

Tenure Track

Career trajectory for top level academics



To accomplish excellence it is imperative that individual top performers work together in teams. Interdisciplinary cooperation of academic staff is stimulated, as well as other collaborations contributing to our mission: **to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life**. Training and coaching are provided to ensure academic staff can optimally develop their talents and every junior tenure tracker can be assigned a mentor if desired (via the HR Department).

- The policy goal of Wageningen University tenure track is to enhance the quality of scientific research and education, by attracting top level (inter)national academics, keeping hold of top talented staff by supporting their development.
- The prospects for top performers are excellent. Academic staff being recruited for an Assistant Professor position have the opportunity to become an Associate Professor (with ius promovendi) and even a Personal Professorship is possible, provided that the assessment procedures are passed.
- The policy provides a guided career pathway. The tenure trackers, appointed as Assistant Professor, are individually coached by a full professor (chair holder). Excellent performance will be rewarded with a tenured position of Associate Professor 1 or even a Personal Professorship.
- The tenure track consists of four successive career steps, from Assistant Professor (two levels) to Associate Professor (two levels). A fifth career step, to Personal Professor, is optional.

The performance and competences are assessed by a Broad Assessment Committee (BAC) before a next career step can take place. The General Director decides on promotion based on the advice of the BAC.

Welcome to Wageningen University tenure track!

Tenure track reflects our human resources policy for core academic staff. Its purpose is to attract and retain ambitious and talented academic staff from all over the world, by offering them development and career opportunities, by supporting them with training and coaching, and by stimulating their performance and excellence. The tenure track system outlines the career path for core academic staff, starting from the position of assistant professor until personal professor.

Through tenure track we stimulate, develop, value and reward high quality and creative research as much as excellent and innovative education. And always with the strong conviction that

academic research and education should remain closely intertwined.

To accomplish excellence in education and research it is imperative that individual top performers work together, both within chair groups and clusters and often also across disciplines. Addressing the major global challenges, but also exploring new scientific innovations, frontiers and breakthroughs, requires teamwork. It warrants collaboration "to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life"!

Prof.dr Arthur P.J. Mol - Vice-President of Wageningen University & Research and Rector Magnificus of Wageningen University



Career opportunity

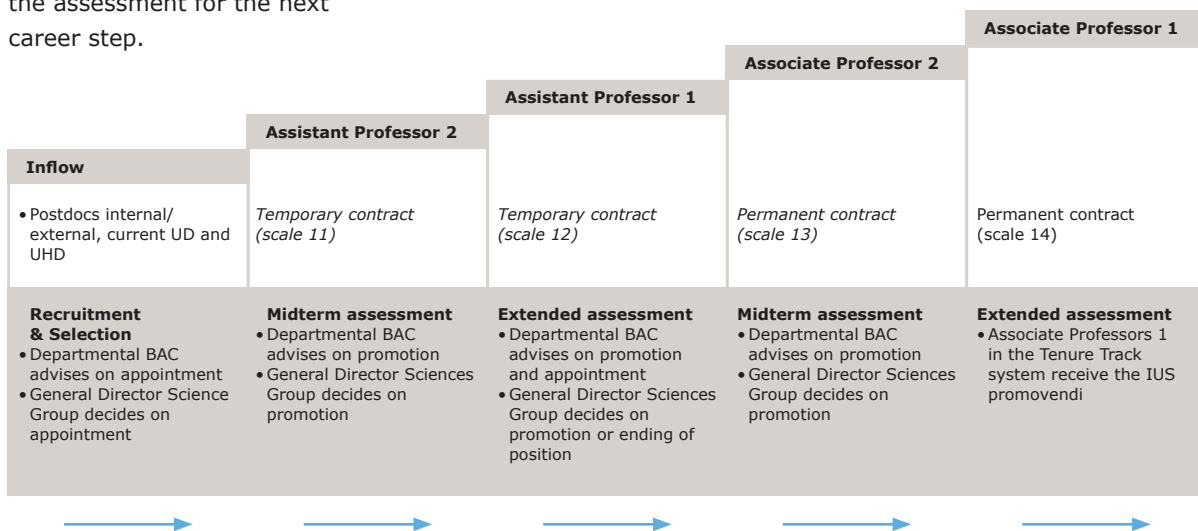
Newly appointed academic staff holding a doctorate degree access the career track. In consultation with the chair holder, current permanent staff will be given the opportunity to take part in the programme as well; the same quality criteria and assessment procedures apply to new and current staff.

The policy provides a guided career pathway. Top level scientists appointed as Assistant Professor are individually coached by a full professor. Excellent performance will be rewarded with a promotion to a tenured position of Associate Professor and possibly to Personal Professor.

Career steps

Assistant Professors start within a temporary position. The duration of this first contract depends on the work history of the candidate. A candidate from outside Wageningen University will have, in general, a temporary contract for 7 years. After that period, if the tenure tracker passes the assessment procedures, he/she will be offered a permanent position. Usually this will be combined with promotion to the next level, Associate Professor.

Due to the Dutch legislation, a candidate from inside Wageningen University will be assessed for a permanent position within a maximum period of four years, if possible combined with the assessment for the next career step.



Assessment procedure Personal Professor

The assessment for Personal Professor will be treated by the extended BAC Personal Chair. This is one central, university wide, BAC and organised twice a year. This BAC sends its advice to the Rector Magnificus; the Executive Board Wageningen University decides. The candidate will be appointed as a Personal Professor for a period of 5 years. After 5 years the Personal Professor will be evaluated by a small committee.



"Coming back from a PostDoc in the United States, the Wageningen tenure track was the perfect path to continue developing my career. The combination of freedom and autonomy for me personally, while embedding the research of my group in collaborations within WUR, has really worked out well."

"It is essential for young researchers to develop their skills as scientific leaders. Coming from a postdoctoral position, most of us haven't spent much time supervising staff, building a network, acquiring grants, managing projects, or balancing budgets. As my group grows steadily over time I'm

gaining the necessary experience. Sometimes through professional tenure track training, but also through the many interactions with my mentors, my peers, and my colleagues in the chair group. I find that connecting to others is really an essential ingredient for success in your career. I am glad this is widely acknowledged within the tenure track at WUR."

Wouter Peters - Personal Chair Carbon Cycle and Atmospheric Composition (Environmental Sciences Group)



'Top level academics enhance the quality of scientific research and education.'



Assessment procedures

For every career step up and including Associate Professor 1 (with ius promovendi) and before obtaining a permanent position, candidates are judged by the quality of their education, research, acquisition, management, their personal file and their competences such as teamwork.

Assessments are carried out by a BAC (Broad Assessment Committee). The BAC advises the General Director of the Sciences Group on promotion (and/or permanent position); the General Director takes the final decision.

'Teaching and research qualities are equally important.'

Criteria for promotion

The aspects that are evaluated include the quality of teaching, research, acquisition, management and the competence to work in a team. Teaching and research qualities are equally important and the effort to obtain credits for teaching and research are comparable. Major tasks, other than education and research, are taken into account.

- The quality criteria are predetermined and transparent. They may differ per Sciences Group or specific domain.
- Candidates, having collected the predetermined required number of credits, have access to the assessment process.
- Having obtained the required number of credits does not guarantee promotion; the BAC makes an overall assessment of the academic performance.
- (inter)national scientists will review the scientific quality.

Once the tenure track has started, career steps are made whenever quality criteria are met (including a positive BAC advice). There are no financial restrictions for promotion. Apart from the recruitment procedure, there will be no competition between candidates during the tenure track.



I am very glad that the tenure track system has offered me the career path leading to a personal professor position in Plant Breeding of WUR. Since the tenure system is a credit system, the utmost importance for a tenure tracker is to fulfil the set of criteria. This may lead to competition among colleagues and avoiding general tasks that deliver no credits. Therefore, I feel positive about the WUR tenure system since it (1) acknowledges collaboration/teamwork and (2) considers the contribution of non-credited activities that are relevant to the organisation.

Further, it is great that both education and research are equally emphasised in the WUR tenure system since the combination of both is crucial for the academic excellence. I hope that, via the form of a WUR tenure track, opportunities will be created for many motivated and talented (inter)national researchers.

Yuling Bai - Associate professor
(Plant Breeding, Plant Science Group)



Information

For more information regarding tenure track policy of Wageningen University, please contact your chair holder or the HR Department.

More information is also available on:
www.intranet.wur.nl