POLICY GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) IN PAKISTAN



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Policy Guidelines for Appointment of Professor of Practice by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan

1. Background:

The rapidly evolving academic landscape across the globe makes it crucial for the HEIs to integrate practical application with theoretical knowledge in its study programs, which in turn supports bridging the gap between the academia and industry/profession. Universities across the world have adopted approaches to provide students with progressive professional instructions from faculty having extensive practical experience in the profession. One such strategy being practiced is including Professors of Practice in the faculty of professional degree programs who bring substantial professional experience and industry/sectoral insights to the academia. Having such professionals within the faculty also brings distinction to the academic discipline and improvement in the quality and repute of the universities.

Pakistan is 6th populous country of the world and as per UNDP statistics, 64 % of its population is below 30 years old and 29% fall between the age of 15-29 years. It could become a potential resource for the uplift of economy if skill-based education is provided at the universities. The curriculum of the academic programs demands continuous update for making it relevant and aligned with the requirements of industry/profession. At the same time, the students at HEIs need an enabling environment where they can receive leadership and mentorship support for developing innovative and entrepreneurial skills and capabilities along with professional knowledge. Engaging experts from various fields as faculty can enable the HEIs to address these challenges and utilize their expertise for achieving excellence in professional qualifications of the students. While the significance of value gained by universities from having such professionals can vary, the fundamental principles/guidelines that support appointment of Professors of Practice within the universities/HEIs include the following:

i. **Expertise in industry/profession:** The professionals with significant practical experience in their respective fields including but not limited to industry, entrepreneurship, government, journalism, law, clinical or creative/performing arts etc. can help students to gain knowledge related to the profession. It will help students to learn and demonstrate practical skills which are in demand in the market.

ii. **Acting as Bridge Between Academia and Industry/Profession:** They will serve as a bridge between the Academia and the Industry/Profession. HEIs are expected to develop partnerships, collaboration and knowledge transfer among various entities. Such collaboration can lead to collaborative research projects, internships, and job placements for students, and will also foster the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

iii. **Improving Curriculum:** The practical experience of professionals can contribute to curriculum development as their first-hand knowledge in the domain will make it more practical. They are expected to incorporate industrial/sectoral/professional trends and practices into the academic programs. It will help students to gain skills which are relevant to the industry and/or profession for better job opportunities and better service-oriented market.

iv. **Professional Development:** Professors of Practice can also mentor students, providing them with guidance, mentorship, and networking opportunities. This mentorship can help students navigate their career paths, make informed decisions, and develop the soft skills necessary for success in the workplace.

v. **Enhanced Employability:** Engagement of experienced professionals will help the Universities to offer qualifications with skills and practical experience. It will help the graduates to get employment on immediate basis because graduates with strong theoretical and relevant professional knowledge are always preferred by various entities.

Objectives:

- Inducting individuals with extensive practical experience to enrich the educational experience for students by providing real-world insights and knowledge.
- Bringing in practitioners who can offer unique perspectives and skills that complement traditional academic teaching, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of educational programs.
- Encouraging innovative teaching methods and approaches that bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing students for success in their future careers.
- Contributing to scholarly activities, such as applied research and industry collaborations, to advance knowledge and address real-world challenges in relevant fields.
- Attracting renowned practitioners who can enhance the reputation of the institution and create networking opportunities for students, faculty, and alumni within relevant industries and professions.
- Offering mentorship and guidance to students based on practical experience, helping them navigate career paths and make informed decisions about their professional goals.

2. Eligibility Criteria for Appointment/Engagement

Professionals who are distinguished practitioners, demonstrate eminence in their areas of expertise and have sustained accomplishments can be hired as Professor of Practice within the HEIs. The following criteria shall be considered for their selection:

i. **Professional Experience:** Minimum of 15 years of professional experience in a relevant industry/field.

In case a person holds a Masters/PhD degree in Practice (from HEC recognized university/HEI), that will be credited/counted as professional experience (maximum 5 years for PhD including M.Phil. and 2 years for M.Phil./MS).

Professional experience means practical experience of the industry/sector/area, however, an expert having both the practical experience and some teaching/coaching experience at an academic set up can be also considered.

Candidates are required to have extensive practical/professional experience and achievements in their respective fields. This could include significant work experience in industry, government, non-profit organizations, or other relevant sectors.

They should have in-depth knowledge and practical skills relevant to the courses they will be teaching. They must hold an applicable license/ relevant certification, where necessary.

ii. **Educational Background:** A traditional academic background (such as a Ph.D.) is preferable but not mandatory. Candidates should possess at least a bachelor's degree/Level-6 qualification in their field. In some cases (as determined through need assessment), a terminal degree or equivalent professional qualification may be preferred.

iii. **Reputation and Recognition:** A strong reputation within the relevant profession or academic community can be a significant asset. This might be demonstrated through awards, honors, collaborative projects, leadership roles, or keynote speeches at conferences and events.

iv. **Commitment to Education:** Candidates should demonstrate a passion for teaching/education and a willingness to engage with students, provide mentorship and contribute to the academic community.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities:**

   i. **Teaching**

   - Conduct lectures in accordance with institutional guidelines with particular emphasis on quality and improving student experience.
   - Introduce fresh courses, develop and design educational programs, curriculum and course materials.
   - Collaborate with resident faculty members to organize workshops, seminars, special lectures, and training sessions.
   - Contribute to development of initiatives relevant to the research, education or enterprise mission of a faculty.

   ii. **Entrepreneurial /Industry Guidance**

   - Motivate and mentor students to engage in innovation and entrepreneurial endeavors
   - Emphasize stronger partnerships between academia/industry/sector. Undertake collaborative projects or provide consultancy services alongside regular faculty members.

The concerned HEI may assign any other role/task to the Professor of Practice, through the approval of the Vice Chancellor/Head of the Institute, that contributes towards achievement of the objective anticipated from the role.

4. **Procedure for Selection:**

- The Higher Education Institution (HEI) may invite applications from the eminent serving/retired experts for the position of Professor of Practice through an advertisement or head hunt who qualify the laid down criteria.
- The Selection Board, after interviewing the eligible candidates, may submit its recommendations to the Syndicate or Statutory Body of the HEI for his/her engagement.
- The HEIs can appoint Professors of Practice up to 10 % of the sanctioned posts.

5. **Terms of Appointment /Engagement**

   i. **Contract Duration:** The appointment will be purely on a **contract basis** (Full-time/Part-time/Adjunct). The duration of the appointment/engagement may span up to one year initially. Upon completion of the initial term or any subsequent extension, the Higher Education Institution (HEI) may evaluate and determine the possibility of further extension. The HEI may establish its own evaluation process for extensions, considering the contributions and needs of the experts serving as Professors of Practice. The maximum period of service for a Professor of Practice within a single institution may be for a period of three years with the spirit that existing faculty will get advantage of

interaction with industry/professional experts and then carry forward the gained knowledge in teaching and research.

ii. **Workload:** The university concerned shall define the workload including teaching hours, mentoring sessions, and other commitments as per the requirement of the program.

iii. **Compensation/Salary Package:** The salary package for the appointments of Professor of Practice shall be the same as that of the tenure track appointment of the same rank. Alternatively, a competitive remuneration package, aligned with industry/sector standards and HEI's policies, must be defined and mutually agreed between the HEI and the selected expert.

In any of the above options, the concerned HEI will pay the remuneration out of its own resources and there will be no financial liability on HEC.

iv. **Performance Evaluation:** Host institutes will evaluate performance of Professor of Practice on the basis of teaching effectiveness, student feedback, contributions to university's objectives and/or any other indicator (s) HEI seems relevant to assess effectiveness of the position.

v. **Dismissal/Other Conditions:** Dismissal of a Professor of Practice holding a fixed-term appointment may only occur upon maturity of the contract, however, dismissal shall be executed prematurely on the grounds of professional incompetence, serious personal or professional misconduct. A notice period of 30 days will be allowed by the HEIs in cases of dismissal or resignation.

The Professor of Practice appointments may not be converted to tenure-track positions and they are also not eligible for academic administrative appointments at and above the department chair level.

The appointed Professor of Practice is expected to follow HEI's policies and the HEIs are required to address all the appointment matters/terms and conditions in the contract.

Under these policy guidelines, universities/HEIs may appoint only a 'Professor of Practice,' with no provision for the appointment of Assistant or Associate Professors of Practice.