

WB meeting, Riga, 9-10
October 2018

REFORMING ACADEMIC CAREERS – UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Andres Soosaar
Academic Secretary

05 | 10 | 2018





1632

Founded in 1632, the University of Tartu (UT) is one of the oldest universities in Northern Europe

1919

The first Estonian-language university (since 1919)



UT is a comprehensive, research-intensive university with a dual mission: to aspire to world-class achievements in research while also serving as the national university of Estonia.

as the national university of Estonia.

University today

- UT is currently alma mater to **13 480 students**, including 1526 international and 1197 doctoral students
- UT has 3526 staff members, 52% of them employed in academic positions (including 197 professors)



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU





faculties

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Institute of History and Archaeology · Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics · Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics · Institute of Cultural Research · School of Theology and Religious Studies · College of Foreign Languages and Cultures · Viljandi Culture Academy

Faculty of Social Sciences

Institute of Education · Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies · School of Economics and Business Administration · Institute of Psychology · School of Law · Institute of Social Studies · Narva College · Pärnu College

Faculty of Medicine

Institute of Biomedicine and Translational Medicine · Institute of Pharmacy · Institute of Dentistry · Institute of Clinical Medicine · Institute of Family Medicine and Public Health · Institute of Sport Sciences and Physiotherapy

Faculty of Science and Technology

Institute of Computer Science · Estonian Marine Institute · Institute of Physics · Institute of Chemistry · Institute of Mathematics and Statistics · Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology · Tartu Observatory · Institute of Technology · Institute of Ecology and Earth Sciences

Funding

UT budget for 2018:
187.7 million euros

Income per academic employee:
101,569 euros



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU



Revenue	million EUR
Education income	84.7
Research and development income	68.9
Other income	34.1

Research and development support	million EUR
Base funding from government	12.1
Estonian grants	33.6
Foreign grants	6.5
Income from Structural Funds	10.9



Flagship of Estonian science

- In Estonia, UT accounts for about two thirds of the national research output (in terms of publications and doctoral degrees conferred)
- UT belongs to the **top 1%** of the world's most highly cited universities and research institutions in 10 fields (as of March 2018, ESI)
- More PhD degrees are defended at UT (141 in 2017) than in all other Estonian universities combined
- Authors affiliated with UT published **2,676 research publications** in 2016



Academic career model – current situation

Parallel career tracks for teachers and researchers

- Teacher, assistant, lecturer, associate professor, professor
- Junior research fellow, research fellow, senior research fellow, research professor
- Tracks are regulated by different state laws

Ordinary and visiting academic positions

- Ordinary academic positions are typically permanent with professional review (evaluation) after every 5 years
- Ordinary positions are filled via open competition
- No promotion to higher position; one can apply to higher position, if such position is opened
- Visiting positions are for teacher's track and are filled by invitation

Retirement

- No retirement age
- There are titles „professor emeritus“ and „associate professor emeritus“





Problems of the current model

- the academic job system is rigid, with too many levels (the assistant's and teacher's positions differ quite little from each other);
- lack of competition / pseudo-competitions;
- low salaries in certain positions;
- lack of criteria and system for promotion;
- research-centred indicators for evaluating performance;
- project-based thinking;
- from the viewpoint of employees and the university, there are no motivational ways to end the academic career;
- the professor's job is not attractive enough for the younger generation; they do not want to apply for the position;
- there are no clear terms and conditions for ending the academic career;

Problems of the current model/ research track

- Project-based research funding; frequent changes in the funding procedure create uncertainty in research staff and lead to instability of the activities;
- contradiction between the desired indefinite employment contracts and the actual fixed-term contracts due to termination of financing;
- the career paths of researchers and teaching staff are quite isolated from each other;
- the teaching and administrative workload hinders commitment to research;
- the social impact of research is underappreciated;
- low salaries in certain positions;
- lack of promotion criteria and lack of a promotion system;
- lack of visiting researchers' positions.





Steps of the reform

I. Modification of the existing system (2016-17)

- Several new aspects in job descriptions – more flexible balance between teaching, research, administrative and external public duties

II. Analysis of the existing system (2017)

- *Ad hoc* commission prepared a SWOT (separate document in conference materials) and outlined some basic features of new career model

III. Principles of new career model (2018)

- Process is on the way – rector's office has accepted basic principles of the new model
- Faculties have started discussions on the new model
- University senate should approve principles of the new model

IV. Preparation of new regulatory documents and transition to the new career model (2019)

Goals of the new model 1

1. Enhance the best employees' job security for advancement on the academic career ladder, in such a manner that
 - the university is attractive and competitive in recruiting talented staff;
 - the best employees do not leave the university due to the lack of possibility for promotion or applying to a higher position;
 - job security is guaranteed to the best employees.



Goals of the new model 2

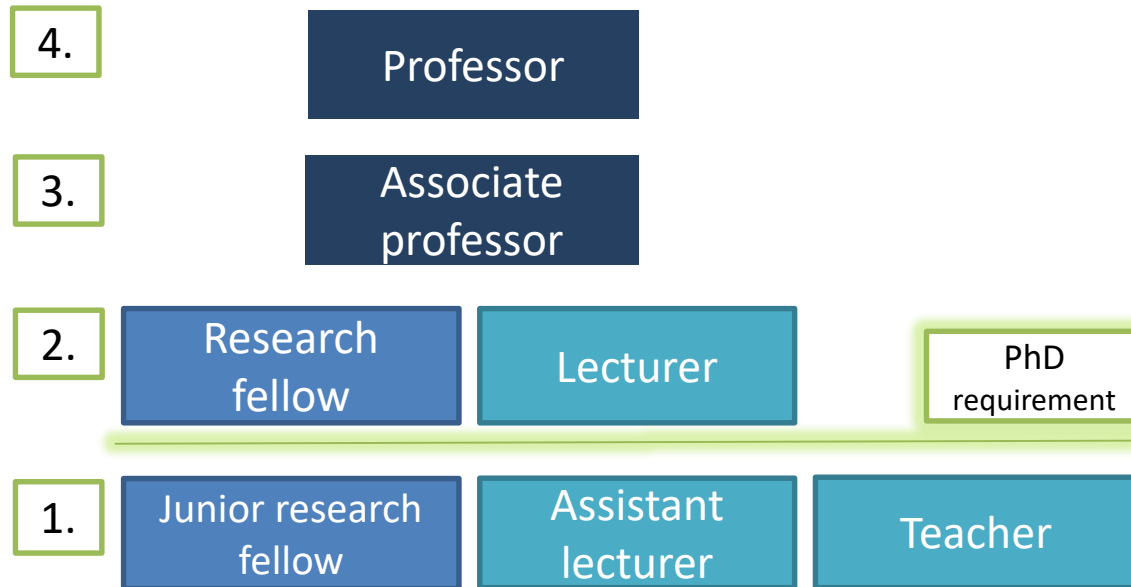
2. Find a balance between the proportion of research and teaching achievements and evaluation criteria.
3. Plan ahead the employee's leaving the academic career (retirement).
4. Systematically analyse and evaluate the labour demand in specialisations needed for the development of the university.



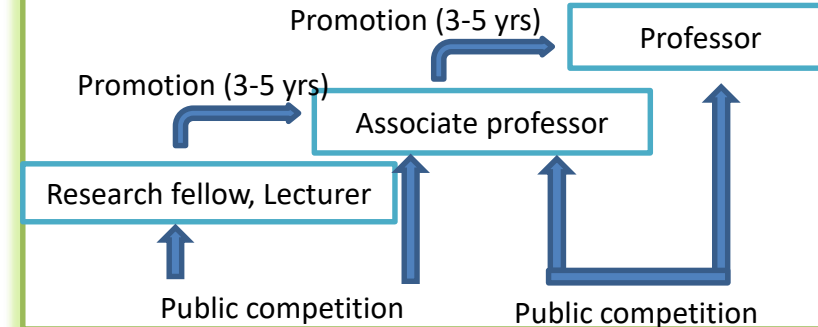
University of Tartu ACADEMIC CAREER MODEL

Draft September 2018

Structure of academic positions



Career path



Tenured position and professor emeritus

Professor who has made significant contribution to UT development

Promotion to tenured

→ Indefinite employment contract without professional review requirement

Worked for 10 years with at least 0.5 workload (FTE) or elected twice

Application for emeritus



Max age 67

Age 68+



→ Professor emeritus title, retirement benefit (lump sum €18,700 or €312 per month over 5 years) and monthly emeritus pay (€300)



→ Professor emeritus title

Ordinary staff recruited by public competition or appointed in position, working under indefinite or fixed-term employment contract
Visiting staff, invited to the job, working under fixed-term employment contract or authorisation agreement or contract for services

Legend

Levels (R1-R4)

Teaching

Research

Teaching and research

Merge of teaching and research track

- On levels 3 and 4 teaching and research duties are more individualised on the basis of shorter term agreements (1-5 years) between scholar and head of academic unit

4.

Professor

3.

Associate
professor

2.

Research
fellow

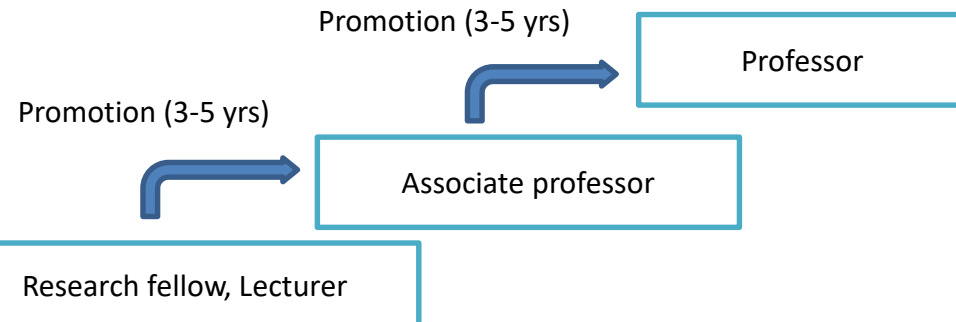
Lecturer



Implementation of tenure track

- There are both tenure track and non-tenure-track set of level 2-4 academic positions
- Up or out/non-tenure-track position
- ~20% of respective positions might be on tenure track

Tenure track



Tenured professorship

- There is also a promotion step for outstanding professors

Tenured professor

Professor who has made significant contribution to UT development

R4 professor
promotion to tenured
professor



- α Indefinite employment contract without professional review requirement
- α special university financing ?

Professional review

- Professional review (evaluation) is a periodic assessment of academic staff with respect to their professional performance and compliance with the requirements established for their position, and it is conducted once every five years of employment.
- This evaluation is rather universal tool of quality management of academic people at the university
- Results of professional review can serve as basis for promotion





Retirement 1

- Retirement as emeritus means termination of the employment contract with a person working in the position of a professor and granting the honorary title of professor emeritus to the person



Retirement 2

The benefit payable on retirement (emeritus pay) depends on the time the application is submitted and satisfied.

- If the emeritus application is filed before the age of 68, the professor is awarded the honorary title of professor emeritus and granted the professor emeritus pay (monthly payment + one time retirement benefit) as compensation for retirement.
- If the emeritus application is filed after the age of 68, the professor receives the status of professor emeritus.

Summary

- Academic career reform at the University of Tartu is approaching the critical phase – after accepting of principles there will be the time to figure out all necessary regulations and to implement them.
- We hope that the new academic career model has deep positive impact on both internal activities at the university and improves also our external capacity to cooperate with partners and to attract talented scholars.

