

without condemning people unfairly who make honest mistakes because they were uninformed.

## Promotion

As long as there is a pecking order, there will be a top rank. In academia, the graduate student assistant is on the bottom, followed by lecturers, who are usually adjuncts. On a tenure-track, one becomes assistant, then associate, and then, perhaps, full professor. Some schools provide endowed chairs or the rank of “university professor” for those they consider the most distinguished full professors. It remains to be proved whether such rankings (which usually carry not only increased salary and benefits but also other privileges as one ascends the scale) are the ideal approach. For now, it is what we all face. Less formal structures for the same dynamic are found in the many other institutions in which we work.

Promotion can be as capricious as **tenure**, as subject to the whims of colleagues and committees, administrations and budgets. In an ideal world, it would be based on the achievement of certain well-specified criteria, the accomplishment of a certain degree of **professional development** commensurate with rank. Sometimes promotion to associate carries with it tenure; sometimes it does not. Sometimes long-term service will be enough to garner a full professorship, often not. There is little rhyme or reason in this system beyond what each institution determines.

Preparing for promotion reviews (see **Evaluations, annual, pretenure**) is essential. Keeping good records (see **Files**) and balancing your work according to the formula prescribed by your institution (see **Service and Institutional analysis**) makes the task much easier. Know that promotions are like grades, subject to the prudential judgment of the ones making it, often with little recourse. Similarly, do not be afraid to appeal a blatantly unfair call. While it may not get you the promotion, it will at least force those who made the decision to be forthright about why. Such a process can help you prepare for the next time, and/or reveal such entrenched biases that the only promotion you want is out the door.