Promotion Rates for First-time Assistant and Associate Professors Appointed from 1967 to 1997

To provide benchmark information against which medical schools can compare their own promotion data, this Analysis in Brief examines the 10-year promotion outcomes of full-time faculty who were first-time assistant professors or first-time associate professors at any time from 1967 to 1997. We suspect that the changing landscape of academic medicine in recent decades provides important context for our findings, such as changes in the demographics of faculty, the meaning of tenure, faculty productivity, the importance of work-life balance, and the growth of Ph.D. faculty in clinical departments.

We tracked every first-time assistant professor or first-time associate professor appointed during the academic years 1967 to 1997 for 10 years in the AAMC's Faculty Roster, the only national database on the employment, training, and demographic backgrounds of individual U.S. medical school faculty. The results indicated generally declining promotion rates and increasing average times to promotion for medical school faculty. For all first-time assistant professors, the average 10-year promotion rates declined from 43.5 to 32.8 percent, and the average time to promotion for these respective groups of cohorts lengthened from 5.2 to 6.2 years for the group cohorts in the study period. For all first-time associate professors, the average promotion rate to full professor declined from 41.7 percent to 38.6 percent, and the average time to promotion increased from 5.7 to 6.1 years for the group cohorts in the study period. Different promotion rates with regard to tenure status, gender, and race/ethnicity were also recorded.

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