

# The Acceleration Program of Academic Rank to Improve the Quality of Lecturers

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The purpose of this research is to develop and implement a project action plan. The acceleration program of academic ranks is implemented as an effort to improve the quality of lecturers. This study was conducted at a private university in Surabaya, Indonesia, in the faculty of economics and business. The researcher collected data by distributing open questionnaires and facilitating focus group discussions. The results of the data analysis show that academic ranks in this faculty are low. The proportion of academic ranks is 40% Instructor, 35% Assistant Professor, 13% Associate Professor, 4% Professor, and the rest are undefined. 70% of Lecturers are not promoted in academic rank for more than ten years. Most lecturers do not increase academic rank because of a lack of scientific publications and complicated institutional bureaucracy. The researcher has arranged a procedure to accelerate the rise of academic rank which involved Deans, the Acceleration Team, and lecturers. A lecturer must have creative and innovative thinking in learning and research to be able to achieve high academic rankings. Creativity in learning models and innovation in research will have significant benefits for the community.

**Keywords:** *Acceleration program, academic rank, Lecturer quality.*

## Introduction

Higher education is an organisation engaged in education services. Management of higher education is different from managing a factory. Universities are not organisations that sell products but provide services in a unique form. The university functions to conserve and transmit knowledge through teaching, research, and public services (Markwell, 2003). Higher education aims to maintain a learning society and spread knowledge. Based on this function and purpose, the university is said to be a community of scholarship (Deem, 2011). Therefore human resources are an essential part of the university.

Human resource management activities are vital in a university because they determine and guarantee of the quality of knowledge provided to students (Brewer & Brewer, 2010). Students become an impetus for the university to achieve its functions and objectives effectively (Sunder, 2016). The provision of quality services is a crucial factor in attracting and retaining students. The quality of teaching and learning is the most critical aspect of increasing student satisfaction (Douglas et al., 2006). Quality and services become a unity that affects customer value (Collins, 1994). Quality is a primary concern in managing universities (Sayidah et al., 2019).

The quality of lecturers becomes the most significant part of ranking universities. The Ministry of Higher Education gives 30% weight to the quality of lecturers in assessing the quality of higher education. The assessment of the quality of lecturers includes the number of lecturers with doctoral degrees and the number of lecturers who have academic positions as Professor and Associate Professor. Lecturers with academic ranks below the Associate Professor, namely, the Assistant Professor and Instructure, do not weight the assessment (Indarjo, 2018). Therefore every university must strive to continuously motivate and send lecturers to continue their doctoral studies and take care of academic promotions. This effort needs to be done intensively, especially in universities that still lack lecturers with Ph.D. degrees and low academic positions.

The university, which is the object of this research, is one of the tertiary institutions that have lecturers with low academic levels, so it must accelerate the increase in academic ranks. The phenomenon of the low level of academic ranks is inseparable from the map of academics ranks in tertiary institutions at the national level. Based on data from <http://sinta.ristekbrin.go.id/>, I downloaded it on April 6, 2020, showed that the number of lecturers in Indonesia is 191,926. Details of the percentage of academic ranks are as follows:

**Table 1:** Academics Rank di Indonesia

Number	Academic Ranks		Amount (Person)	Percentage %
	Indonesian	English		
1.	Profesor	Professor	5.103	3
2.	Lektor Kepala	Associate Professor	24.366	13
3.	Lektor	Assistant Professor	42.467	22
4.	Asisten Ahli	Instructure	44.754	23
5.	-	Undefined	75.236	39
		Total	191.926	100

**Source:** <http://sinta.ristekbrin.go.id/>

The table above shows that the number of Professors and Associate Professors in Indonesia is still relatively small, which is 13%. The most significant amount are lecturers who do not have

academic positions at 39%. In Indonesia, in general, almost all tertiary institutions require an accelerated program to increase academic ranks. This data is different from Italy, which shows that the number of Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors has almost the same proportion. These three levels have a percentage of 37%, 35%, and 28% respectively (Abramo, D'Angelo, & Di Costa, 2011).

The researcher has designed a program to accelerate the increase in academic ranks in the form of a project action plan. The goal of this program is to improve the quality of Lecturers. This program is essential for the Dean to achieve success in realising the vision of leadership. I expect that this program can motivate lecturers to promote academic ranks to increase the accreditation and ranking of the university.

Several studies have shown that one solution to increase academic rank is to build an online credit score calculation system. Minartiningtyas & Sumariata (2018) produce computer applications that can help in the process of calculating credit numbers quickly, precisely, and accurately as a reference before submitting a functional promotion. Other researchers developed using the FAST (Framework for the Application of System Technology) (Lestari, Heroza, & Zubiah, 2016) system or using case diagrams (Sunoto, 2017).

This research is different from previous studies that offer solutions to the problem of increasing academic rank by designing systems. The researcher has compiled standard operational procedures to assist with a program to encourage lecturers to take care of academic promotions. The contribution of this study is to provide input for university leaders to make creative and innovative policies. They can create systems that can encourage lecturers to improve their competence through various creativities and innovations in the fields of learning, research, and community service. Lecturers who have excellent performance in these three fields will be easy to promote in higher academic positions. The high proportion of Associate Professors and Professors will increase the ranking of the university.

## **Research Methods**

This study aims to develop and implement a project action plan. The author uses a qualitative approach with the research site of the faculty of economics and business of a private university in Surabaya, Indonesia. The researcher collected data by distributing questionnaires with open questions. The questionnaire contained three general questions, namely, (1) the academic position of the lecturer concerned, (2) age, (3) education, and (4) the length of time not taking care of the increase in academic ranks. Four specific questions include (1) the reasons, and (2) the obstacles lecturers do not rise in academic ranks, (3) the perception of the benefits of raising academic positions, and (4) suggestions for faculty leaders. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to all lecturers in the faculties of economics and business. The researcher

analysed data by thematic methods. The researcher then used the results of mapping academics ranks and thematic answers to prepare a project action plan with the following stages:

1. Mapping the level of academics ranks.
2. Explores the problems faced by lecturers in taking care of the increase in academics ranks.
3. Finding a solution to the problem of academics ranks.
4. Arranging Standard Operating Procedures and Acceleration Teams to increase academic ranks.
5. Conduct socialisation of Standard Operating Procedures and the Team to Accelerate the increase in academic ranks.

## Result and Discussion

### *Mapping Academics Rank*

The researcher collected data for mapping academic positions in the Faculty of Economics and Business from the questionnaire answers. The results are of the mapping are available in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Mapping Academics Ranks

Academics Ranks			Age		Education		Duration From The Latest Academics Rank Up to Now	
Indonesian	English	Person (%)	Year	Person	Degree	Person	Year	Person
Profesor	Professor	2 (4%)	≥60	2	Ph.D.	2	< 5	2
Lektor Kepala	Associate Professor	6 (13%)	40-50 51-60 ≥60	1 3 2	Ph.D. Master	5 1	5-10 >10	2 4
Lektor	Assistant Professor	16 (35%)	40-50 51-60 ≥60	5 10 1	Ph.D. Master	4 12	< 5 5-10 >10	1 4 11
Asisten Ahli	Instructure	18 (39%)	30-39 40-50 51-60 ≥60	2 9 5 2	Ph.D. Master	2 16	< 5 5-10 >10	0 2 16
-	Undefined	4 (9%)	20-29 51-60	3 1	Ph.D Master	1 3	< 5 5-10	3 1
Total	Total	46	20-29 30-39 40-50 51-60 ≥60	3 (7%) 2 (4%) 15 (33%) 19 (41%) 7 (15%)	Ph.D. Master	14 32	< 5 5-10 >10	6 (13%) 9 (20%) 31 (67%)

Source: Author

Based on Table 2, it is apparent that the quality of lecturers in terms of academic ranks in the faculties of economics and business is low. Most lecturers have academic positions under Associate Professor (83%). Professor plus Associate Professor is only 17%. This academic rank gap needs to get the attention of faculty leaders because the government uses the number of Professor plus Associate Professors to determine universities ranking. Next, data regarding age shows that 26% of the lecturers were over 50 years old, and only 74% were less than 40 years old. 74% of lecturers are expected to increase academic ranks. The number of lecturers who have the opportunity to be able to increase the academic rank from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor is four people with doctoral degrees.

Based on the Operational Guidelines for Evaluating Credit Scores for Academic Position (Dikti, 2019), one of the requirements to propose is that an Associate Professor is a lecturer who has a doctoral level education . Overall, almost 70% of lecturers have not increased academic ranks for more than ten years. Among the six lecturers including the Associate Professors, only one lecturer has received a doctorate and is less than 50 years old so that there is still enough time for them to become a Professor.

The findings in this faculty differ from the results of research in another one of the state's higher education study programs in Malang, namely, at the State University of Malang (Wiyono, 2005).The findings show that the highest percentage are lecturers with the academic rank of Associate Professors, namely, 28.7% group IVa and group IVb 15%. The second-largest rate is lecturers with the academic rank of Assistant Professor 30%. Lecturers with low academic rank, namely, lectures accounted for only 1.75%.The two findings above show that there are gaps in the quality of lecturers in private higher education and state higher education. Table 2 below reinforces the condition of the difference at the national level. Based on data the proportion of academic rank at each level for private higher education and state higher education is as follows (Maftuh, 2017):

**Table 2:** Perbedaan Academics Ranks Between Private and State Universities

Academic Rank	Private Universities		State Universities	
	Jumlah	%	Jumlah	%
Professor	1.065	1%	4.176	6%
Associate Professor	9.253	5%	20.265	27%
Assistant Professor	25.158	15%	24.481	33%
Instructure	39.286	23%	13.973	19%
Undefined	95.979	56%	10.722	15%
Total	170.741	100%	73.617	100%

**Source:** (Maftuh, 2017), processed.

The data above shows that the number of lecturers in state universities is 2.3 times greater than the number of lecturers in private universities. Implicitly, this data also shows that the number of students in the private university is 2.3 times greater than the number of state university students. This data means that private university has an essential role in helping the task of government to educate the community. But unfortunately, the quality of private university lecturers is inversely proportional to state universities. In-state universities, the percentage of lecturers with low academic rank is smaller.

In contrast, in a private university, the number of lecturers with low academic ranks is large. The government, through the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education needs to make efforts to improve the quality of private university lecturers, particularly those related to the management of academic rank. Training on writing scientific articles needs to be done intensively at private universities. The government should group various research grants for research, service and institutional capacity building between private and state universities.

### ***Exploring Lecturer Opinions Regarding Academic Rank***

The researcher explored problems faced by lecturers in the management of academic rank at a meeting. The researcher gave four questions related to the management of academic positions. I group answers into themes. The questions and answers are presented in the following Table 3.

**Table 3:** Results of Exploration Lecturer Opinions Regarding Academic Rank

	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
1.	What are the benefits of academics rank promotion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased income</li> <li>- Greater opportunity in applying for research grants</li> <li>- Devotion and career advancement.</li> </ul>
2.	Why do you not promote your academics rank?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of publications is less.</li> <li>- Donot understand the mechanism</li> <li>- Time constraints (not two years),</li> <li>- Limitations of formal education (still in S2)</li> <li>- Age constraints (more than 50 years).</li> </ul>
3.	What do obstacles to promote academics rank?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- complicated mechanism.</li> <li>- Strict research requirements.</li> <li>- Rules change frequently.</li> </ul>
4.	What are your suggestions for faculty leaders in raising academic rank?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faculty leaders form a special team to help lecturers take care of the academic's rank</li> <li>- Faculty leaders need to provide motivation,</li> <li>- Making regulations related to rewards and</li> </ul>



		sanctions for those who do not take care of academic rank.
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**Source:** Author

The answer to the question about the benefits of taking care of an increase in academic rank shows that the lecturer is aware of the three benefits of having a high academic grade. The first benefit, lecturers, will get a higher income. Functional benefits increase progressively according to the academic rank level. Lecturers who have more top academic ranks get more excellent take-home pay. The second benefit, the high academic grade, will have a positive impact on getting the opportunity to gain research grants from the government. Based on the 2018 Revised Edition of Research and Community Service Guidebook, lecturers who can submit research grant proposals for superior schemes are lecturers who have a minimum academic rank of associates professor with the Master of Education level (Tim DRPM, 2019). In addition to research grants obtained from the government, lecturers who have a high academic rank have the opportunity to receive research funding from the private sector. Research in Norway shows that Professors gain funding from industry to improve research performance (Gulbrandsen & Smeby, 2005).

The third benefit for lecturers who have high academic rank is that they have better welfare and opportunities to develop a broader career. These results support research findings in North Cyprus and the UK. Research on 600 academics in North Cyprus shows academic rank is related to satisfaction with advancement and compensation. The Professor is the most satisfied with their promotion and compensation. The higher the academic level, the greater the payment received (Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009a). However, job satisfaction does not increase progressively with academic rankings (Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009a). In the UK, research at 23 universities showed that Professors are most satisfied with promotion, of course, and most happy to have the highest academic rank with the benefits of material and non-material achievement (Oshagbemi, 2012).

There are several reasons and obstacles that cause lecturers to be reluctant to take care of an increase in academic rank. The personal basis is the lack of scientific publications, education level, and age. The low performance of scientific publications is a significant obstacle for almost all lecturers. The lecturer must improve the ability to write scientific articles through training and assistance. Another barrier to promote academics rank is formal education. Many lecturers are still master-educated so that they cannot raise their positions from Assistance Professor to Associate Professor. The management of the university must help academic employees to continue their studies to the doctoral level. Some lecturers have age constraints. Some lecturers are more than 60 years old and the institutions felt that it was useless to promote

academic positions because they would retire in a few years. This is due to the average lecturer will be entering retirement at the age of 65 years.

External barriers in the view of lecturers include complicated bureaucratic mechanisms, stringent scientific publication requirements, and often changing rules. The complicated procedures to take care of academic promotions felt by lecturers occur due to several problems. Research findings at Sriwijaya University show (1) lecturers do not know the exact number of credit points they have, so it is difficult to submit an increase in academic srank, (2) they cannot see their amount of credit points anytime and anywhere because of no system stores it (3) they have difficulty collecting the required documents (Lestari et al., 2016).

Based on the opinion of lecturers, there were several reasons and obstacles determined for promoting academics rank. These include the lack of publication, the mechanism of academic rank management that is not understood, complicated, and changes often. Scientific papers are the main obstacle. This condition shows that the research performance of the lecturers is still low. Most of the lecturers are only interested in fulfilling their obligations in the teaching field and not doing enough innovation through research. Low research performance is one of the weaknesses of lecturers in various universities in Indonesia. The results showed at Darul Ulum University, and at STKIP PGRI Jombang, only about 18% of lecturers improved their professional quality with research activities (Nurmilah, Bafadal, Djatmika, W, & Imron, 2020).

This condition is inseparable from the climate at the university, which does not encourage lecturers to innovate. Research in Vietnam on knowledge workers at research-oriented universities shows that the pro-innovation environment affects innovative work behaviour (Dac Son, 2020). Faculty management needs to create a climate that encourages lecturers to find innovation through research. Research on 338 lecturers in several Indonesian universities shows that the quality of lecturers is related to job satisfaction, trust, and commitment. Management needs to build job satisfaction, trust, and loyalty to increase the intention and motivation of lecturers to improve quality (Rekarti et al., 2020). Research findings in state universities in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, show that increasing academic rank becomes an extrinsic motivation that encourages lecturers to conduct research (Garnasih, 2017).

Furthermore, suggestions from lecturers for faculty leaders are the formation of a unique team, providing motivation, and making regulations on rewards (sanctions) for lecturers who promote (not) academic rank. Faculty leaders must be able to motivate lecturers and create rules that can increase academic rank. The faculty must have a team that assists lecturers in managing academic positions. Lecturers who have succeeded in improving their academic level should be given an appreciation in addition to receiving higher allowances automatically. While sanctions for lecturers who are not willing to take care of academic rank, do not need to be given because it will be a problem.

### ***Solutions to Academic Rank Problems: Teams and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)***

Based on suggestions written by lecturers, the researcher conducted focus group discussions with several faculty leaders to make policies. The result is a draft of a unique team and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the acceleration of academic rank promotion. The researcher asked for advice from one of the professors in the faculty to perfect the SOP (see figure 1a, 1b, and 1c).

The Team for the Acceleration of Academic Promotion (TAAP) is under the direct command of the Dean. Next, the Dean circulated a letter to lecturers immediately to collect academics rank documents, especially lecturers who have not had their academic positions raised for more than ten years. If necessary, the Dean will personally call the person to motivate him. The Dean will monitor and request reports from each team regarding the progress of each lecturer. The Team for the Acceleration of Academic Promotion (TAAP) consists of 3 (three), namely the Team of Administration and Credit Score Calculation, the Team of Scientific Article Writing Assistance, the Team of Scientific Article Publishing. The Team of Administration and Credit Score Calculation consists of one employee and one lecturer who has experience in managing his academic rank. This team has the following duties and responsibilities:

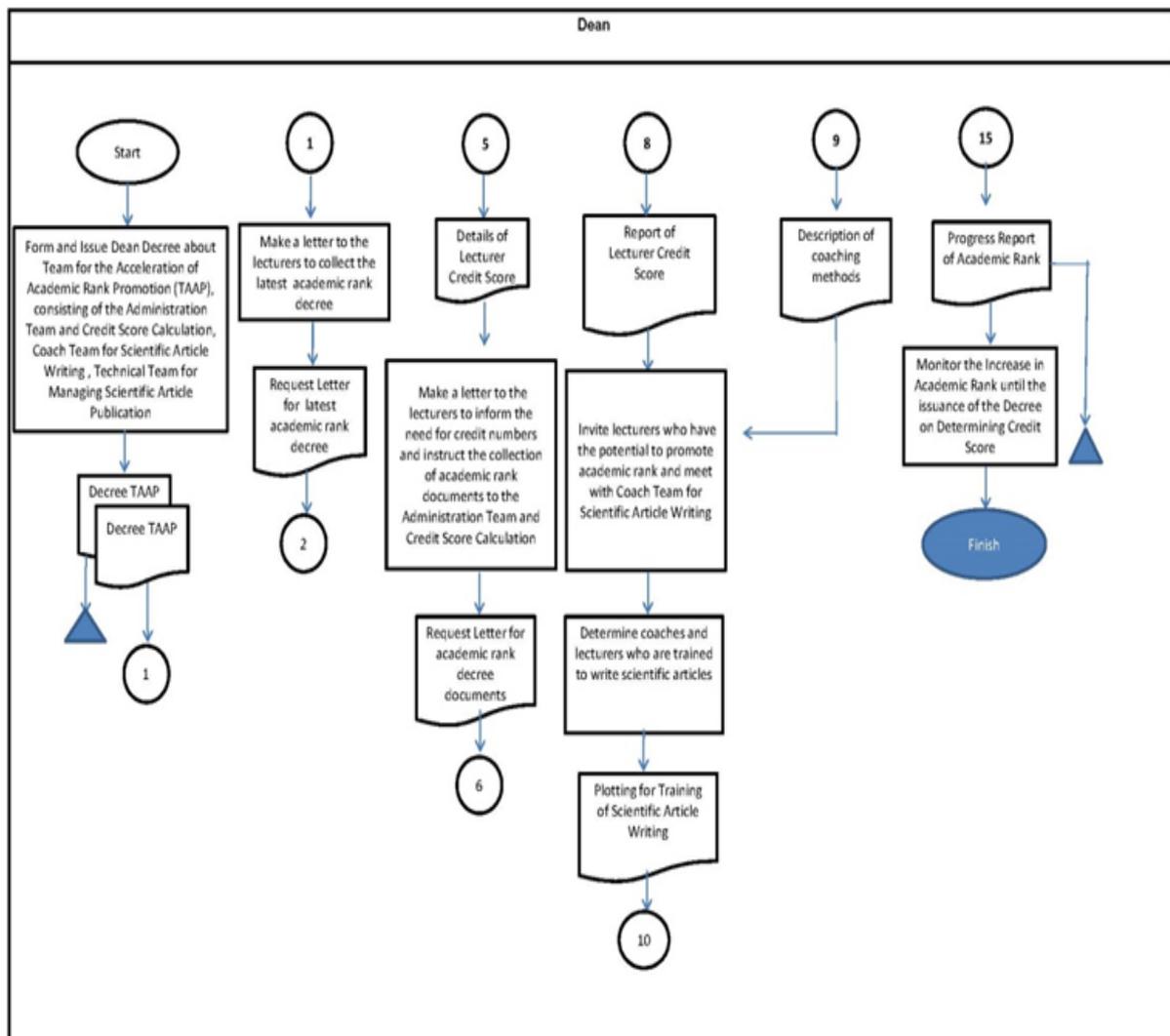
1. Prepare the format of the credit number collection.
2. Record details of credit scores for all lecturers and the need to increase academics rank
3. Make a report to the Dean about the Lecturer Credit Score Details.
4. Assist lecturers in filling out all the forms needed in academic rank, and calculate the number of credit points.
5. Rank lecturers starting from the lowest to the highest credit score and report it to the Dean.

The Team of Scientific Article Writing Assistance consists of one Professor (Chief Editor of the Management Study Program Scientific Journal, *Ekspektra*), one Associate Professor, and one Assistance Professor. This team will assist the lecturers until they have articles that are ready to be published. The lecturer will intensively meet the team for consultation on article writing. Lecturers who have finished the article will report to the Dean and the file is submitted to the Team of Scientific Article Publishing Scientific Publication Management Technical Team. They look for scientific journals as target publications and manages them until they are published. If there is a revision, the team will submit it to the lecturer. This team informs the lecturer and send the evidence when an article has been published. Furthermore, the lecturer will report published articles to the Team of Administration and Credit Score Calculation so that the team can recalculate credit numbers.

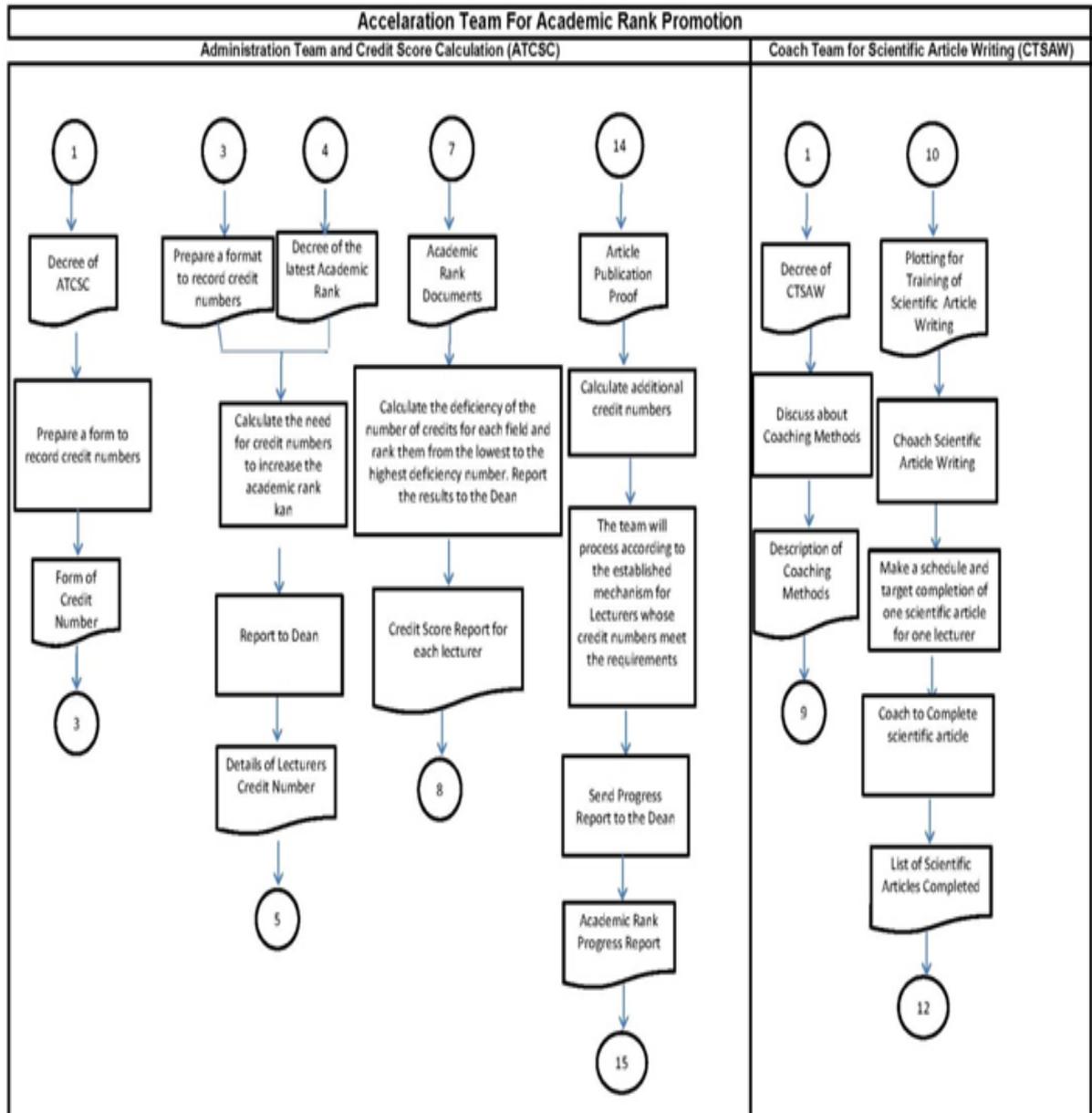
The workflow of the three Teams can be clearly explained in the Standard Operating Procedures, as shown in figures 1a to 1c below. In the picture, there are five parties involved in the mechanism of Accelerating the Increase in academic rank, namely 3 Team for the

Acceleration of Academic Promotion (TAAP), Dean and lecturers. These five parties interconnected according to their respective duties and responsibilities. The flow or mechanism starts when the Dean determines the Team for the Acceleration of Academic Promotion and issues a decree. Furthermore, each team, together with the lecturer and the Dean, manages academics rank. Lecturers who have fulfilled the credit score and completed all the required documents will then be processed at the university level to upload documents. The Dean monitors the academic rank management process. If there is a revision, the team will return to work following their duties and responsibilities. The Dean will continue to motivate lecturers to remain enthusiastic in improving what needs to be revised.

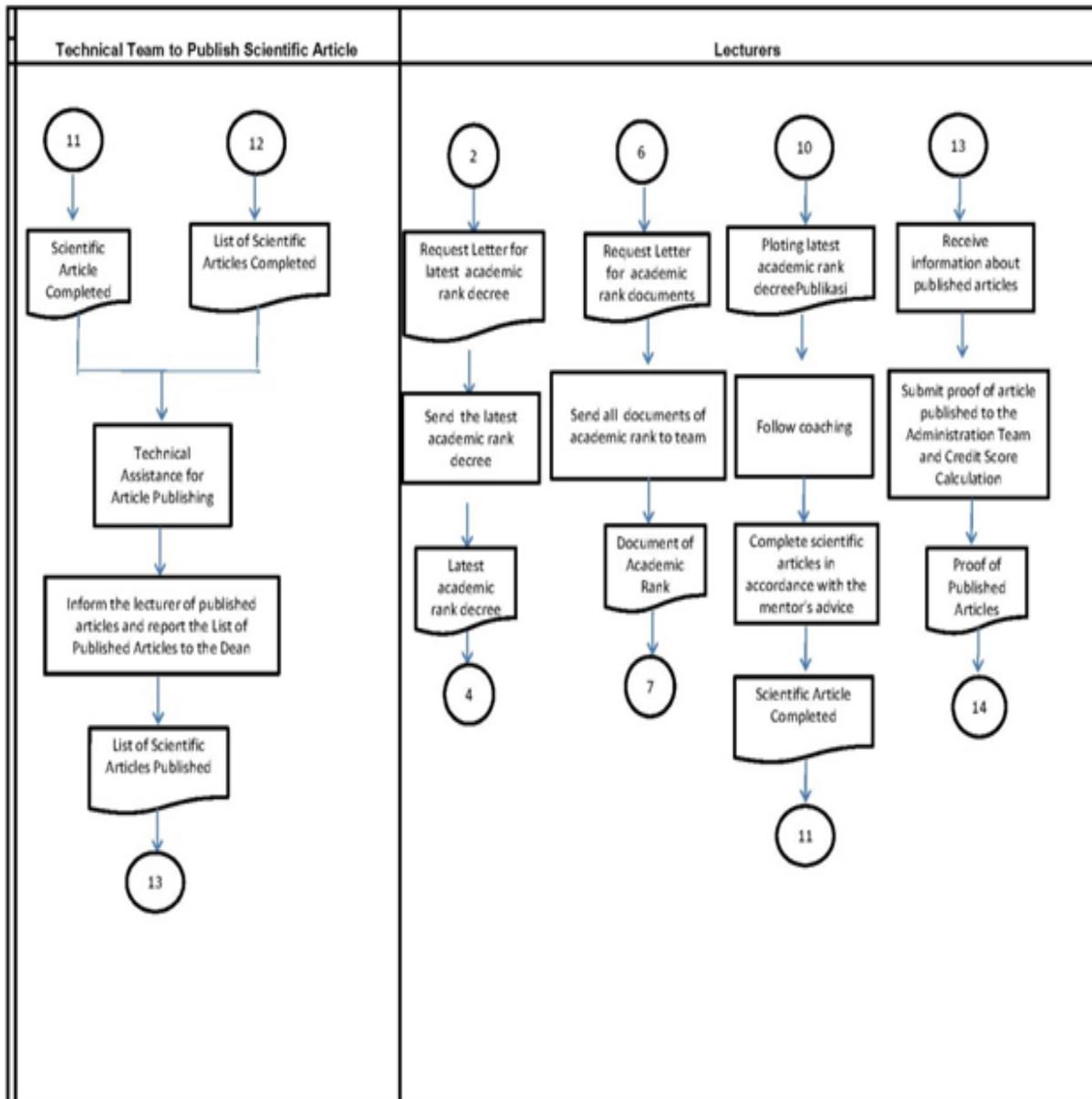
**Figure 1a:** Standard Operating Procedures for Accelerating Academic Rank Promotion



**Figure 1b:** Standard Operating Procedures for Accelerating Academic Rank Promotion



**Figure1c:** Standard Operating Procedures for Accelerating Academic Rank Promotion



## Conclusion

The low level of academics ranks of my faculty have motivated the researcher to conduct research aimed at making the program accelerate the increase in academics ranks. The results showed that the level of academics rank of my faculty was still low. 67% of the lecturers did not take care of the increase in academics rank more than ten years. In general, they consider that the mechanism of academics rank established by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education is complicated, often changes, and tight in research requirements.



The researcher found Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the acceleration of academic rank promotion to solve the problem of a low level of academic rank. The biggest challenge in implementing this program is the low motivation of lecturers in taking care of academic rank promotion. The team must encourage them to increase academics rank. A lecturer must have creative and innovative thinking in learning and research to be able to achieve high academic rank. Creativity in learning models and innovation in research will have significant benefits for the community. The biggest dream of a lecturer can become a Professor. In every meeting, we always explain the importance of the lecturer quality primarily related to the academic rank level. High academic rank will increase accreditation and also ranking of institutions.

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