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Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) Processes

from the Perspective of a Committee Member

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Article 30

Article 30 contains the procedures and criteria for Members who are applying for renewal, tenure, and promotion.

Because it has such a significant impact on the career of all tenure-track and tenured faculty members, colleagues serving on each academic unit's RTP Committee must be attentive to issues that are important in ensuring that all Members receive a fair and consistent reading of their files.

Committee discussions shall remain confidential. When in doubt about any procedural issue, the Committee members should consult either with QUFA or the Faculty Relations Office for advice, who in turn will consult with each other if need be.

This information about Article 30 is intended to clarify some details about which QUFA is regularly asked.

Renewal Tenure and Promotion (RTP) Committee (Article 30.2)

Decisions about including students and/or members of cognate units on their RTP Committee are discretionary to each unit and may vary from year to year. If possible, given the size and composition of the unit, the composition of the Committee by Members should represent differences in rank and gender.

However, conflicts of interest of Committee members with any Member applying for renewal, tenure, or promotion must trump representation, and anyone with a conflict of interest must leave the Committee (see Article 18: Conflict of Interest). Similarly, Members who believe that a Committee member has a reasonable apprehension of bias have the right to request that the Committee member step down. RTP Committee members who have a conflict of interest or who are believed to have a reasonable apprehension of bias with respect to an applicant for a personnel process must leave the Committee entirely and a replacement found. It is not sufficient that they excuse themselves from discussions of those files where they have a conflict or a reasonable apprehension of bias.

It is the responsibility of anyone who has knowledge of potential conflict of interest or apprehension of bias to bring their concerns forward to the Committee Chair, who in turn will make a decision on whether there is an actual conflict of interest or

apprehension of bias, often with the assistance of QUFA or Faculty Relations or both. If such concerns are not adequately addressed up front, then the whole process stands in danger of being tainted, and this will have to be addressed later in the process. It is always more difficult to address issues of any sort later in the process.

The Role of the Equity Representative on the RTP Committee (Article 24.4.2)

The Equity Representative has explicit responsibility for the Committee's adherence to the rules and practices that assure equity, for the data collection, and for the reporting of this information. While the Equity Representative is designated for this particular role, all Committee members, including students, must also take the requisite equity training before the Committee begins its work, and all Committee members have the responsibility of ensuring that the process is conducted fairly (Article 24.1.5).

Function of the RTP Committee

The function of the RTP Committee is to assess evidence in the Candidate's file only, *not* to produce evidence about the calibre of the candidate. For example, Committee members' personal opinions about an applicant's research are not relevant and cannot play a role in the decision making process: the Committee must defer to the opinions of the referees. It is up to the Committee to weigh the evidence presented fairly and to play an adjudicative role, not an

investigatory role. It is thus unnecessary (and, indeed, often impossible) to have RTP Committee members who are experts in any Candidate's sub-field (Article 30.14).

Assessment of each Candidate must also conform to the applicant's appointment letter. Some individuals have non-standard job descriptions and must be evaluated according to their actual terms of appointment (Articles 30.6.8 and 30.6.9).

Burden of Proof and Criteria (Article 30.6)

- **Renewal**

In Renewal processes, there is a presumption in favour of the member, i.e., the University would have to prove that the individual should not be kept on (Article 30.6.2). Renewal requires a record as a good teacher and clear evidence of high-quality scholarly or creative work. There is no requirement with respect to a specified *quantity* of research.

- **Tenure**

Tenure cases presume that Members must make the case for their tenure, but it does not imply that the presumption is against them (Article 30.6.4). To attain tenure, there must be a record as a very good teacher committed to academic and pedagogical excellence, high-quality and peer-assessed scholarly or creative work, and a record of service.

- **Promotions to Rank**

At no level is there a stipulation with respect to the quantity of research required. In respect to the rank of Professor, to be described as "distinguished," there must be a demonstration of multiple and continuing contributions, but there are no specifications about when these

are made or how much constitutes a distinguished career.

Referees (Article 30.8)

The "international stature" of a referee refers to an individual's reputation and does not mean that the referee needs to be located outside of Canada.

"Arm's length" in respect to a referee is hard to define. It means that the referee should not be a person's thesis supervisor, co-investigator on recent grants, or a co-editor of a recent book. The common denominator in these instances is that such individuals have had a hand in producing the work that they would be asked to assess, and anyone who could be described in those terms should be excluded.

The Committee may choose to use the names of referees from the candidate's list as their own or add others.

When external referees make reference to standards elsewhere, that information has no bearing on a decision at Queen's.

Masking Referees and Solicited Student Letters

Masking letters means that the letterhead and signature block are covered. Referees' letters can be masked upon the request of the referee. All solicited student letters are masked. In either case, no masking of identification that occurs in the body of the letter is considered necessary.

Unsolicited Student Letters

No unsolicited student letters are included in the Candidate's file with the exception of those which the Member submits as part of his or her teaching dossier.

The RTP Committee's Recommendations

The basis of the Committee's recommendation is solely on the material in the RTP file. Nothing known, rumoured, or believed by Committee members or the unit is to be taken into account unless documentation thereof and in accordance with the process outlined in the collective agreement is in the file.

Emerging Negative Recommendations

An "emerging negative" recommendation refers to a recommendation *still in process*, and therefore, the Member must be apprised of the Committee's preliminary findings with the clearly stated reasons for the Committee's emerging position, so that the Member may respond appropriately before a final recommendation has been made by the Committee.

When Recommendations Conflict

Where a Head's recommendation differs from that of a Committee's in departmentalized faculties or a Dean's recommendation differs from a Committee's in a non-departmentalized faculty, the Department Head or Dean shall discuss his or her concerns with the Committee.

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