# National Open University of Nigeria

| Policy Title | NOUN Policy on Staff Upgrade and Conversions |
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| Owner: | National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) |
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## 1.0    Introduction

In consideration of the geometrically increasing number of applications from staff who are desirous of moving from one cadre/level, the University deemed it fit to formulate a policy document to guide consideration and approval of such requests to ensure equity, fairness, and justice.

This policy underscores NOUN's dedication to promoting a culture of lifelong learning and continuous improvement among its staff members. It embodies the university's core values of excellence, integrity, and inclusivity, guiding the equitable consideration and approval of requests for movement between different cadres and levels.

The workforce of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), like many other public universities, is loosely categorized into the following cadres:

1.1    Academic/Teaching Staff Cadre:

   1.1.1   Assistant Lecturer/ Librarian II on CONUASS 2
   1.1.2   Lecturer II/Librarian I on CONUASS 3
   1.1.3   Lecturer I/Senior Librarian on CONUASS 4
   1.1.4   Senior Lecturer/Principal Librarian on CONUASS 5
   1.1.5   Associate Professor/Reader/Deputy Librarian on CONUASS 6
   1.1.6   Professor/Librarian on CONUASS 7

1.2    Non-Teaching Staff Cadre:

   The non-teaching cadre is much larger than the Teaching as it spans through many divisions with administrative division subdivided into Officers and Executives, depending on the academic qualification and field of the staff as follows:

I. Administrative/Executive Officers
II. Professional
III. Technical
IV. Secretarial
V. Clerical
VI. Environmental Attendant

A prerequisite requirement to be employed as officer is a university degree while the executive officers are required to possess a minimum of Polytechnic Diploma, National Certificate in Education (NCE) or their equivalents. Each cadre has a starting point and peak, which determines how far an officer can rise through the ranks in their chosen career to properly motivate employees, the University ensures that they move from one level or cadre to another provided all requirements for the desired cadre/level are met. All officers are degree(s) holders from any approved University. The degree holders are eligible to be members of the University Congregation. They have the privilege of rising from the lowest level (usually level 7 for a graduate) to the peak of Director on CONTISS 15. The Executive cadre includes all staff who are holders of Polytechnic/Monotechnic Diplomas. They are employed to executive cadre and can rise from CONTISS 5 up to CONTISS 13 which is the peak of the cadre whether at administrative or any other subdivision.

Staff Upgrade and Conversion refers to a formal set of guidelines, principles, and procedures established by the University to govern the process of advancing and transitioning its workforce. This policy is designed to provide a structured framework for the professional development, career progression, and adaptability of both academic and non-teaching staff within the University.

Through this policy, NOUN seeks to empower its workforce to reach their full potential, enriching both individual career trajectories and the overall institutional landscape. By fostering a supportive environment for staff development and advancement, NOUN reaffirms its commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and service to society.

## 2.0    Purpose

The purpose of Staff Upgrade and Conversions policy in NOUN is multifaceted, and it shall serve several strategic and operational objectives as follows:

2.1    Talent Retention: The policy will help in retaining skilled and experienced employees by providing a structured pathway for career growth and development within the university. This will enhance job satisfaction and loyalty among staff and would reduce staff turnover rates.

2.2    Employee Motivation: Offering opportunities for staff upgrades and conversions will serve as a motivational tool. It will encourage employees to invest in their professional development, improve their skills, and contribute more  effectively to the university's success.

2.3  Skill Enhancement: By promoting staff upgrades and conversions, the institution would ensure that their workforce remains up to date with the latest industry trends and technologies. This focus on skill enhancement will contribute to the overall competence and adaptability of the staff.

2.4  Organizational Agility: In a rapidly changing business environment, NOUN will need to be agile and adaptable. The policy will enable NOUN to adjust its workforce according to evolving needs, ensuring that employees are well-suited for their roles and can meet new challenges.

2.5  Succession Planning: Staff upgrades and conversions would facilitate effective succession planning by identifying and preparing employees for higher-level roles. This proactive approach will ensure a smooth transition in leadership and would help NOUN maintain continuity in its operations.

2.6  Enhanced Productivity: Engaged and motivated employees are generally more productive. Offering opportunities for advancement through staff upgrades and conversions will contribute to a positive work culture in NOUN, which, in turn, would enhance overall productivity within the university.

2.7  Fairness and Equity: A structured policy ensures that decisions related to staff upgrades and conversions are based on merit, performance, and skills, promoting fairness and equity. This will contribute to a positive work environment and reduce the likelihood of internal conflicts in the university.

2.8  Attracting Top Talent: A well-publicized staff upgrade and conversions policy would be an attractive feature for potential employees in NOUN. It would signal to prospective hires that the university values and invests in the professional development of its staff, making it a desirable workplace.

2.9  Employee Engagement: Offering career advancement opportunities would foster a sense of purpose and engagement among employees in NOUN. When staff see a clear path for growth within the university, they would be more likely to be committed to their work and align with the university vision, mission, core values, and objectives.

2.10  Organizational Reputation: commitment to staff development and advancement would positively influence NOUN reputation. This will enhance its standing as an employer of choice, making it more appealing to both current and prospective employees.

Generally, the purpose of Staff Upgrade and Conversions in NOUN would be to create a supportive and dynamic work environment that attracts, retains, and develops a skilled workforce, ultimately contributing to the university's long-term success and competitiveness.

## 3.0    Scope

The scope of this policy will cover both teaching and non-teaching staff in NOUN.

## 4.0    Definitions

4.1    Staff Upgrade:

Upgrades also known as Advancement is the process of elevating an officer to a higher position within a particular cadre or related one based on additional qualification(s) and/or cognate experience as provided in the Scheme of Service.

4.2    Staff Conversion:

Conversion is the movement of an officer from one cadre to another on presentation of prerequisite additional qualification(s) and demonstration of competence.

## 5.0    Principles

The policy on Staff Upgrade and Conversion policy is guided specific principles that fosters a supportive, fair, and dynamic work environment that would encourage continuous learning, career growth, and adaptability.   The followings are the basic guiding principles:

5.1    Meritocracy: Decisions regarding staff upgrade and conversion shall be based on merit, recognising, and rewarding staff for their skills, performance, and contributions to the university.

5.2    Fairness and Equity: NOUN shall ensure that staff have access to career advancement irrespective of background, gender, or other characteristics.

5.3    Professional Development: NOUN shall support professional development by providing staff with opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies in alignment with the university vision, mission, core values, and objectives.

5.4    Strategic Alignment: Staff upgrades and conversions in NOUN shall align with the strategic goals and mission of the university, ensuring that staff career growth contributes to the overall success and sustainability of the university.

5.5    Continuous Learning Culture: NOUN will foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, encouraging staff members to stay abreast of industry trends, emerging technologies, and best practices in their respective fields.

5.6     Open Communication: Transparent and open communication shall be maintained throughout the staff upgrade and conversion processes, keeping employees informed about opportunities, criteria, and decisions.

5.7     Diversity and Inclusion: NOUN recognises diversity and inclusion, recognizing the value of a diverse workforce and promoting equal opportunities for career growth across all segments of the institution.

5.8     Balancing Institutional and Individual Needs: NOUN strikes a balance between the institution's needs for talent management, succession planning, and operational efficiency, and the individual aspirations and career goals of the staff.

5.9     Recognition of Contributions: Acknowledgment and recognition of staff contributions, whether in teaching, research, administration, or other areas, shall be integral to the policy, reinforcing a positive and appreciative workplace culture.

5.10    Adaptability and Flexibility: The policy shall be adaptable to changing circumstances and evolving institutional priorities, allowing for flexibility in staff roles and responsibilities to meet emerging needs.

5.11    Investment in Leadership Development: The institution shall invest in leadership development programs, identifying and nurturing individuals with leadership potential to ensure a strong and capable leadership pipeline.

5.12    Employee Well-Being: The policy shall consider the well-being of employees, recognizing the importance of work-life balance, mental health, and overall job satisfaction in fostering a productive and motivated workforce.

5.13    Accountability: There will be a clear system of accountability in the policy, ensuring that staff members are accountable for their performance and that the institution is accountable for providing a conducive environment for professional growth.

5.14    Ethical Conduct: Ethical conduct and professional standards shall be emphasized, promoting integrity, honesty, and ethical behaviour among staff members.

5.15    Regular Evaluation and Improvement: The policy should undergo regular evaluations to assess its effectiveness, making necessary adjustments to address changing needs and to enhance its impact on staff development and institutional goals.

By adhering to these principles, a Staff Upgrade and Conversion policy establishes a foundation for a positive Institutional culture that values its employees, fosters growth, and aligns individual aspirations with the strategic objectives of the University.

## 6.0    Policy Statements

Below are policy statements on inputs, activities, and outputs of the policy on Staff Upgrade and Conversion in NOUN.

6.1     NOUN shall allocate resources to establish and maintain a variety of professional development programs, including workshops, seminars, and training sessions, as inputs to enhance the skills and knowledge of staff members.

6.2.    NOUN shall develop and implement a comprehensive performance evaluation framework that serves as an input for assessing staff contributions and aligning them with career development goals.

6.3     NOUN will invest in succession planning initiatives to identify and groom individuals with leadership potential, ensuring a continuous supply of qualified candidates for key roles.

6.4     A dedicated budget will be allocated for training and development initiatives, serving as a critical input to facilitate staff upgrades and conversions in alignment with institutional goals.

6.5     NOUN shall establish effective communication channels as inputs to ensure transparency in the staff upgrade and conversion processes, keeping staff informed about opportunities, criteria, and decisions.

6.6     Feedback mechanisms will be instituted as inputs to gather insights from staff members, facilitating continuous improvement in the policy and addressing concerns related to staff upgrades and conversions.

6.7     NOUN shall organize and facilitate a range of professional development activities, including workshops, seminars, and online courses, to enhance the skills and knowledge of staff members.

6.8     NOUN will conduct regular performance evaluations as activities to assess staff contributions, provide constructive feedback, and align individual performance with career development goals.

6.9     Workshops and training sessions will be organized as activities to educate staff and supervisors about succession planning principles, ensuring a proactive approach to leadership development.

6.10    NOUN shall implement structured training and development programs as activities to address specific skill gaps and prepare staff for potential upgrades and conversions.

6.11    NOUN shall conduct communication and awareness campaigns as activities to inform staff about the Staff Upgrade and Conversion Policy, its objectives, and the opportunities available for career progression.

6.12    NOUN shall introduce flexibility initiatives as activities to allow staff members to explore cross-functional roles and facilitate conversions between academic and administrative positions.

6.13    The ultimate output of the Staff Upgrade and Conversion Policy will be an enhanced skill set and competencies among staff members, contributing to increased effectiveness in their respective roles.

6.14    NOUN shall aim to develop a robust leadership pipeline as an output, ensuring a continuous pool of qualified candidates for key leadership positions within the institution.

6.15    Successful implementation of the policy will lead to improved employee satisfaction as an output, with staff members experiencing a sense of recognition, career growth, and alignment with institutional goals.

6.16    A key output of the policy will be transparent and fair decision-making processes, fostering a positive work culture and building trust among staff members.

6.17    NOUN shall aim to produce effective succession plans as an output, ensuring a seamless transition in key academic and administrative roles when needed.

6.18    An output of the policy will be increased adaptability to changing institutional needs, allowing the workforce to evolve in response to emerging priorities and challenges.

By incorporating these policy statements on inputs, activities, and outputs, the institution can establish a comprehensive framework for staff upgrade and conversion that aligns with its strategic objectives and supports the continuous development of its workforce.

## 7.0    Policy Implementation

Policy on Staff Upgrade and Conversion will be implemented through a systematic and transparent process designed to align with the NOUN goals and foster the professional development of NOUN staff. The following steps outline how the policy shall be implemented.

7.1    Policy Communication and Awareness: Clear communication channels will be established to inform all staff members about the Staff Upgrade and Conversion Policy, its objectives, and the opportunities it presents for career growth. Awareness campaigns will be conducted to ensure that employees understand the importance of the policy.

7.2    Policy Documentation and Accessibility: The policy document will be made readily accessible to all staff members through the institution's official channels, including the intranet and other communication platforms. The document will outline the principles, procedures, and criteria for staff upgrades and conversions.

7.3    Training and Orientation: Training sessions and orientation programs will be organized to educate staff and relevant stakeholders on the details of the policy, including the criteria for upgrades, conversion processes, and the significance of professional development.

7.4    Performance Evaluation Framework: A comprehensive performance evaluation framework will be implemented to assess staff contributions, align individual performance with career development goals, and identify high-performing individuals eligible for upgrades.

7.5    Professional Development Programs: A calendar of professional development programs, workshops, and training sessions will be established to provide staff members with opportunities to enhance their skills and competencies, aligning with the objectives outlined in the policy.

7.6    Succession Planning Initiatives: Initiatives for succession planning will be integrated into the policy implementation, including workshops and training programs to identify and nurture individuals with leadership potential, ensuring a steady leadership pipeline.

7.7    Flexibility and Cross-Functional Opportunities: The policy will actively encourage flexibility in career transitions, allowing staff members to explore cross-functional roles. Processes for facilitating conversions between academic and administrative positions will be clearly defined, aligning with individual aspirations and institutional needs.

7.8    Communication of Upgrade and Conversion Opportunities: Clear communication channels will be established to notify eligible staff members about specific upgrade and conversion opportunities. This will include transparent information on criteria, timelines, and the evaluation process.

7.9    Performance Feedback and Development Plans: Regular performance feedback sessions will be conducted to provide staff with insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. Individualised development plans will be created to support staff members in achieving their career goals.

7.10   Evaluation and Adjustment: The policy implementation will be subject to regular evaluations to assess its effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure its alignment with institutional goals. Feedback from staff members will be actively sought and considered in the continuous improvement process.

7.11   Adherence to Ethical Standard: The implementation of the policy will be conducted with strict adherence to ethical standards, ensuring fairness, transparency, and equal opportunities for all staff members.

7.12   Documentation and Reporting: Clear documentation procedures will be established to record each step of the upgrade and conversion processes. Regular reports on the outcomes of staff upgrades and conversions will be generated to track the effectiveness of the policy.

By following these outlined steps, the Staff Upgrade and Conversion Policy shall be effectively implemented, promoting a positive work culture, aligning staff development with institutional objectives, and contributing to the overall success and sustainability of the University.

## 8.0    Sanctions for Violating this Policy

8.1    Verbal or Written Warning: A staff member who violates the policy may receive a verbal or written warning from their superior or department/unit head. This serves as a formal notification that their behaviour is unacceptable and may lead to further disciplinary action if not corrected.

8.2    Loss of Privileges: Depending on the nature of the violation, the staff member may temporarily or permanently lose certain privileges or benefits, such as access to professional development opportunities, participation in recognition programs, or eligibility for promotions or raises.

8.4    Suspension: In more serious cases, the university may impose a temporary suspension from work without pay or half pay pending investigation. Suspension allows the university time to investigate the violation further and provides an opportunity for the staff member to reflect on their actions and make necessary changes.

8.5    Demotion or Transfer: In cases where the violation involves a breach of trust or integrity, the staff member may be demoted to a lower position or transferred to a different department, unit, or centre in the university.

## 9.0    Policy Alignment

9.1    Rules and Regulations Governing the Condition of Service of Senior Staff, National Open University   of Nigeria (NOUN).

9.2    Public Service Rule

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