



Policy Owner:	Vice President for Research			<div><div>جامعة حمد بن خليفة HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY</div><div></div><div>عضو في مؤسسة قطر Member of Qatar Foundation</div></div>
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## Research Engineers Promotion Policy

Ver.	Approval Date	Effective Date	Type of Change	Approved by
00	17/11/2025	17/11/2025	Initial Release	President

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## 1 Purpose

This policy establishes the principles and standards for the promotion of research engineers at Hamad Bin Khalifa University. It sets forth the promotion requirements, criteria, and approval process for the advancement in the rank from Engineer to Senior Engineer, and from Senior Engineer to Principal Engineer. By establishing clear promotion standards, the policy ensures the recognition of professional excellence and contributions that advance the university's mission in research and innovation, while supporting career development, motivation, and retention of talent.


## 2 Scope

This policy applies to engineers employed by HBKU who are directly engaged in research activities and projects within the University's research institutes and colleges. These engineers typically work in collaboration with a faculty member, Scientist, or Principal Investigator and contribute to the execution and advancement of research projects.

This policy does not apply to engineers or other employees engaged primarily in administrative, operational, or other support functions within the university. This policy governs promotion from Engineer to Senior Engineer, and from Senior Engineer to Principal Engineer.

## 3 Terms, Abbreviations, and Definitions

Term	Definition
President	HBKU President
VPR	HBKU Vice President for Research
Provost	HBKU Provost
ED	Executive Director of a Research Institute
Dean	Dean of a College
HBKU	Hamad Bin Khalifa University or "the University"
RI	HBKU Research Institute
College	HBKU College or School
HBKU HR	HBKU Human Resources
Engineer	An entry to mid-level technical research and development professional who applies established engineering principles to contribute to the design, implementation, testing, and documentation of research experiments, simulations, systems, and prototypes often in collaboration with a faculty member or scientist.
Senior Engineer	Experienced technical research and development professional with advanced expertise in the design, development, and prototyping of complex systems who contribute to the conception, planning, and execution of research initiatives and projects. They combine advanced technical expertise, stakeholder engagement, project management, and leadership skills to ensure the effective delivery of research objectives. They operate with a high degree of independence and typically provide mentorship to Research Engineers and to junior staff.
Principal Engineer	Highly experienced technical research and development professional with deep domain knowledge and demonstrated strategic and leadership expertise. Their role includes leading and managing the conception, design, and execution of complex large scale or cross-functional research initiatives and projects. They combine technical expertise, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, leadership and team supervision skills to help achieve the University's research and innovation objectives. They work with a high degree of autonomy and contribute to shaping research priorities.

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## 4 Policy

### 4.1 General Principles

- 4.1.1 HBKU provides opportunities for the promotion of research engineers based on demonstrated excellence, professional growth, and significant contributions to research and innovation to recognize achievement and foster career development, motivation, and retention of talent.
- 4.1.2 Promotion decisions at HBKU are guided by fairness, transparency, and merit. All evaluations are conducted objectively, based on documented evidence of achievement, and in alignment with the University's standards and values.
- 4.1.3 Promotion applications are processed and evaluated based on a set of promotion criteria. These criteria consist of:
  - General Criteria applicable to all ranks
  - Rank-Specific Criteria specific to advancement from one rank to another; and
  - Entity-Specific Criteria that may be defined by a research institute or college, subject to approval by the Vice President for Research or the Provost, as applicable.
- 4.1.4 Research Engineer promotion applications shall be reviewed through formally constituted committees at the Research Institute (RI), College, and University levels. Each committee is responsible for ensuring that promotion recommendations are made objectively, consistently, and in accordance with this policy.
- 4.1.5 All committee appointments shall be made in writing, specifying the term of service, and recorded by the Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR). Members must observe the principles of fairness, confidentiality, and avoidance of conflict of interest as defined in this policy.


### 4.2 Promotion Criteria

#### 4.2.1 General Criteria

- 4.2.1.1 The Promotion of research engineers shall be based on merit and demonstrated readiness to assume the responsibilities of the higher rank. Eligibility for promotion requires fulfillment of the minimum period of service and residency and evidence of sustained professional performance.
- 4.2.1.2 A candidate must have completed a minimum of four (4) years of service at the current engineer rank before being considered for promotion. Service completed outside HBKU in a comparable role may be recognized, subject to verification and approval by the appropriate Dean or RI Executive Director.
- 4.2.1.3 Notwithstanding the above, the candidate must have completed a minimum of three (3) years of service at HBKU at the current rank prior to consideration for promotion, irrespective of previous experience elsewhere.
- 4.2.1.4 In exceptional and well-justified circumstances, the Vice President for Research (for Research Institutes) or the Provost (for Colleges) may approve a reduction in the required period of service or residency at HBKU. Such exceptions shall be documented and recorded in the promotion file.
- 4.2.1.5 Meeting the minimum period of service does not, by itself, constitute entitlement to promotion. Candidates must also demonstrate the level of performance and impact defined in the accompanying document "Engineers Promotion Evaluation Criteria".

#### 4.2.2 Rank-Specific Criteria

- 4.2.2.1 Promotion of Research Engineers is based on demonstrated performance, professional growth, and contributions consistent with the expectations of the higher rank. Each promotion reflects an increased level of technical expertise, independence, leadership, and impact.

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4.2.2.2 The specific expectations, performance indicators, and evaluation standards for the promotion to higher ranks, as detailed in the approved “Engineers Promotion Evaluation Criteria” document associated with this policy. The “Engineers Promotion Evaluation Criteria” document shall be endorsed by the Provost and approved by the VP Research before its implementation.

#### 4.2.3 Entity-Specific Criteria

4.2.3.1 In addition to the General Criteria and Rank-Specific Criteria, each Research Institute or College may develop its own Entity-Specific Criteria to address the distinctive nature of its research and professional activities.

4.2.3.2 The Entity-Specific Criteria shall be consistent with the standards and expectations of this policy and shall not reduce or conflict with the General and Rank-Specific Criteria.

4.2.3.3 All Entity-Specific Criteria shall require prior approval by the Vice President for Research (for Research Institutes) or the Provost (for Colleges) and must be approved no less than twelve (12) months before their intended implementation.

#### 4.2.4 Promotion from Engineer to Senior Engineer

4.2.4.1 Promotion from Engineer to Senior Engineer shall be based on evidence of professional achievement and significant contributions in the following areas:

1. Technical Expertise
2. Project Contribution and Delivery
3. Collaboration
4. Stakeholder Engagement

4.2.4.2 The detailed expectations and performance indicators for each of the four areas listed above are defined in the accompanying document “Engineers Promotion Evaluation Criteria.”

4.2.4.3 Promotion committees shall evaluate both qualitative and quantitative evidence verifying that the candidate meets or exceeds the standards for the Senior Engineer rank across all required areas and demonstrates readiness to perform independently at a higher professional level.

#### 4.2.5 Promotion from Senior Engineer to Principal Engineer

4.2.5.1 Promotion from Senior Engineer to Principal Engineer shall be based on demonstrated professional excellence, leadership, and sustained contributions that advance the University’s research and innovation mission.


4.2.5.2 Candidates must provide verifiable evidence of significant achievement in the following areas:

1. Technical Expertise and Innovation
2. Project Contribution and Delivery
3. Mentorship and Knowledge Sharing
4. Collaboration and Team Leadership
5. Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach

4.2.5.3 Promotion to the rank of Principal Engineer requires clear evidence of leadership, sustained professional accomplishments, and recognition within the candidate’s area of expertise or field of practice.

4.2.5.4 The detailed expectations and performance indicators for each of the five areas listed above are defined in the accompanying document “Engineers Promotion Evaluation Criteria.”

4.2.5.5 Evaluation for promotion to Principal Engineer shall be conducted by the relevant promotion committees through a comprehensive review of both qualitative and quantitative evidence.

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4.2.5.6 The assessment shall confirm that the candidate has achieved a sustained record of excellence across all required areas, meets or exceeds the performance standards prescribed for the rank, and demonstrates readiness to assume broader institutional leadership responsibilities.

### 4.3 Promotion Committees

#### 4.3.1 Research Institute Promotion Committee


- 4.3.1.1 Each Research Institute shall establish an RI Promotion Committee appointed by the Executive Director (ED).
- 4.3.1.2 The committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members, each serving a two-year term, renewable as required.
- 4.3.1.3 Members shall normally hold the rank of Principal Engineer, Principal Scientist, or Full Professor. Where such ranks are unavailable, a Senior Engineer, Senior Scientist, or Associate Professor may be appointed with written justification.
- 4.3.1.4 The committee shall include one external member from another HBKU Research Institute or a College at the level of Principal Engineer, Principal Scientist, or Full Professor.
- 4.3.1.5 The RI Promotion Committee shall evaluate all promotion applications originating within the Institute and submit recommendations, with supporting documentation, to the Executive Director for review and decision.

#### 4.3.2 College Promotion Committee

- 4.3.2.1 Each College shall establish a College Promotion Committee appointed by the Dean.
- 4.3.2.2 The committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members, each serving a two-year term, renewable as required.
- 4.3.2.3 Members shall normally hold the rank of Principal Engineer, Principal Scientist, or Full Professor. Where such ranks are unavailable, a Senior Engineer, Senior Scientist, or Associate Professor may be appointed with written justification.
- 4.3.2.4 The committee shall include one external member from another HBKU College or Research Institute at the level of Principal Engineer, Principal Scientist, or Full Professor.
- 4.3.2.5 The College Promotion Committee shall review and recommend cases for promotion within the College to the Dean for review and decision.

#### 4.3.3 University Engineers Promotion Committee

- 4.3.3.1 At the beginning of each academic year, the Vice President for Research (VPR), in consultation with the Provost, shall appoint the University Engineers Promotion Committee.
- 4.3.3.2 The committee shall include a Chairperson and representatives from each Research Institute, together with two representatives from the Colleges, all holding the rank of Principal Engineer, Principal Scientist, or Full Professor.
- 4.3.3.3 Executive Directors, Deans, and members of RI and College Promotion Committees shall not serve simultaneously on this committee.
- 4.3.3.4 Where no Principal Engineer, Principal Scientist, or Full Professor is available, a Senior Engineer, Senior Scientist, or associate professor may be appointed by exception.
- 4.3.3.5 The University Committee shall ensure consistency and equity across the University, review all recommendations forwarded by the RI and College Promotion Committees, and submit final recommendations to the VPR or Provost, as applicable, for approval.


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#### 4.4 Promotion Application File

- 4.4.1 Candidates seeking promotion under this policy shall submit a complete promotion application file through their respective Research Institute or College in accordance with the related procedures and timelines.
- 4.4.2 The promotion application file shall include, at a minimum, the following documents:
  - a. **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** A comprehensive and up-to-date cv including record of academic, technical, and professional achievements. The candidate is fully responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. Any inaccurate statement or misrepresentation may result in disqualification
  - b. **Statement of Technical Contributions and Self-Assessment:** A statement limited to five (5) pages, describing the candidate's major technical achievements, research contributions, and professional development with an emphasis on activities completed at HBKU since the last promotion and/or appointment in the position whichever comes later. The statement should describe key contributions (e.g., software, devices, prototypes), highlight their local and global impact, explain alignment with the priorities and objectives of the Institute or the College, and HBKU, and provide evidence consistent with the evaluation criteria defined in the "Engineers Promotion Evaluation Criteria" document associated with this policy.
  - c. **Performance Appraisals:** Copies of annual performance appraisal results for the required assessment period, as stipulated in the promotion procedures.
  - d. **External Support Letters:** A list of recommended external reviewers or referees who can attest to the candidate's contributions and standing in the field, free of any conflict of interest.
- 4.4.3 Additional documentation may be required by individual Research Institutes or Colleges, subject to approval by the Vice President for Research or the Provost, as applicable.
- 4.4.4 The detailed format, structure, and submission process for the promotion application file shall be governed by the "Engineers Promotion Procedure."

#### 4.5 Review and Evaluation Process

- 4.5.1 The promotion review process shall be conducted in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner that reflects HBKU's commitment to excellence, professional development, and career advancement. All evaluations shall be based on documented evidence and aligned with the University's approved promotion criteria.
- 4.5.2 Promotion applications shall undergo a two-tier review process. The initial review shall be conducted at the Research Institute (RI) or College level, followed by a University-level review to ensure uniform application of standards and institutional consistency.
- 4.5.3 At the first level, the RI or College Promotion Committee shall:
  - a. Verify the candidate's eligibility and the completeness of the submitted application,
  - b. Evaluate the candidate's performance and contributions based on the approved promotion criteria, and
  - c. Submit a list of external reviewers or referees who can attest to the candidate's contributions and standing in the field, free of any conflict of interest and a written report and recommendation to the appropriate Executive Director (for Research Institutes) or Dean (for Colleges).
- 4.5.4 The Executive Director or Dean shall review the committee's recommendation and either decline the application and send a formal notification to the candidate or endorse it and forward the complete promotion application file—including all supporting documentation—to the University Engineers Promotion Committee through the Office of the Provost or the Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR) as appropriate.

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- 4.5.5 At the second level, the University Promotion Committee should select qualified external reviewers to whom a formal request for support letters shall be sent. The Committee may seek additional information or clarification from external reviewers if submitted reports are incomplete or ambiguous.
- 4.5.6 The University Engineers Promotion Committee shall review all endorsed applications from Research Institutes and Colleges to ensure fairness, equity, and consistency across HBKU. The committee shall then submit its recommendations to the VPR (for engineers in Research Institutes) or to the Provost (for engineers in Colleges).
- 4.5.7 The final decision on promotion shall rest with the VPR or Provost, as applicable, and shall be formally communicated to the candidate through the appropriate administrative channel.
- 4.5.8 The detailed procedural steps governing submission, screening, evaluation, scoring, and timelines shall be outlined in the accompanying document “Engineers Promotion Procedure.”

#### **4.6 Confidentiality**


- 4.6.1 All information, documentation, and deliberations related to promotion applications shall be treated as strictly confidential. Access to such information shall be limited to individuals officially involved in the evaluation and decision-making process.
- 4.6.2 Members of promotion committees, administrative staff, and other officials engaged in the promotion process are required to preserve confidentiality at all times. Breach of confidentiality shall be regarded as a violation of professional ethics and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with University policies.
- 4.6.3 The obligation of confidentiality continues beyond the completion of the promotion process and applies to all materials, deliberations, and outcomes associated with promotion cases.

#### **4.7 Conflict of Interest**

- 4.7.1 All members involved in the promotion review process shall adhere to the provisions of the HBKU Conflict of Interest Policy and this policy. They must act with impartiality and integrity and shall not participate in any deliberation or decision where a real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest exists.
- 4.7.2 Committee members are required to disclose in writing any actual or potential conflict of interest to the committee chair prior to or during the review process. Members with a declared conflict shall recuse themselves from all related deliberations and decisions. The recusal and its justification must be formally recorded in the committee’s minutes.
- 4.7.3 Candidates for promotion may also submit a written request for the recusal of a committee member on the grounds of conflict of interest, supported by appropriate justification. For College or RI promotion Committees, the Executive Director or Dean, as applicable, shall review the request and communicate the decision in writing. For the University Promotion Committee, the VPR shall review the request and communicate the decision in writing.
- 4.7.4 All conflicts of interest, disclosures, and recusals must be documented in the promotion file. Breach of these provisions shall be considered a violation of professional conduct and handled in accordance with the HBKU Conflict of Interest Policy and related University policies and procedures.

#### **4.8 Annual Promotion Review Cycle**

- 4.8.1 The review cycle shall commence in accordance with the schedule issued by the Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR).

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- 4.8.2 Eligible candidates shall submit their applications for promotion through their direct line manager to the Executive Director (for Research Institutes) or the Dean (for Colleges).
- 4.8.3 Approved promotions shall take effect on September 1st of the corresponding fiscal year unless otherwise determined by the University.

## 4.9 Appeal

- 4.9.1 A candidate may lodge an appeal against an unsuccessful promotion within seven (7) days from the date of receiving formal notification of the decision of the promotion application.
- 4.9.2 The appeal should be supported by substantial evidence and strong justification. However, no new evidence may be submitted for consideration during the appeal process.
- 4.9.3 Decision on an appeal shall be communicated to the candidate within fourteen (14) days of submission of the appeal.
- 4.9.4 The appeal must be submitted to the VPR or Provost (depending on the candidate's home entity) in case the decision was reached at the RI or College level and to the President in case the decision was reached at the VPR/Provost level.
- 4.9.5 In the case of an appeal submitted to the VPR or Provost, the VPR or Provost may:
- Accept the appeal and forward the application file to the University Promotion Committee for review and recommendation.
  - Reject the appeal and send formal notification to the candidate. The decision of the VPR or Provost is final and the candidate may not pursue further appeal.
- 4.9.6 In the case of an appeal submitted to the President, the President may:
- Accept the appeal and solicit feedback from the VPR, Provost, RI, College, Promotion Committees, or other parties as deemed appropriate by the President, then make the final decision regarding the appeal.
  - Reject the appeal. The President's decision is final, and the candidate may not pursue further appeals.

## 5 Associated Procedures, Guidelines, and Supporting Documents

Engineers Promotion Evaluation Criteria  
Engineer Promotion Procedure.

## 6 References and Related Policies

N/A

## 7 Source, Responsible Office, Authority

This policy will be implemented and overseen by Research Institutes Management, College Management, VPR, Provost, HR Management and HBKU Management. This policy has been developed in collaboration between HBKU HR office, Colleges, Research Institutes, Institutional Effectiveness Office, the Provost and VPR Offices.