

Framework Policy for
Academic Career Advancement and Assessment
at the University of Southern Denmark

Policy Ambition and Principles

Annex: Policy Development and Review

Policy Ambition

The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) aims to recruit and invest in inspired academics capable of pushing boundaries of research-based knowledge, teaching and knowledge dissemination, entrepreneurship and innovation.

This framework policy furthers this objective. Its intent is to clarify SDU's approach to academic merit and to engender transparent and meaningful career advancement criteria in the departments of the university. It is designed to guide and reinforce local initiative.

The framework builds on the principles of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) and shares CoARA's desire to promote a higher quality, a fairer, more inclusive and more impactful approach to the advancement of the quality and impact of diverse research activities and practices.

The framework builds a bridge between SDU strategy and departmental career advancement policy. It asks faculties and departments to be explicit about their understanding of academic quality. It asks them to layer this understanding into a career advancement policy for quality improvement, to be inclusive in this policy development, and to engage in a review of the policy's impact.

The framework does not give detailed guidelines for academic assessment criteria and merit at SDU. It does not develop a matrix with expectations across academic activities and levels of career progress. It cannot serve as a checklist for departmental policy development.

In its broadest sense, the framework is about people. It is about how SDU must compete internationally to attract and continuously invest in first rate academics. It is about how SDU academics must be empowered to compete internationally.

Policy Principles

Approach

- All SDU departments must formulate and make use of written Academic Career Advancement and Assessment criteria applicable to all academics employed in main positions (assistant, associate, and full professors).
- Criteria must support the interests, traditions, and development of individual research environments.
- Criteria must be consistent and durable in order to enable individual career planning.
- Simplicity and transparency are virtues: criteria must neither be unduly narrow in scope nor excessively elaborate and intricate; criteria must be easy to access and understand for both SDU and non-SDU academics.
- Criteria must build on extensive input from academics.
- Criteria must enable a holistic approach to career advancement.

Content

- Research-based knowledge is foundational for academic merit and forms the basis for SDU academic assessment.
- Research-based knowledge is at heart about the ability to master a research field so completely that it commands the respect of international peers, the ability to credibly challenge important questions and expand the research field, as well as the ability to contribute to the solutions to society's challenges. Career advancement across employment levels as well as career maintenance within tenured levels of employment must reflect progression in such knowledge.
- Career progress must reflect an increasingly advanced ability to conduct research-based teaching at the highest international level as well as the ability to critically review and innovate teaching and learning activities.
- Career progress must reflect an increasingly advanced ability to disseminate knowledge to society, to impact societal change, to further academic collaboration and community-building, entrepreneurship and innovation. A diversity of such contributions should be described, recognized, and enabled.
- Career progress for senior academics, especially full professors, must involve an ability to build and lead research collectives.
- Career progress must involve membership as well as leadership of academic and societal services, such as study board service or collegial organs and councils.
- Assessment criteria should focus primarily on the originality and contribution of academic activities, with evaluations being organized primarily around qualitative

judgements and peer review. Quantitative indicators should be used only where appropriate.

- Assessment criteria should encourage academics' audacious decisions and actions. Criteria should thus also support transformative and long-term research contributions, just as they should support and sustain a culture of risk taking and innovation.

ANNEX

Policy Development and Review

Departmental Policy Development and Review

- Criteria development is the responsibility of the Heads of Department.
- Criteria must have certain characteristics:
 - o Criteria must be attached to an explicit departmental ambition for the improvement of academic quality.
 - o Criteria must address main priorities as they apply to career advancement across employment categories (assistant, associate, full professor) as well as to the maintenance of academic skills within tenured categories.
 - o Criteria as well as the overall academic ambition must address career opportunities such as tenure track and full professorship promotion programs, as well as university-wide strategic initiatives, such as contributions of DIAS affiliations.
 - o Departmental review policy, while taking into account field-relevant quantitative metrics, must build primarily on qualitative assessment.
- Criteria development must be inclusive:
 - o Heads of Department must organize an inclusive process to ensure that SDU's high-quality ambitions are meaningfully translated into departmental policy. The inclusive process must give departmental research staff the opportunity to propose success criteria as well as expectations for promotion across career levels and continuous development for tenured faculty.
 - o Draft merit policy must be subjected to review by Department Councils as well as Academic Councils.
 - o Criteria and ambitions must be regularly reviewed. Reviews should be inclusive and should to the extent possible involve feedback from external members of assessment committees. Reviews should be led by Heads of Department and should ensure that career guidelines are durable but also amenable to adjustment following feedback.

SDU Review

- Heads of Department must report regularly to the Dean on the appropriateness and the contribution of academic career advancement criteria to SDU's high-quality ambitions.
- The Dean must facilitate and guide learning among faculty Heads of Department.

- The Rector can review or discuss career advancement criteria and excellence ambitions at the annual meeting with faculty leaderships—the Dean and Heads of Department.
- The Rector's office will determine the nature of the reporting for such discussions and invite comments from Academic Councils.
- SDU HR must continuously ensure that recruitment and promotion principles and procedures support the overall SDU review of career advancement and assessment criteria.