

REFORMING ACADEMIC PROMOTION CRITERIA IN IRAQI MEDICAL COLLEGES: ALIGNING NATIONAL POLICY WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

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Abstract

Background: Academic promotion in Iraqi medical colleges currently depends exclusively on original research articles, while other internationally recognized forms of medical scholarship are not counted. This policy analysis compares the Iraqi system with global academic promotion models and proposes a modernization framework. **Methods:** Comparative review of academic promotion standards in the United States, United Kingdom, European Union, and Middle Eastern medical schools, with reference to World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) guidelines. **Results:** Restricting promotion to original research limits clinical documentation, educational innovation, early-career academic growth, and international academic integration. **Conclusion:** A national policy dialogue is necessary to broaden accepted academic outputs while maintaining scientific rigor.

Keywords: Academic promotion; Medical education; Iraq; Clinical scholarship; WFME standards; Faculty development

INTRODUCTION

Academic promotion is central to advancing medical education, clinical practice, and research culture. In Iraq, promotion criteria currently recognize only original research articles, while other forms of scholarly contribution are excluded. This stands in contrast to international standards that embrace diverse academic outputs [1,2].

Current Iraqi Promotion Framework

Iraqi academic promotion is governed by Ministry of Higher Education Regulation 167 (2017). Promotion points are awarded exclusively for original research publications in indexed journals, with no academic value given to case reports, reviews, educational studies, curriculum innovation, or health systems scholarship [3].

International Promotion Models

Medical schools in the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe use academic portfolios that recognize research, clinical scholarship, educational innovation, and service contributions [4–7]. World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) also emphasizes comprehensive scholarly engagement for accreditation [8].

Implications for Iraqi Medical Academia

Limiting promotion criteria reduces documentation of rare clinical cases, restricts educational development, challenges early-career faculty facing research constraints, and limits Iraq's ability to align with international accreditation standards [9–12].

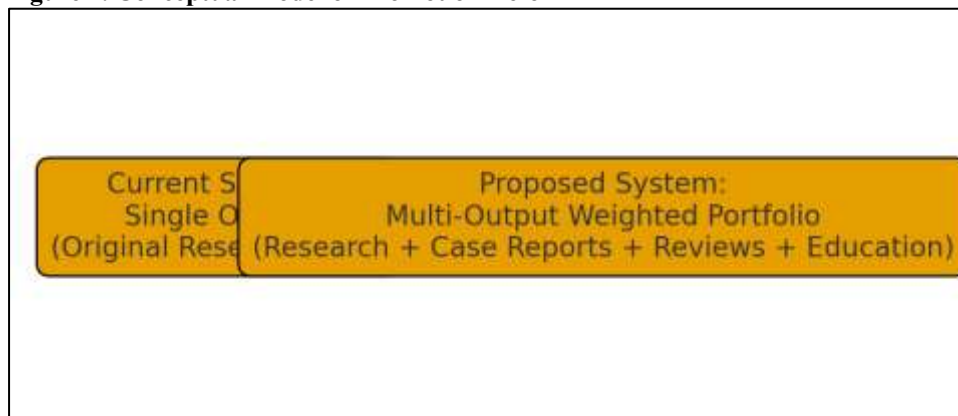
Proposed Modernized Framework

A reformed system should retain original research as the highest-value scholarly contribution while recognizing systematic reviews, case reports, educational innovation, and policy-relevant research through weighted scoring [13–15].

Table 1. Proposed Weighted Recognition of Scholarly Outputs:

Original	Research	(100%)
Systematic	Reviews/Meta-analyses	(80–100%)
Narrative	Reviews	(60–70%)
Case	Reports	(40–60%)
Educational	Scholarship	(40–60%)
Health Policy Research		(50–80%)

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Promotion Reform



Conclusion

Reforming academic promotion criteria is necessary for strengthening clinical and educational scholarship in Iraq. A national dialogue involving the Ministry of Higher Education, Colleges of Medicine, and IBMS is recommended.

Author Position Statement

The author has served in academic medicine in Iraq for several decades, contributing to clinical practice, public health policy, and the education of multiple generations of physicians.

Declarations

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Figure 1 (Revised). Conceptual Model of Promotion Reform

