



## Academic Promotions Committee

# Terms of Reference and Operational Guidelines

*Version: June 2008*  
*Revised: December 2011*

## **1. GENERAL**

### *1.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ACADEMIC PROMOTION COMMITTEE*

- 1.1.1 Given that the University strives to foster excellence in teaching, scholarly activity and service, the mandate of the Academic Promotion Committee (APC) is to advise the Vice-President and Chief Academic Officer (VP&CAO) on individual cases with respect to academic promotion (i.e. appointments to the rank of Associate Professor and Professor) according to: a) the concepts of procedural fairness (often called natural justice); b) existing QU Promotion Policy as outlined in the QU Faculty Handbook, and; c) considerations on appropriate standards of excellence across and within colleges and disciplines.
- 1.1.2 This will be accomplished by considering the merits of each specific case; and examining the preceding deliberations to ensure that the procedures were consistent with QU policy.

### *1.2 PURPOSE OF THE THIS DOCUMENT*

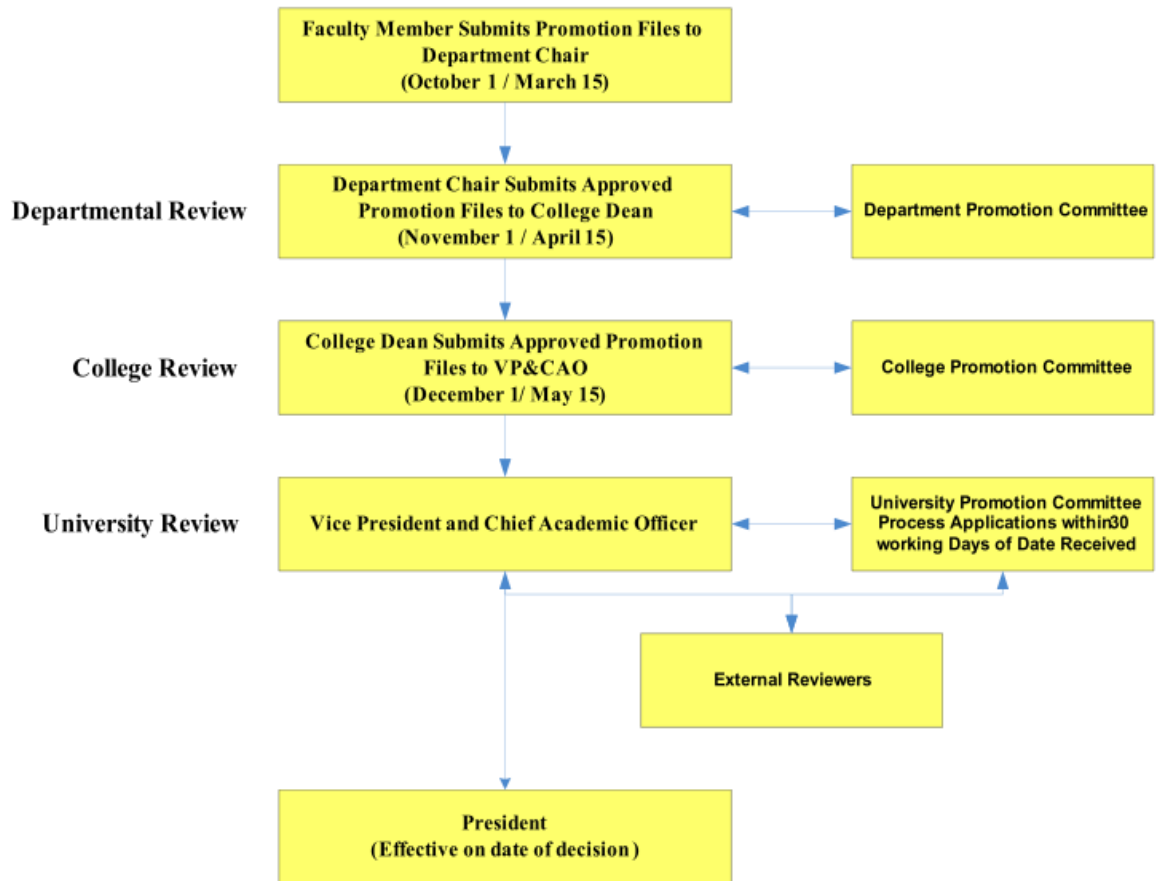
- 1.2.1 This document is intended to supplement the QU Promotion Policy as outlined in the QU Faculty Handbook. The substance of this document has been agreed to by the APC and is provided for operational guidance purposes. If there is a conflict or inconsistency between this document and the QU Faculty Handbook, the latter shall prevail.
- 1.2.2 Each year, this document will be reviewed by the VP&CAO and Chair of the APC, who in turn will consult with APC regarding any proposed changes. The document will be updated whenever appropriate.

### *1.3 CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST*

- 1.3.1 Promotion files and related proceedings are considered strictly confidential. The promotion committees at all levels (Department, College and University) recommendations will be conveyed to the appropriate administrative level.
- 1.3.2 Members should refrain from engaging in any communication regarding the deliberations and decisions of the promotion committees.
- 1.3.3 Where cases of conflict of interest exist (e.g. family member, close friend, co-author), the professional involved should not be a part of the promotion process. If such a conflict of interest is established, the next managerial level should assign a different professional to conduct the review.
- 1.3.4 Department Head: If a department head is believed to have conflict of interest, the Dean of the College shall assign the promotion case to another head of related discipline within or outside the college to perform the head evaluation.
- 1.3.5 College Dean: If a college dean is believed to have a conflict of interest, the VP&CAO shall assign the promotion case to another dean to perform the dean evaluation.



### Academic Promotion Process



## **2. DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### *2.1 Departmental Head Responsibility to Departmental Members*

- 2.1.1 While the ultimate responsibility for an application for academic promotion lies with the department member, the Departmental Head is expected to provide guidance to each member of the department regarding the promotional requirements of the university and college, including demonstrated performance in research, academic duties/activities, and service to the university and the community. This can be accomplished when meeting with members for their periodic performance evaluations.
- 2.1.2 Discussions between the Department Head and members should include issues of scholarly activity including the need to conduct high quality research and publish their findings in recognized high quality peer-reviewed journals, and disseminate their findings at international conferences.
- 2.1.3 Department Heads are expected to prepare a list of all potential candidates for promotion at the onset of the academic year and inform candidates of their eligibility. Additionally, Department Head concerned shall submit to his/her college dean cases of the faculty members who have not been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor after ten years of appointment to the post of Assistant Professor. The college shall forward a report to the VP&CAO.

### *2.2 Departmental Promotion Committee Meetings and Votes*

- 2.2.1 Each academic department shall form a promotion committee that will be responsible for evaluating promotion cases in their respective departments in accordance with the university promotion policies and guidelines for submission of applications for academic promotion.
- 2.2.2 The Department Promotion Committee (DPC) shall consist of three to five members appointed by the Department Head at or above the rank to which the candidate seeks promotion.
- 2.2.3 Committee members at the department level should not vote on a case unless present for all substantive discussion of that case. Eligible members who cannot attend are permitted to send a memorandum to the committee chair indicating their support (positive or negative) for a case, but this will not constitute a vote (i.e. there is no voting in absentia or by proxy).
- 2.2.4 Committee members shall discuss each promotion case on its own merit and render a blind vote to either recommend or deny promotion.
- 2.2.5 The committee Chair shall not vote except to break a tie. The Department Head shall not be a member of the Department Promotion Committee.
- 2.2.6 In cases where the department promotion committee does not have unanimous vote and a minority member(s) wish to render a written rationale, this document will be attached to the department promotion committee report.
- 2.2.7 The results of the Departmental Promotion Committee shall be forwarded by the Chair of this committee to the Department Head.

### 2.3 Department Head's Recommendation

- 2.3.1 The Department Head is expected to forward a written recommendation (for or against promotion) to the college Dean.
- 2.3.2 The Head's letter of recommendation should contain information on special conditions of the candidate's appointment, including, but not limited to, reduced teaching or administrative responsibilities, unusually extensive teaching or administrative responsibilities, protected time for research or scholarly activity, or responsibilities in more than one unit.
- 2.3.2 The letter should provide:
  - a) information on department norms at the rank being considered with regard to teaching load, graduate supervision, administrative responsibilities, dissemination of research or other scholarly work and external funding;
  - b) the extent to which the case rests on creative or professional (as opposed to traditional scholarly) contributions;
  - c) an indication of the stature of journals (such as its acceptance rate) in which a candidate has published;
  - d) details on the evaluation of the candidate's teaching by students and peers (if this information is provided elsewhere in the dossier, then it should be referenced to in the Head's recommendation);
  - e) information on department norms with regard to student and peer evaluations of teaching; and,
  - f) the basis of the recommendation.

## 3. COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITIES

### 3.1 College Promotion Committee

- 3.1.1 Each college shall form a promotion committee that will be responsible for evaluating promotion cases in their respective colleges in accordance with the university promotion policies and guidelines for submission of applications for academic promotion.
- 3.1.2 The College Promotion Committee shall consist of three to five members appointed by the College Dean at or above the rank to which the candidate seeks promotion.
- 3.1.3 College Promotion Committee members should not vote on a case unless present for all substantive discussion of that case. Eligible members who are unable to attend the meeting at which the vote will take place are permitted to send a memorandum indicating their support (positive or negative) for a case, but this will not constitute a vote (i.e. there is no voting *in absentia* or by proxy).
- 3.1.4 Committee members shall discuss each promotion case on its own merit and render a blind vote to promote or deny.
- 3.1.5 In cases where the college promotion committee does not have unanimous vote and a minority member(s) wish to render a written rationale, this document will be attached to the college promotion committee report
- 3.1.6 The Committee Chair shall not vote except to break a tie. The College Dean shall not be a member of the College Promotion Committee.

### *3.2 Dean's Recommendation*

- 3.2.1 The College Dean is expected to forward a written letter or recommendation (for or against promotion) to the APC. The recommendation shall include:
- a) a summary of the reasons for the recommendation; and,
  - b) an outline of any special circumstances about the individual's academic appointment. For example, were there agreed upon expectations that the candidate's teaching load would be less to enable a greater concentration on research activities.

### *3.3 Joint Appointments*

- 3.3.1 Where a candidate has a formal joint appointment, the file should include full documentation from each department and college involved.
- 3.3.2 Where a candidate does not have a formal joint appointment but does a significant amount of teaching or other work in another college, the file should include a statement from the dean of that college.

## **4. ACADEMIC PROMOTION COMMITTEE**

### *4.1 Composition and Duration*

- 4.1.1 The APC shall consist of Full Professors appointed by the VP&CAO. Typically, a minimum of seven members from various colleges will form the APC membership. Members of the APC shall not be members of Department or College Promotion Committees, but may serve as a resource for these committees.
- 4.1.2 A typical term for membership on APC is three years. However, in cases where the member cannot continue or failed to fulfill his/her responsibilities, VP&CAO may replace the member prior to completing the membership term. Each year, the membership of APC will be reviewed by the VP&CAO and nominations for new members will be solicited from the Deans. To ensure continuity, at least two members should be replaced each year with the objective that the majority of the committee members will have served at least one year.

### *4.2 Schedule of Meetings*

- 4.2.1 The APC shall hold ten monthly meetings per academic year. Typically, meetings are not held during the months of July and August.

### *4.3 Criteria for Evaluation*

- 4.3.1 Candidates who are in their last year of contract will not normally be considered for promotion. Additionally, Qatar University faculty members must apply for promotion at Qatar University independent of a possible association with, and irrespective of promotional decisions made at other universities.
- 4.3.2 The APC will judge each candidate's file on its merits. Such evaluation will take place within the context of its mandate to examine the achievements of the candidate with regard to teaching, research, and service to the University, to the discipline, and to the broader community.
- 4.3.3 Such deliberations will incorporate a consideration of general criteria of

scholarship and scholarly excellence, particularly as these are identified and defined by the external reviewers, in prior reviews by the Department and/or College Committee, and by the Dean of the College as set out in his/her letter of recommendation during its meetings.

4.3.4 In its considerations, the APC will assess the information contained in each candidate's file in terms of the impartiality of prior judgments, particularly in terms of its obligation to ensure that criteria of fairness have been employed and that the rights of the candidate to fair and equitable treatment have been maintained.

4.3.5 Publications:

***Promotion to the rank of Associate Professor:***

-The faculty member desiring to be promoted to the rank of associate professor must have demonstrated his/her ability to engage in scholarly endeavor and to publish.

-The applicant should submit for consideration of promotion and external peer review evaluation at least four refereed (not edited) original publications (**published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed regional or international journals or books**), among which is a **maximum of one** review article, book, **or** book chapter.

- At least three must be published.

-The applicant must be the sole or senior author of at least two of the submitted publications.

***Promotion to the rank of Professor:***

-The faculty member desiring to be promoted to the rank of professor must have established a reputation of being a scholar and authority in his/her field.

-The applicant should submit for consideration of promotion and external peer review evaluation at least six refereed original articles beyond the Associate Professor level, **published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals** that are noted regionally and internationally to be high impact journals.

-At least four of the articles must be published.

-The applicant must be the sole or senior author of at least four of the submitted publications.

4.3.6 All the referees should recommend promotion of the candidate. Each referee evaluation should rate a candidate for promotion to associate professor as “*commendable*” or higher. The majority of referee evaluations should rate a candidate for promotion to full professor as “*superior*” or higher. Additionally, there should be no discrepancy between the referee's quantitative and qualitative assessments. If such a discrepancy exists, the Chair should contact the referee and seek clarification.

4.3.7 The APC shall review the referees' comments and recommendations for promotion during its deliberations of a case, and take these into consideration when making its recommendation to the VP&CAO.

4.3.8 The APC, for reasons it deems justifiable (e.g. non-compliance with QU policies and procedures, evidence of a superficial review and/or inconsistency between quantitative and qualitative ratings) after review of the three referees' reports on

the applicant's research level and/or quality, will utilize a fourth referee.

#### *4.4 Chair Role and Responsibilities*

- 4.4.1 The APC chair shall call and conduct all meetings of the committee.
- 4.4.2 All applications for promotion should be screened by the APC Chair.
- 4.4.3 For each case, the APC chair shall assign an APC member to prepare a comprehensive report. The comprehensive report is intended to be a summary of the documentation and recommendations received and comments about the quality of the external reviews.
- 4.4.4 The APC Chair, on behalf of the full committee, shall provide a written summary of the votes to the VP&CAO, along with a written recommendation for each case reviewed.

#### *4.5 Member Roles and Responsibilities*

- 4.5.1 Members are expected to attend and participate in all committee meetings. .
- 4.5.2 Members shall review the agenda, promotions cases under consideration, and other documents prior to attending the meetings.
- 4.5.3 Members shall maintain confidentiality of all matters related to committee work.
- 4.5.4 Members shall serve as an informational resource for their respective colleges on general committee matters.
- 4.5.5 Members shall review the list of external referees and be prepared to recommend three primary and three secondary referees.
- 4.5.6 When assigned, a member shall prepare a comprehensive report summarizing the external referees' judgment about a candidate.

#### *4.6 Dossier Review Procedures*

- 4.6.1 The APC chair shall screen all cases for completeness prior to the meetings.
- 4.6.2 APC members will have the opportunity to review the full dossiers of candidates at any time. These dossiers will be located in a secure location within the VP&CAO suite.

#### *4.7 Voting*

- 4.7.1 For the purpose of voting, a quorum for the APC shall be five members (i.e. 2/3 of the full seven-member committee).
- 4.7.2 A blind vote is to be taken for each case. The Chair shall not vote unless required to achieve a quorum or break a tie vote.
- 4.7.3 An APC member shall not vote on cases involving a candidate from his/her department and should also recuse himself/herself from APC discussions regarding this candidate unless called upon by the committee for assistance.
- 4.7.4 Members who have a conflict of interest in a case (e.g. spouse or family member, close colleague, co-author, grant co-holder) must recuse themselves from any and all activities related to that case.
- 4.7.5 The APC recommendations are determined by a simple majority vote.

#### *4.8 Confidentiality*

- 4.8.1 APC files and related proceedings are considered strictly confidential. The APC recommendation will be conveyed to the VP&CAO. It is the responsibility of



- the VP&CAO to convey the final promotional recommendation to the Dean, Department Head, Promotional Committee Chairs and the candidate themselves.
- 4.8.2 Candidate files (electronic and paper-based) shall be archived; however committee copies and personal notes will be destroyed at the end of the academic year.
  - 4.8.3 Members should refrain from engaging in any communication regarding the deliberations and decisions of the APC.

#### *4.9 Communication with the VP&CAO*

- 4.9.1 The Chair of APC, on behalf of the full committee, provides a written summary of the votes to the VP&CAO, along with a recommendation on each case.
- 4.9.2 The VP&CAO may request to meet with the Chair of the APC or with the full committee to gain a fuller appreciation of the issues in a case.
- 4.9.3 If the VP&CAO disagrees with the recommendation of APC or is considering doing so, he/she should meet with the Chair or the whole committee to discuss the case prior to the submission of a decision to the President.
- 4.9.4 Should the VP&CAO wish to meet with the full committee members, the committee will convene at the earliest convenient time. In preparation for such a meeting, APC members should have a copy of the full dossier for the case, the notes stemming from the APC deliberations over the case, plus any specific questions that need to be addressed to clarify the case.
- 4.9.5 If the Office of the VP&CAO decision is not in accord with the APC recommendation, the VP&CAO shall inform APC of this fact and the reasons for it and should meet with the committee in an attempt to resolve the differences.
- 4.9.6 The Office of the VP&CAO office will regularly provide APC (through the APC Chair) with a summary of the decisions made by the VP&CAO.

### **5. EXTERNAL REFEREES**

- 5.1 The APC will review the recommendations of Department Promotions Committee, the Department Head, The College Promotion Committee, and College Dean regarding the quality of the candidate research. Based on these recommendations and the judgment of APC, a decision will be made whether to utilize external referees. If the APC decides that external review is warranted, evidence of the candidate's published research will be provided to three external referees for peer review purposes.
- 5.2 External referees are expected to be at arm's length, and should only include persons whose impartiality cannot be doubted. They should not include relatives, close personal friends, clients, current or former colleagues, former thesis advisers, research supervisors, grant co-holders and co-authors.
- 5.3 A list of potential referees (who meet the aforementioned criteria) will be submitted by the College. There shall be no communication with referees about the matter in question. The list should reflect the names of impartial experts with a full professor rank and diverse geographical locations.
- 5.4 The candidate should not be informed of the names of the referees selected for the external review process.

- 5.5 Referee letters of recommendation shall not be solicited by nor communicated to the candidate.
- 5.6 The Office of the VP&CAO will contact the selected referees and request an independent and objective evaluation of the candidate's scholarly, professional or creative achievements, including an opinion as to whether or not the candidate has met the QU criteria for promotion to the academic rank being sought.
- 5.7 The letter to external referees will clearly state the decision under consideration (i.e., promotion and the rank involved) and ask the referee to declare their potential relationship with the candidate. A written record of all material sent to referees should be included with the letter.
- 5.8 Referees letters which are two or more years old are not sufficient, and must be up dated by the same, or supplemented by other referees. When a letter from a previous year is included with a recommendation, all letters obtained that year must be included.
- 5.9 The Department Head should provide brief biographical information for each external referee recommended.
- 5.10 All the referees should recommend promotion of the candidate. Each referee evaluation should rate a candidate for promotion to associate professor as "commendable" or higher. The majority of referee evaluations should rate a candidate for promotion to full professor as "superior" or higher. Additionally, there should be no discrepancy between the referee's quantitative and qualitative assessments.
- 5.11 The APC shall nominate three principal referees and three reserve referees to examine the applicant's research.
- 5.12 The APC shall review the referees' comments and recommendations for promotion and make its own appropriate recommendation.
- 5.13 The APC, for reasons it deems justifiable (e.g. non-compliance with QU policies and procedures, evidence of a superficial review and/or inconsistency between quantitative and qualitative ratings) after review of the three referees' reports on the applicant's research level and/or quality, will utilize a fourth referee.

## **6. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP**

- 6.1 For the purposes of consideration for promotion, research is defined as an original investigation undertaken for the purpose of gaining knowledge and/or enhancing understanding.
- 6.2 Research does not include routine data collection, standardization, testing and analysis of materials, components and processes; the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research; the provision of scientific and technical information services; commercial, legal and administrative aspects of patenting, copyright or licensing activities; or routine computer programming.
- 6.3 Judgment of scholarly activity is based mainly on the quality and significance of an individual's contributions. Quality is measured by various means such as acceptance rate of outlet, impact factor, and ranking by professional specialized organizations.
- 6.4 Evidence of scholarly activity varies among the disciplines. Published work is, where appropriate, the primary evidence. Such evidence as distinguished

- architectural, artistic or engineering design, distinguished performance in the arts or professional fields, shall be considered in appropriate cases.
- 6.5 In professional or clinical studies, scholarly activity may be evidenced by research on or the creation of significant applications of fundamental theory, or significant forms and applications of professional or clinical practice or theory.
  - 6.6 A peer-reviewed (aka refereed) publication is defined as a publication that has undergone an assessment or review in its entirety by independent experts in the same field who are willing to provide an objective opinion of the quality and pertinence of the research.
  - 6.7 Where a publication involves more than one author, a standard author contribution form will be required. This form must be completed and signed by the senior author (if not the candidate) for co-authored publication. The senior author is generally defined as the person who leads a study and makes a major contribution to the work. The Senior Author is typically responsible for all communication with the journal in which it is published, and takes overall responsibility for its content. The Senior Author is often the first or last author on the publication. Should there be any confusion regarding the identity of the Senior Author for a submitted publication, the APC will seek clarification as needed to better understand the role of the candidate in this scholarly activity. While in many cases the Senior Author will also be the Corresponding Author identified in the journal article, this may, for different reasons, not always be the case.
  - 6.8 Textbooks that changed academic understanding or made a significant contribution to the way in which a discipline or field is taught might constitute useful evidence of the scholarship whereas publishing textbooks for your own course would not. Scholarly books that have undergone a rigorous referee process may count toward promotion to associate professor only. Only one book (or at least one chapter in a book) can be submitted for consideration.
  - 6.9 Material culled from the candidate's MA or Ph.D. thesis/dissertation shall not count as Research. Scholarly work to be considered for promotion to Associate Professor must be based on work done during the time period following completion of the Ph.D. degree.
  - 6.10 Publications that appear in print while a faculty member at Qatar University must identify that the faculty member is affiliated with Qatar University.

## **7. APPEAL PROCESS**

### *7.1 Appeal the Department Decision*

- 7.1.1 Once a candidate turns in his/her dossier for promotion, the Department Head will ask the department promotion committee to meet. The Department Promotion Committee will evaluate the dossier and make a recommendation to the Department Head.
- 7.1.2 In cases where the Department Head disagrees with the Department Promotion Committee recommendation, he/she should meet with the committee to state the reasons for disagreement and attempt to resolve the differences. If disagreement continues, the promotion application will proceed to the college level with split decision (department promotion committee and chair recommendations are one

for and one against promotion).

- 7.1.3 If the committee and the chair agree that the candidate does not meet the promotion standards, the candidate will be informed by the Department Head that the promotion is denied. The promotion process will conclude at this stage.
- 7.1.4 If promotion is denied at this level, the department decision may be appealed by candidates. The candidate' appeal shall be submitted to the college dean within 10 working days of being informed of the denial. The appeal letter must include the reasons for appeal. The candidate must present compelling evidence to demonstrate that evaluation judgments were not sound or policies and procedures were not followed. The dean, within 10 working days of receiving the appeal will render a decision. The Dean may solicit feedback from department promotion committee and/or Department Head, however the Dean's decision is final and the candidate shall not pursue further appeals.

### *7.2 Appeal the College Decision*

- 7.2.1 Once an applicant is recommended by the department to the college dean, the dean will ask the college promotion committee to meet and evaluate the dossier. The college promotion committee will evaluate and make a recommendation to the college dean.
- 7.2.2 Once the dean receives the recommendation from the college promotion committee, he/she will conduct his/her own evaluation of the applicant.
- 7.2.3 In cases where the dean disagrees with the college promotion committee recommendation, he/she should meet with the committee to state the reasons for disagreement and attempt to resolve the differences.
- 7.2.4 In cases where the dean evaluation is that the applicant does not meet the standards for promotion, the applicant will be informed by the dean that the application is denied. The promotion process will conclude at this stage.
- 7.2.5 If promotion is denied, the candidate may utilize appeal the college decision. The appeal shall be submitted to the VP&CAO within 10 working days of being informed of the denial. The appeal letter must include the reasons for appeal. The candidate must present compelling evidence to demonstrate that evaluation judgments were not sound or policies and procedures were not followed. The VP&CAO, within 15 working days of receiving the appeal will render a decision, The VPCAO may solicit feedback from college dean, college promotion committee, department promotion committee, and/or Department Head. The VP&CAO decision is final and the candidate shall not pursue further appeals.

### *7.3 Appeal the University Decision*

- 7.3.1 Once an applicant is recommended by the College Dean to the VP&CAO, the VP&CAO will assign the application to the APC for review. Once complete, the APC makes a written recommendation to the VP&CAO.
- 7.3.2 The VP&CAO will review the candidate dossier, and the APC summary report and recommendation. Should the VP&CAO disagrees with APC recommendation, the Chair will arrange a meeting of the VP&CAO and APC to review the rationale for the decision and to reach a resolution.
- 7.3.3 The final decision regarding promotion will be conveyed to the candidate by the

Office of the VP&CAO.

- 7.3.4 If promotion is denied, the candidate may utilize university-level appeal. The appeal shall be submitted to the president within 10 working days of being informed of the denial. The appeal letter must include the reasons for appeal. The candidate must present compelling evidence to demonstrate that evaluation judgments were not sound or policies and procedures were not followed. The president, within 20 working days of receiving the appeal will render a decision. The President may solicit feedback from VP&CAO, APC, college dean, college promotion committee, department promotion committee, and/or Department Head. The President's decision is final and the candidate shall not pursue further appeals.

The appeal process at the department, college, and university levels is depicted in the following diagram.

**Qatar University  
Academic Promotion Appeal Process**

