



Memorandum on UG's Academic Career Track policy



Approved by the Board of the University on 15 May 2017, effective from 1 July 2017. Amended in 2023/2024.

Until 2016, the UG's Tenure Track policy consisted of the specific memoranda per faculty combined with the UG Adjunct Professor regulations. An evaluation conducted in 2015 revealed a need for making the shared elements of the institution's Tenure Track policy explicit and for pointing out the differences among faculties.

The policy formulated in this memorandum supersedes all differing policies at faculty level. In 2023, the memo was transformed into a broader memo on Academic Career Track policy.

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General

1

The goal of the Academic Career Track policy (previously UG's Tenure Track policy) is to offer young academics a career path. Meeting the objectives and criteria of the path automatically leads to an appointment as associate professor and, in certain tracks, to a full professorship at the UG. In this way, the UG aims to attract young academic talent and to foster a long-lasting commitment. The regular Academic Career Track policy (previously the Tenure Track policy) is supplemented by a specific Tenure Track policy to make the University extra appealing to women: the Rosalind Franklin Fellowship programme. Staff members can make the most of their talents and deliver good performances in teaching and

research. In addition, this academic career path allows the University to train its own staff and meet the need for associate and full professors. In 2023, the UG memo on Tenure Track policy, adopted in 2017, was transformed into a memo on Academic Career Track policy. Developments on the labour market, amended legislation, and the Recognition and Rewards programme have led to more variation in the tracks, both in terms of when the appointment is turned into a permanent one and in terms of differentiation in the career tracks, i.e. focus more on teaching, on research, or on research impact. There is also more flexibility in when the candidate will be assessed and promoted.



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

The University of Groningen is committed to the principles of the European Commission's Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Link: <http://www.rug.nl/about-us/where-do-we-stand/quality-works/room-for-talent/>

Our institution is working on the realization of the HR excellence in research action plan through continuous evaluation and improvement of its HR policy for academics, in consultation with the faculty boards, professors and other academics.

This UG Academic Career Track policy memorandum identifies the shared framework of the UG's institutional policy regarding career tracks. This does not mean, however, that the Academic Career Track policy is identical throughout the University of Groningen. Its implementation also differs per faculty.

The general principles of the track, however, are identical everywhere in terms of the duration of the first career step, composition of the appointment and assessment committees, responsibilities of the Board of the University, the faculty boards, and managers. The practical implementation of the career path may vary across faculties. This can be observed most clearly in the performance criteria applied and, for example, in the proportion of time to be spent on teaching versus research. Meanwhile, there are also differences in when the position is turned into a permanent one.

Moreover, the extent to which faculties use the academic career track rather than recruiting for a specific position differs according to the academic staffing policy they adhere to. The Faculty of Science and Engineering posts Tenure Track position vacancies for all of their structural positions. The other faculties post certain positions as career track positions and some faculties only incidentally have career track vacancies. The University of Groningen supports this policy diversity, so that faculties may optimally align their staffing needs with the characteristics of the labour markets in which they operate.



2

Various academic career tracks, whether or not in the shape of a tenure track.

The section below describes the shared aspects of an Academic Career Track. The implementation at faculty level is much more detailed and involves many more steps. Since these details differ across faculties, they are not presented here. The framework of this track is Article 2.2a and Article 6.6 of the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities.

Phase 1

temporary appointment as assistant professor³ for a maximum of six/seven years

After five years, the Faculty Promotion Committee performs an assessment for promotion to phase two and a permanent position. In some variants, the permanent position is disconnected from the promotion to UHD-2. See the above overview.

Phase	Duration	Type of appointment	Position	Scale
1	Assessment after 5 years, maximum total duration of the appointment 6/7 years	Temporary	Assistant professor	11, 12
Variants in which the permanent position is disconnected from the promotion to UHD				
Variant a	(Tenure Track Article from Collective Labour Agreement)	Temporary position for six or seven years at the start of the track. Permanent position after one to three years.	Assistant professor	11, 12
Variant b	Without the Tenure Track Article from the Collective Labour Agreement, a regular UD appointment as legal position	Duration of temporary appointment 18 months	Assistant professor	11, 12
2	Approximately seven years	Permanent	Associate professor (UHD) with ius promovendi or Adjunct Professor	13,14
The more elaborate tracks run on to Professor 2				
End	Indefinite	Permanent	Full Professor (HGL) 2	H2

¹ Tracks comprise the positions UD2-UD1-UHD2. Some tracks also comprise higher positions: UD2-UD1-UHD2-UHD1 (adjunct professor)-professor.

²According to UG Adjunct Professor regulations 2010

³The university medical centres have a different Collective Labour Agreement (CAO) and a number of the proposed options are technically not possible at the UMCG, according to their CAO. The maximum term of a first temporary tenure track contract at the UMCG is five years, not six/seven years. The duration of a regular temporary academic contract is four years. Medical staff have a permanent contract that is not subject to their academic achievements. Because the UMCG also has a regular track, which runs on to UHD-1, a talent track without adjunct professorship is technically not possible. If someone is found to be unsuited for the adjunct professorship, they will become a regular track candidate. At the UMCG, only the talent track has fixed terms. In consultation with their department, the regular track candidates may decide when they are ready to be assessed for promotion.

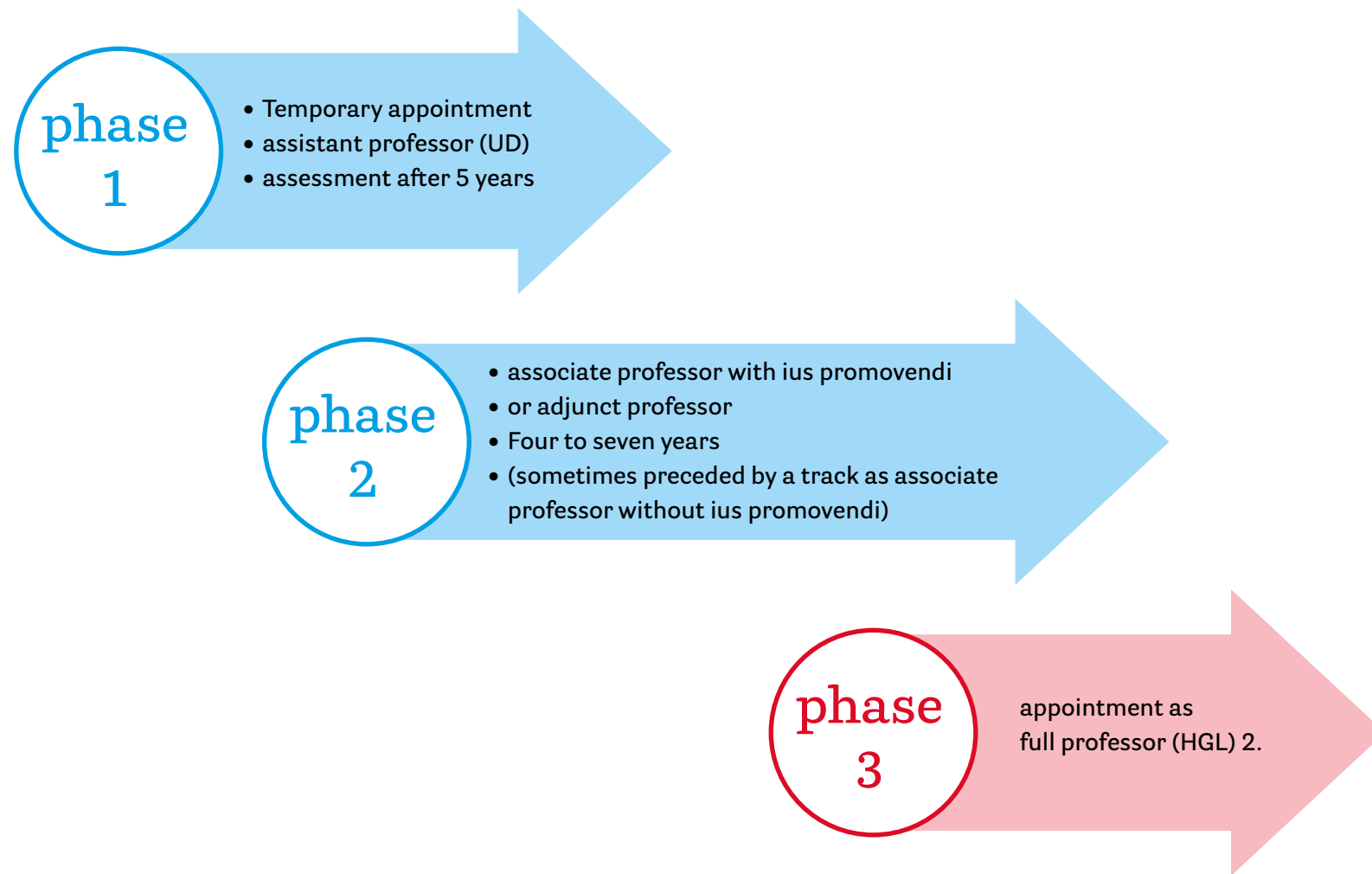
Phase 2

permanent appointment as associate professor with *ius promovendi* or adjunct professor.

The Board of the University appoints the staff member as adjunct professor with *ius promovendi* for part of or the entire phase 2. After four to seven years, staff members can have themselves assessed by the Faculty Promotion Committee for the final step of the track: appointment as full professor (HGL) 2 by the Board of the University. An appointment to adjunct professor is not mandatory

in the Academic Career Track policy. The advantage is the use of the title Professor (Prof.). Instead, the dean can request the *ius promovendi* for the UHD at the PhD Board⁴. For some career tracks, appointment to UHD with *ius promovendi* is the final stage of the Academic Career Track – see phase 2 below. Other career tracks have an appointment as professor as the final stage of the track. The candidate will then be nominated to the Board of the University for appointment as full professor 2 –see phase 3 below.

⁴ The *ius promovendi* may already be requested during the assistant professor career phase, provided that the candidate satisfies the conditions.



Up or out

3

The career path as described assumes successful completion of the different steps. The candidate meets the norms of the performance criteria and is promoted to the next phase: *up*. What happens if the assessments are negative, the career path stagnates, or is disrupted prematurely? This might be the case in both the first and the second phase.

The track ends for candidates who, in the judgement of the Committee, fail to meet the criteria after five years, at the end of phase one. In this case, the temporary appointment can be cancelled prematurely subject to one year's notice. This final year can be used by the staff member to find a new position within or outside the University of Groningen. The institution will support such efforts. If the candidate already has a permanent position, the career track may be adjusted or, in consultation, a different position will be sought within or outside the UG.

The track ends for candidates who fail to meet the criteria at the end of phase two within the stipulated timeframe. Their appointment as adjunct professor ends after a maximum of seven years. Such candidates will retain the *ius promovendi* for five more years and will return to their original job title of associate professor. In specific situations, the Board of the University can decide otherwise on the basis of the hardship clause. Naturally, UHDs with *ius promovendi* will retain this right.



4

Tailored Track

The Academic Career Track is an intensive track that is usually offered as a full-time position and requires staff members' full-time devotion. But one can imagine situations in which staff members prefer a four-day working week at the University of Groningen. This does imply, however, that these candidates need more time to achieve their performance objectives. Illness may also delay progress in the career track. The current Collective Labour Agreement only allows for a three-month extension of this specific temporary appointment. As a result, less time may in fact be available to achieve the criteria imposed, due to part-time work and disruptions such as pregnancy or illness. The general agreement within the University of Groningen is that the criteria for promotion remain in place in such cases. Rather than adapting the criteria, the assessment by the Promotion Committee is postponed. In such cases, termination of the temporary appointment may already be imminent by operation of law, and agreements are made that do justice to the situation while weighing the importance of being a consistent employer.

Previous employment at the University of Groningen may also necessitate earlier permanent appointment, i.e. prior to the promotion to associate professor. Such situations require tailored solutions and cannot be fully described here. Customization must, however, be properly justifiable towards fellow participants of the career track.

Below is a description of the duration of the temporary appointment at different numbers of FTE.

	Time until assessment	Buffer for life events	Total duration
number of FTE 100%	5 years	2 years	7 years (max. 6 years without any life events)
number of FTE 90%	5 years, 7 months	2 years, 3 months	7 years and 10 months (max. 6 years and 10 months without any life events)
number of FTE 80%	6 years, 3 months	2 years, 6 months	8 years and 9 months (max. 7 years and 9 months without any life events)

Criteria

The entry requirements and the requirements for admission to the next phase are determined at the faculty level and laid down in a Faculty Tenure Track memorandum // Faculty Academic Career Track policy memorandum. The activities to which the requirements pertain are common for all faculties: teaching, research, valorization, and organization/administration. The focus will not be on all four activities simultaneously all the time, but a mix of responsibilities will be imposed.

Behavioural competences that are essential to the successful functioning as a professor will be a part of the performance requirements. This includes competences such as active professionalization, guiding leadership, reflective skills and strategic action, collegiality, creating a good atmosphere and team spirit, giving and receiving feedback, integrity, planning and organizing, insight in and commitment to the organization of the faculty and the University of Groningen as a whole. Obviously, performance measures will vary across faculties, depending on the publication conventions and, for example, opportunities for obtaining external funding in the academic field concerned. The extent to which deficiencies can be compensated depends on the individual faculty, the criterion concerned, and the compensation available in another criterion. The faculty Academic Career Track memorandum stipulates the conditions under which compensation is possible.

Institution-wide requirements for appointment to the Career Track

- PhD gained
- Publications in peer-reviewed journals
- International network/experience
- Innovative research proposal which could potentially attract external funding
- Teaching experience
- UTQ certificate or the obligation to obtain one as soon as possible
- Good command of English (and Dutch eventually), both oral and written
- Demonstrable organizational qualities and excellent communication skills.

These requirements have been elaborated and supplemented with faculty-specific appointment requirements by each faculty.

6

Recruitment: open recruitment in the international labour market⁵

As a rule, vacancies for Tenure Track/ Academic Career Track assistant professors are announced to the international labour market in English via national media, job sites (Academic Transfer, Euraxess Jobs), international networks, and job markets. Tenure Track positions are considered the instrument par excellence to attract more women to higher academic positions. Each faculty has its own target figures to ensure a sufficient intake of female talent in phase one of the Career Track. Members of appointment advisory committees are professionalized through workshops.



⁴ In conformity with the European Commission's Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R). Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/singleNews/1851>

Roles and authority

7

Several people/positions and committees each have their own role during the career track. These roles are described below.

Appointment Advisory Committee (BAC)

This committee is appointed by the faculty board and gives recommendations on the content of the vacant Academic Career Track position, the structural report, and the selection criteria to be imposed as part of the faculty Tenure Track / Academic Career Track policy.

The composition of the BAC in principle has to meet the same requirements as that of the BAC for full professors.

- a. At least two female members, including one full professor
- b. At least one external expert (full professor)
- c. The Programme Director and Academic Director of the relevant school of research
- d. One representative of the academic staff with knowledge of the field
- e. One student member
- f. The HR advisor is an advisory member.

In addition, it is important to involve international staff members in the selection process.

Faculty Tenure Track Committee

This committee, appointed by the faculty board, advises the faculty board during the phase transitions on the extent to which candidates meet the performance criteria. Its members conduct a thorough review of the documentation concerning the appointment and the phase transitions. They are allowed to speak to informants as well as the candidates in person.

The Committee does not have hiring authority but offers advice to the faculty board. It is advisable for its consistent functioning that (a part of) the Academic Career Track Committee be appointed for a longer period of time.

The composition of the Academic Career Track Committee is different from that of the Appointment Advisory Committee in some faculties.

- a. At least two female members, including one full professor
- b. At least one external expert (full professor)
- c. One representative of the academic staff with knowledge of the field
- d. Not at all faculties: the programme director and academic director of the relevant school of research
- e. One student member
- f. The HR advisor is an advisory member.

Faculty Board

The faculty board decides on the appointment of a candidate, or to advise and nominate a candidate to the Board of the University in case of a Rosalind Franklin Fellowship, on the advice of the BAC or the faculty Academic Career Track Committee.

Board of the University

The Board of the University agrees to a nomination as Rosalind Franklin Fellow or a nomination as adjunct professor and appoints candidates as adjunct professor or full professor (HGL) 2, i.e. at the end of the appointment track. The Board of the University also decides on any rejections. All letters of appointment or rejection as adjunct or full professor are sent on behalf of the Board of the University.

Supervising Full Professor

All candidates will have a supervising full professor as their manager. These full professors conduct the annual Results and Development (R&O) interviews, encourage candidates, and ensure that they become well anchored within the faculty and are introduced in the academic networks. Since the candidates will be forming their own groups and setting their own course, a development-oriented attitude is required from the supervisors. The supervisors advise the Academic Career Track Committee or are a part of it in certain faculties.



Training and Support

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It is important for their career development that Academic Career Track candidates feel at home at the University of Groningen and that their teaching and research are anchored within the organization. Customized and generic training and support are available to the candidates and their managers to achieve this.

Support for the candidates

The University of Groningen has developed a support programme, tailored to the situation of the participants. It includes both general activities and individual support.

A good initial phase of the Career Track enhances the likelihood of its successful completion. For this

What is the added value of a mentor over a manager?

A mentor is an experienced full professor who knows the ins and outs of the University and knows how to handle things. Mentors are not necessarily from the same faculty as the candidates/mentees. Mentors are independent, are not accountable for the functioning of their mentee or mentees, and are sparring partners. Mentorship is career guidance by an experienced colleague who is at a distance, and not an immediate party in daily affairs, who is able to reflect on and assist in the development of the mentee.

reason, participants are assigned a mentor after arriving in Groningen. Mentors are available for support and for introducing the new staff members to the University of Groningen. In addition, a training plan is drawn up in the first months of the appointment, and the requirements of the Academic Career Track programme are explained and translated in terms of the individual situation of the participant.

Various activities are available in addition to this individual support:

1. Academic Career Track network

The candidates are introduced into the University's existing Academic Career network. The network meetings address various subjects that are helpful to the introduction of the mostly international academics to Groningen.

Examples of subjects are:

- Introduction to the University, the city of Groningen, and the Netherlands
- Introduction of support staff and support departments, such as Dean Talent Development, Research & Valorization, faculty funding officers, Human Resources, etc.
- Learning from the experiences of previous candidates.
- Themes such as diversity, management, PhD supervision, etc.

2 Personal marketing

It is important for academics to be internationally visible. Several activities are being offered to help candidates achieve this aim. Examples include:

- Designing your own staff page (MEPA)
- Introduction to the Current Research Information System (CRIS)
- Media training
- Increasing societal impact

3 Masterclass on funding

Attracting external funding is an important part of the Academic Career Track. Several support activities are available for candidates:

- Knowledge of Dutch and European grant-awarding bodies
- Routing of grant applications within the University of Groningen
- Support departments and external support for grant applications
- Dutch-language masterclasses

4 Academic Leadership

Besides familiarizing participants with the backgrounds of various leadership styles, the programme is primarily designed for practice, using examples from daily operations, largely provided by the participants themselves. As such, the collegial contact and exchange of experiences form an important subsidiary objective. The following subjects are covered in the curriculum:

- Situational leadership
- Styles of influencing
- Managing changes
- Personal effectiveness

5 Acquiring the Dutch language

The acquisition of the Dutch language is encouraged in order to integrate into (Dutch) academia. It is important in acquiring means from the Dutch Research Council (NWO) and membership of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

Support for supervisors/managers

Supervisors of Academic Career Track candidates play an important role in successfully completing the track. For this reason, supervisors are invited to an information meeting to discuss their role in an early stage of the track.

Subjects include:

- Introduction of the candidates to the University and the academic field
- Available support for supervisors and candidates
- Role and responsibility of the supervisor

Ongoing improvement

9

Careful implementation of the Academic Career Track policy requires regular monitoring of the process from a distance as well as watching out for any undesired developments. Candidates themselves will be asked to share their experiences at specific times. In addition, a joint meeting will be organized for the relevant administrators, supervisors, and HR staff every four years to evaluate the policy. Furthermore, faculty administrators will update the faculty memoranda on a regular basis, after which the memos will be approved by the Board of the University.

