotions Committee, endorsed by the Dean, and approved by the VPAA. New categories may be added between review cycles with VPAA approval.

2.3 Teaching and Learning

The evaluation of teaching and learning encompasses the candidate's effectiveness, growth, and contribution to the educational quality of AIU. Evidence considered includes:

- Student evaluation of teaching results across all courses taught at AIU during the period in rank, showing sustained effectiveness above the institutional threshold.
- Peer observation of teaching documentation, including at least two formal peer observations conducted during the period in rank.
- Teaching portfolio for the promotion period, including the Teaching Philosophy Statement, course syllabi, sample assessment materials, and reflective commentary on teaching development.

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- d. Evidence of teaching innovation including development of new courses, introduction of new pedagogical approaches, design of assessments that improve student learning, integration of educational technology.
- e. Contribution to curriculum and program development at the departmental or School level.
- f. Student academic advising contributions, where applicable to the candidate's assigned role.
- g. Teaching awards or recognition received from institutional, national, or international bodies.
- h. Contribution to graduate supervision, where graduate programs exist in the relevant School.

A minimum overall evaluation in Teaching and Learning of Very Good in the most recent annual performance review is required for promotion. A candidate who received a teaching sub-rating of Needs Attention or Unsatisfactory in any evaluation during the promotion period must provide evidence of documented instructional improvement before the dossier is submitted.

2.4 University and Community Service

Service contributions evaluated for promotion include:

- a. Service on departmental, School, and University committees with evidence of active, constructive participation rather than nominal membership.
- b. Faculty governance participation, including Faculty Council membership or committee roles.
- c. Mentoring of junior faculty, graduate students, or student research projects.
- d. Participation in institutional assessment, accreditation, and quality assurance activities.
- e. Contributions to professional associations, editorial boards, peer review, and conference organization in the candidate's discipline.
- f. Consultancy, public engagement, and community outreach activities connected to the candidate's academic expertise.
- g. Service in administrative leadership roles (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, etc.), recognized in proportion to workload.

A minimum overall evaluation in University and Community Service of Good in the most recent annual performance review is required for promotion.

Article 4: Quantitative Research Requirements

The following minimum quantitative requirements apply to all promotion applications. These are minimum thresholds, not targets. Meeting the minimum does not guarantee promotion; the quality, impact, and trajectory of the scholarly record are equally determinative.

Requirement	To Associate Professor	To Professor
Minimum total eligible outputs	6 outputs	9 outputs

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Minimum published (not just accepted)	3	5
Minimum as sole or main/senior author	3 (at least 3 journal articles)	5 (at least 5 journal articles)
Minimum outputs earned at current rank	All 6 must be from the Assistant Professor period	All 9 must be from the Associate Professor period
Minimum published while at AIU	2	3
Minimum in Scopus-indexed Class A journals (SJR top 20%) PhD disciplines	2 as sole or main author	3 as sole or main author
Minimum in Scopus-indexed or equivalent high-impact outlet terminal degree disciplines	2 as sole, main author, or equivalent creative/professional output	3 as sole, main author, or equivalent creative/professional output

4.1 Carry-Forward Provisions

For promotion to Associate Professor: a maximum of one publication completed after obtaining the doctoral degree but before the Assistant Professor period at AIU may be carried forward, provided they were not used to satisfy the requirements of a prior promotion application at another institution.

4.2 Accelerated Promotion

A faculty member who has produced at least double the minimum research output required for their promotion level and who meets all other eligibility criteria may apply for promotion one year before completing the standard minimum service period (i.e. after four years rather than five). Accelerated promotion applications follow the same review process as standard applications. The accelerated track is not available to mandatory promotion applicants.

4.3 Journal Standards

For a publication to be eligible for promotion:

- The journal must be published by a reputable university, specialist academic society, research center, or international publishing house.

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- b. The journal must have an editorial board comprising scholars of recognized standing in the discipline.
- c. Articles must be reviewed by at least two independent referees who are not members of the editorial board. The refereeing process must be stated publicly by the journal.
- d. The journal must have an ISSN and have been in regular circulation for at least three years before publication of the candidate's article.
- e. For PhD-discipline faculty: the journal must be indexed in Scopus with an SJR metric. Papers in English not indexed in Scopus are not eligible. Papers in languages other than English in non-Scopus journals may be submitted for classification by the UPC.
- f. For terminal-degree faculty: the School's approved Creative Output Classification List determines the equivalent standing of publications and creative outlets.

The classification of journals for promotion is confirmed by the UPC at the start of each academic year and communicated to all faculty. Candidates are encouraged to request pre-classification of a journal before submission of a manuscript by writing to the VPAA.

Article 5: Promotion Committees

5.1 Department Promotions Committee (DPC)

- a. At the beginning of each academic year, the Department Chair appoints a DPC comprising at least three faculty members holding a rank equal to or higher than the rank applied for. The DPC is chaired by the Department Chair if they hold the rank of Professor; otherwise by another Professor in the department. Where the department does not have sufficient members of the required rank, the Dean appoints external members from within AIU from cognate disciplines.
- b. The DPC conducts the first substantive review of the promotion dossier, assessing whether the candidate meets the promotion criteria set out in this policy and any approved School-specific supplementary criteria. The DPC produces a written recommendation with a numerical vote, a statement of reasons, and, where applicable, a signed minority opinion. This recommendation is forwarded to the SPC.
- c. The Department Chair must recuse from all DPC deliberations and votes and prepares a separate written recommendation to the SPC independently of the committee.

5.2 School Promotions Committee (SPC)

- a. At the beginning of each academic year, the Dean appoints an SPC comprising at least three faculty members at the rank of Professor, with representation from each department in the School. Associate Professors may serve on the SPC for promotion to Associate Professor cases only. The SPC is chaired by the Dean if they hold the rank of Professor; otherwise by a Professor designated by the Dean.
- b. The SPC reviews the dossier forwarded by the DPC, the Department Chair's separate recommendation, and all external and dependent assessor reports received by the close of the review window. The SPC produces a written recommendation with a numerical vote, a statement

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of reasons, and, where applicable, a signed minority opinion. This recommendation is forwarded to the UPC.

- c. The Dean prepares a separate written recommendation to the VPAA, distinct from the SPC's recommendation. Where the Dean's recommendation differs from the SPC's, the Dean must state the reasons in writing and share those reasons with the SPC before the file is forwarded.

5.3 University Promotions Committee (UPC)

- a. At the beginning of each academic year, the President appoints the UPC comprising the VPAA (who chairs), and at least one Professor from each School. Members serve two-year staggered terms, renewable once. SPC members may not simultaneously serve on the UPC for cases from their own School. Faculty in their terminal contract year are not eligible to serve on any promotion committee.
- b. The UPC reviews all dossiers forwarded from Schools together with the SPC and Dean recommendations. It ensures consistency of standards across Schools, reviews external assessor evaluations, and may request additional information from any party before reaching a final recommendation. Decisions are taken by majority vote in secret ballot. The UPC forwards its recommendations, together with the full dossier and all supporting documents, to the President.
- c. The VPAA conducts a final equity and consistency check across all promotion cases and submits a formal academic recommendation to the President. The President holds final approval authority for all promotion decisions. The President's decision is final and is not subject to further institutional review except through the appeal process in Article 8.
- d. Committee members shall receive periodic guidance or training on the consistent application of promotion criteria.

5.4 Committee Conflict of Interest

A committee member must declare a conflict of interest and recuse from any case where the candidate is their relative, close personal acquaintance, former doctoral student, current co-author, or collaborator within the preceding three years. Recusal is declared in writing to the committee chair, who reports it to the Dean or VPAA. A candidate may request the disqualification of a committee member on conflict of interest grounds by submitting a written request with stated reasons to the Dean (for DPC and SPC cases) or to the VPAA (for UPC cases). The decision on disqualification requests is issued within five working days and is included in the dossier.

Article 6: External Peer Review

External peer review is an essential component of AIU's promotion process. It ensures that promotion standards are anchored to international disciplinary norms rather than solely to internal institutional comparisons.

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6.1 Independent External Reviewers

- a. Each promotion dossier requires a minimum of four independent external reviewer reports, where exceptional circumstances prevent obtaining the required number of reports, the VPAA may approve proceeding once sufficient independent evidence has been obtained. Independent reviewers must:
 - Hold the rank of Professor, or equivalent recognized senior standing, in the candidate's field.
 - Be from a recognized university or research institution outside Kuwait.
 - Have no conflict of interest with the candidate, meaning they must not have supervised the candidate's doctoral work, co-authored any work with the candidate, been a colleague at the same institution within the preceding five years, or have any personal relationship that could compromise independence.
 - Be recognized authorities in the candidate's area of specialization.
- b. A list of at least ten potential independent external reviewers is proposed collaboratively by the candidate and the Dean. The SPC reviews this list for independence, balance, and disciplinary alignment. At least four reviewers are selected from the list by the VPAA, with at least one reviewer drawn from each of the three sub-lists provided (see Article 6.3). The VPAA may add additional reviewers after consulting the UPC. All communication with external reviewers is conducted by the VPAA Office.
- c. Each external reviewer receives: the candidate's full CV; the research statement; the teaching statement; five selected publications or equivalent creative outputs (specified by the candidate as their best work); the University promotion criteria; and an AIU evaluation questionnaire addressing the sufficiency of the scholarly evidence for promotion.
- d. A minimum of three independent external reviewer reports must be received before the dossier is considered complete. If a reviewer does not respond within 45 days, the VPAA approaches the next reviewer on the list. The identities of external reviewers are not disclosed to the candidate at any stage of the process.

6.2 Dependent Assessors

The candidate nominates five dependent assessors, senior academics or practitioners who have interacted professionally with the candidate and can speak to their scholarly standing and professional character. The Dean requests formal written assessments from at least three of the five nominated dependent assessors. Dependent assessors should hold at least the rank being applied for by the candidate. Dependent assessor identities and reports are treated as confidential.

6.3 External Reviewer Nomination Lists

Candidates submit three sub-lists of potential reviewers:

- a. Scholars who have closely followed the candidate's work (e.g. cited it, reviewed it, or engaged with it at conferences).

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- b. Scholars who are leaders in the candidate's area of specialization but have had limited direct interaction with the candidate.
- c. Scholars whose work the candidate has cited or followed but with whom there has been minimal direct professional contact.

Candidates may also submit a separate exclusion list of individuals who should not be approached due to a known conflict of interest, with a brief explanation of the nature of the conflict.

6.4 Promotion Dossier Contents

The complete promotion dossier must contain the following, in the order specified:

- Table of contents
- Copy of AIU, School, and departmental promotion criteria applicable to the candidate
- Candidate's signed letter requesting promotion
- Updated curriculum vitae, complete and accurate; inaccurate statements are grounds for disqualification
- Personal Statement (maximum five pages) comprising: Statement of Research (or Creative Activity) covering major achievements since last promotion and future trajectory; Teaching Statement covering teaching philosophy, pedagogical development, and evidence of student learning impact; and Service Statement summarizing meaningful contributions to the institution, profession, and community
- Citation and impact metrics, h-index, i-10 index, and citation counts from both Scopus and Google Scholar, with active profile links
- Five selected publications or equivalent creative outputs including the candidate's best work representing the promotion period; collaborative works must include a contribution statement
- Complete list of all publications, outputs, grants, and scholarly activities during the promotion period, with full bibliographic details
- Teaching portfolio including student evaluation summaries, peer observation reports, sample syllabi, and reflective teaching statement
- Service record including committee appointments, Faculty Council participation, professional association roles, and other documented contributions
- Supporting documentation including certificates, awards, exhibition records, commissions, grant letters, and other relevant evidence
- Proposed external reviewer list and, separately, exclusion list
- Proposed dependent assessor list

No material may be added to the dossier after its formal submission except: (a) external reviewer and dependent assessor reports received by the VPAA Office; (b) written recommendations of each reviewing body; and (c) any response to a formal request from a committee for clarification. Any addition made outside these parameters requires written approval from the VPAA. The candidate has the right to withdraw the application before external review is initiated.

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Article 7: Promotion Timeline

The following timeline governs the AIU annual promotion cycle. All deadlines are mandatory. Late submissions are not accepted except in cases of documented medical emergency or acute personal circumstance approved in advance in writing by the VPAA.

Activity	Deadline	Responsibility
VPAA issue call for promotions and eligibility criteria	1 August	VPAA
Faculty submit Intent to Apply	31 August	Faculty Candidate
HR confirms eligibility; shares list with VPAA and Deans	15 September	HR
Faculty submit proposed external reviewer list to Dean (in consultation with Dean)	15 September	Faculty Candidate
Dean reviews and approves external reviewer lists; VPAA conducts conflict-of-interest check	30 September	Dean / VPAA
VPAA sends formal requests to confirmed external reviewers	1 October	VPAA
Faculty submit complete promotion dossier (excluding external letters) to Dean	1 October	Faculty Candidate
Dean reviews dossier for completeness; shares relevant documents with external reviewers	15 October	Dean
Dean endorses dossier for submission; external reviewer window open	Early November	Dean / VPAA
External reviewer responses received and locked; dossier finalized	Early November	VPAA
Faculty submit complete finalized dossier	Early December	Faculty Candidate

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SPC checks completeness; transmits dossiers to University Promotions Committee	Early December	SPC
University Promotions Committee deliberations and vote	January	UPC
UPC submits committee recommendation letter; Dean submits formal endorsement	January	UPC / Dean
Rebuttal window opens (if applicable on procedural grounds only)	January	Faculty Candidate
VPAA conducts equity and consistency check; submits final academic recommendation	January	VPAA
Finance confirms budget; Senior Leadership approves; President issues decision	February	Finance / President
HR prepares and issues formal promotion decision letters signed by the President	March	HR
Promotion effective date	Start of following academic year	Institution

Promotions become effective at the start of the following academic year. At that time, the salary reflecting the new rank takes effect, the employment contract is updated to reflect the new title, and HR updates all institutional records accordingly.

The VPAA may adjust operational deadlines where institutional circumstances require without requiring amendment of this policy.

Article 8: Appeal Process

A candidate whose promotion application is unsuccessful has the right to appeal. The appeal process is designed to protect procedural integrity, not to substitute the committee's scholarly judgment with the appellant's. The following provisions govern appeals at AIU:

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8.1 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals may only be filed on one or more of the following grounds:

- Failure to account for pertinent evidence that was included in the dossier and was available to the reviewing bodies.
- Failure to secure the required number of independent external reviewer and dependent assessor reports.
- Introduction of improper evidence or criteria not published in this policy.
- Application of standards or procedures other than those published in this policy and any approved School-level supplementary criteria.
- Prejudicial or discriminatory judgment including evidence that the decision was influenced by factors unrelated to scholarly merit, including the candidate's exercise of academic freedom, their participation in Faculty Council, or any protected characteristic.

Appeals on the sole grounds of disagreement with the scholarly judgment of the committees or external reviewers are not admissible. New scholarly material submitted after the close of the promotion cycle is not admissible in an appeal of that cycle; it may be submitted in the following promotion cycle.

8.2 Appeal Procedure

- A faculty member who receives a negative final decision may request, within two weeks of receiving the decision letter, a summary report from the Dean detailing the major weaknesses identified by the reviewing committees. The summary report must preserve the confidentiality of committee deliberations, voting scores, and external reviewer identities.
- Within two weeks of receiving the summary report, the candidate may file a formal written appeal with the Dean, who comments on it and refers it to the VPAA within five working days.
- The VPAA refers the appeal, with the Dean's commentary, to the Promotion Appeal Committee.
- The Promotion Appeal Committee reviews the appeal, determines whether the stated procedural grounds are substantiated, and submits one of two recommendations to the President: Dismiss the appeal (insufficient evidence of procedural error) or Accept the appeal (convincing evidence of procedural error). The Committee may request information from any party involved in the promotion review. The Committee does not re-evaluate scholarly merit, call witnesses, or substitute its judgment for that of any reviewing body.
- The President reviews the Appeal Committee's recommendation and issues a final decision, which is communicated through the VPAA and Dean to the candidate. The President's decision is final and not subject to further institutional appeal.
- Where the appeal is accepted and an error is found at the School level, the President directs the VPAA to refer the file back to the Dean for review by a newly constituted SPC whose members did not participate in the original review. Where the error is at the UPC level, the VPAA may constitute a new UPC or refer the matter back to the same UPC for reconsideration, at the President's direction.

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8.3 Promotion Appeal Committee

The Promotion Appeal Committee is a standing committee appointed by the President comprising three Professors from different Schools at AIU. Members are appointed for renewable three-year terms. A member who participated in any reviewing body for a case being appealed must recuse from that case. Committee deliberations are strictly confidential; minutes are maintained and shared only with the President at the conclusion of deliberations. Any breach of confidentiality is reported to the President and treated as a breach of professional ethics under FAC-004.

Article 9: Confidentiality and Integrity

The promotion process at AIU is treated with the strictest confidentiality at every level and by every participant. The following rules apply:

- All committee deliberations, individual votes, minority opinions, external assessor identities and reports, and dependent assessor reports are confidential.
- No participant in the promotion review process may share, discuss, or disclose any aspect of committee proceedings outside the process.
- Candidates are not entitled to know how any individual committee member voted, which comments in a committee letter are attributable to which member, or the identity of any external reviewer.
- Violation of confidentiality by any participant in the process constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics under FAC-004 and is subject to the sanctions available under that policy.
- No person may participate in evaluating a candidate's dossier at more than one committee level in the same promotion cycle (i.e. a person who serves on the DPC may not also serve on the SPC or UPC for the same candidate's case).
- Faculty members serving in their terminal contract year are not eligible to serve on any promotion committee.

Article 10: Administrative Roles and Promotion

- If a candidate for promotion is serving as a Department Chair, their dossier is submitted directly to the Dean, who refers it to the SPC. The Department Chair's normal DPC recommendation role is discharged by the SPC in this case.
- If a candidate for promotion is a School Dean, the dossier is submitted to the VPAA, who appoints an ad hoc committee to assume the SPC role. The VPAA assumes the Dean's role in the process.
- Faculty members serving in senior University management positions, President, VPAA, or Vice President level, may not apply for promotion while in office.
- Administrative load releases and service contributions during administrative appointments are recognized in the service domain of the promotion evaluation. Workload profile adjustments during administrative service are documented and considered in assessing research output expectations.

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Article 11: Promotion and Salary

1. Promotion to Associate Professor or Professor takes effect at the start of the academic year following the President's decision. Salary adjustments are implemented by Finance and HR at the effective date. The adjusted salary reflects the new rank's approved pay scale. Where a faculty member has received an exceptional salary premium under FAC-003, Article 6.3, the premium is reviewed at the point of promotion and adjusted consistent with the new rank's scale, subject to Presidential approval.
2. Promotion is recognized in the faculty member's employment contract, which is updated to reflect the new rank and extended or renewed accordingly. HR updates all institutional records, including the Faculty Information System, within ten working days of the effective date.

Article 12: Record Retention

All promotion dossiers including all submissions, committee reports, external assessor reports, dependent assessor reports, vote records, appeal documentation, and final decisions are retained as official University records. Successful promotion dossiers are retained in the faculty member's personnel file for the duration of their employment. Unsuccessful promotion dossiers are retained for a minimum of ten years from the date of the final decision in accordance with the University's records management and data protection requirements. All records are maintained with strict confidentiality. The original promotion dossier, including all submitted documents, is returned to the faculty member upon completion of the process in cases of successful promotion; unsuccessful dossiers are retained by the VPAA Office.

Procedures

The following procedures govern the administration of this policy and are read in conjunction with the timeline table in Article 7.

Annual Promotion Cycle Launch

1. The VPAA issues the annual Call for Promotions by 1 August, distributed through AIU communication channels to all Deans, Department Chairs, and faculty. The Call specifies the promotion criteria, eligibility requirements, required documentation, all deadlines, and instructions for the current cycle.
2. Deans communicate the Call to their faculty and hold information sessions for potential applicants. Candidates are encouraged to meet with their Dean before submitting their Intent to Apply to review their eligibility and the state of their dossier.
3. Faculty submit Intent to Apply by 31 August. Late submissions are not accepted. HR acknowledges receipt and shares the list with the VPAA and Deans.

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4. SPC confirms the eligibility of all applicants by 15 September, cross-checking rank, years of service, AIU service period, and annual evaluation history. The confirmed eligibility list is shared with the VPAA and Deans. SPC communicates ineligibility decisions in writing to affected candidates with the specific grounds stated.

External Reviewer Selection and Engagement

1. Eligible candidates submit their proposed external reviewer list and exclusion list to the Dean by 15 September, following the three-sub-list structure in Article 6.3.
2. The Dean reviews the list for compliance with independence, rank, and disciplinary alignment requirements and endorses it to the VPAA by 30 September.
3. The VPAA conducts a conflict-of-interest review of all proposed reviewers and selects the confirmed reviewer panel from the approved list, ensuring at least one reviewer from each sub-list.
4. The VPAA issues formal review requests to confirmed external reviewers by 1 October, enclosing the reviewer evaluation questionnaire. Reviewers are given 45 days to respond. The VPAA monitors responses and sends reminders at the 30-day mark. Where a reviewer does not respond within 45 days, the VPAA contacts the next name on the relevant sub-list.
5. External reviewer letters are received and locked by the VPAA Office by early November. They are not shared with the candidate, the Dean, or any committee before the UPC deliberation stage.

Dossier Preparation and Submission

1. Candidates prepare and submit their complete promotion dossier (excluding external letters) to their Dean by 1 October. The Dean reviews the dossier for completeness and compliance within 10 working days and endorses it for onward submission or returns it to the candidate with specific deficiencies identified.
2. Incomplete dossiers are not advanced. Candidates whose dossiers are returned for deficiencies have five working days to address the identified issues; if the corrected dossier is not resubmitted within this period, the application is deferred to the next cycle.
3. The Dean shares relevant dossier documents (CV, research statement, teaching statement, five selected publications) with the confirmed external reviewers through the VPAA Office by 15 October.
4. The finalized, complete dossier incorporating external reviewer letters received by the close of the window is submitted by the candidate by early December. HR checks completeness and transmits all dossiers to the UPC.

Committee Review Process

1. The DPC convenes within two weeks of receiving the complete dossier and prepares its written recommendation within four weeks. The recommendation is forwarded with the full dossier to the SPC.
2. The SPC convenes within two weeks of receiving the DPC recommendation and prepares its written recommendation within four weeks. The Dean prepares a separate written recommendation. Both are forwarded to the VPAA.

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3. The UPC convenes in January, reviews all dossiers submitted in the current cycle, and produces its written recommendations. The UPC ensures consistency of standards across all cases reviewed in the cycle before finalizing its recommendations.
4. All committee recommendations include: the numerical vote; the reasons for the recommendation; and, where applicable, a signed minority opinion. All recommendations are included in the dossier forwarded to the VPAA.

Rebuttal, Final Review, and Decision

1. Where the UPC recommendation is adverse to the candidate, the candidate is notified and given 10 working days to submit a formal written rebuttal addressing procedural grounds or documented factual inaccuracies only. New scholarly material is not permitted in a rebuttal. The rebuttal is included in the dossier forwarded to the VPAA.
2. The VPAA reviews all dossiers, committee recommendations, Dean recommendations, and any rebuttals, conducts an equity and consistency check across all cases, and submits a formal academic recommendation to the President by the end of January.
3. Finance confirms budget availability. Senior Leadership reviews and approves the promotion decisions. The President issues formal decisions in February.
4. HR prepares formal decision letters and issues them to all applicants in March. Successful candidates receive notification of new rank, effective date, and salary adjustment. Unsuccessful candidates receive notification of the outcome, with guidance on the appeal process and an invitation to consult with their Dean for developmental feedback.

President Signature

Signature: _____ Date: _____