The Academic Career in Tertiary Education
Pointers for policy development

GIVE INSTITUTIONS AMPLE AUTONOMY OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

➢ Ensure that national legislation focuses on outlining principles rather than specific processes

➢ Make faculty and staff formal employees of tertiary education institutions (TEIs)

➢ Give institutions discretion over setting academic salaries

➢ Give institutions freedom to create academic positions in line with their strategy

➢ Allow institutions to determine the range of career structures, e.g. balance between teaching and research and make them responsible for designing promotion, assessment and professional development strategies

➢ Ensure open competition and transparency for staff appointments

MANAGE THE ACADEMIC CAREER IN A FLEXIBLE MANNER

➢ Provide more flexibility on the roles and workloads of academic staff and the types of employment contract

➢ Align career structures (e.g. academic ranks, responsibilities, qualifications) with institutions' missions

➢ Ensure that academics assume responsibility for shaping their work profile and develop professionally in accordance with the larger organisational and external environment

➢ Evaluate through debate the continuing merit of long and expensive career ladders

RECONCILE ACADEMIC FREEDOM WITH INSTITUTIONS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY

➢ Provide academics with support and conditions to meet what the institution and society expect from them

➢ Give academics autonomy in the design of the courses they teach

➢ Grant academics the freedom to select research topics and approaches to research

➢ Give academics freedom in their interpretation of research results and knowledge conveyed to students

➢ Allow academics to publicise the results of their research and the outputs of their service to the community

➢ Hold academics accountable for the outcomes of their academic activities

ENHANCE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE ACADEMIC CAREER

➢ Consider targeting larger salary rises to the key groups of interest to particular institutions

➢ Consider providing a dynamic knowledge-rich work environment, opportunities for career growth, prospects for a stable career and opportunities for mobility and collaboration with external organisations

➢ Properly remunerate academic staff in their institution of primary employment so that secondary employment becomes exceptional

➢ Consider dual appointments for academic staff to encourage inter-institutional collaboration

➢ Sustain efforts to enhance the development of female representation in leadership positions

IMPROVE ENTRANCE CONDITIONS OF YOUNG ACADEMICS

➢ Provide a supporting environment to young academics upon entry into the academic career

➢ Ensure that recruitment processes are transparent and based on merit

➢ Set up a formal probationary process for new academics

STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND LEADERSHIP

➢ Link individual academic work to institutional strategic goals through leadership and management processes

➢ Foster sense of ownership and collegiality through team work, internal communication and peer reviews

EVALUATE AND REWARD THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ACADEMICS

➢ Extend rewards to areas other than research such as teaching, community service, technology transfer and dissemination activities

➢ Train heads of department and other senior colleagues in evaluation processes

➢ Consolidate mechanisms to reward academics for exemplary performance

➢ Diversify types of rewards such as time allowances, sabbatical periods, opportunities for activities in another organisation, support for research or further study or opportunities for training activities

➢ Provide simple, transparent and accepted procedures for dealing with ineffective academics

INTEGRATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE CAREER

➢ Grant academics released time and/or financial support to undertake professional development activities

➢ Consider participation in professional development as a requirement for salary increases

➢ Recognise and assist the establishment of teaching and learning centres within tertiary education systems

DEVELOP MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF ACADEMICS

➢ Create administrative units to assist academics with administrative tasks, technology transfer offices, teaching and learning centres and offices to advise students on career and other issues

ENHANCE CAPACITY FOR COLLABORATION AND ENCOURAGE MOBILITY

➢ Ensure mutual recognition of academic career structures across institutions

➢ Ensure recognition of skills and experience gained outside academic institutions and provide flexible re-entry pathways to the academic profession

➢ Consider the creation of Centres of Excellence involving different research groups or of joint degrees between institutions

➢ Discourage "in-breeding" from student to staff member within the same institution

➢ Prepare to deal with consequences of growing internationalisation of the academic labour market

PROVIDE MORE FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS FOR SENIOR ACADEMICS

➢ Introduce professional development activities, more flexible working arrangements with reduced hours, working on a consultancy basis or new tasks such as curriculum development

FURTHER READING

These general pointers for policy development are drawn from the Thematic Review of Tertiary Education, which covered tertiary education policies in 24 countries. The findings of this review are presented in Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society, published in September 2008. Background reports prepared by 21 countries, Reviews of Tertiary Education in 14 countries and other documents of the review are also available on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review.