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ARTICLES 30 AND 31

Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) Processes

for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty Members, Librarians, and Archivists, from the Perspective of the Applicant

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Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) processes are critical decision points in your academic career. In

worst-case scenarios, they can be career-ending.

Applicants are welcome to contact QUFA staff before or at any stage during a personnel process to consult about their individual circumstances. QUFA also sponsors RTP Workshops for tenure-track/continuing-track, tenured/continuing faculty, and librarians/archivists in early May every year to discuss questions and concerns of Members about to apply for RTP governed by the following procedures.

Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) Committee

Departmental RTP Committees are elected annually by 1 May. Members who are going forward with applications in the coming year for any RTP decision must not stand for election to the Committee.

If an applicant believes that any of the elected RTP Committee members in his or her unit has a conflict of interest with him or her (Article 18.1), or if there is a reasonable apprehension of bias towards him or her, the applicant should raise this issue by speaking to the Head and/or QUFA. Committee members must resign from the committee in either situation. Committee members may not recuse themselves from one or two files, but rather they must be available to assess all files. New to this Collective Agreement is the proviso that no student whose graduate supervisor of record is either a candidate or member of an RTP Committee may serve on that Committee (Article 30.2.5).

(Please see the *Know Your CA* regarding the RTP Committee, at <http://www.queensu.ca/provost/faculty/facultyrelations/qufa/collectiveagreement.html>)

Also new in the 2011-2015 Collective Agreement is that violations of the Agreement may be disclosed by RTP Committee members to the Faculty Relations Office or to the QUFA Grievance Officer. In the 2008-2011 Agreement, disclosure could have been made to "the appropriate University officer," which ran the risk of irreparably tainting the process if disclosure was made to a Unit Head, Dean, or the Principal (Articles 30.2.7 and 31.2.7).

Aboriginal Applicants: If the applicant is an Aboriginal person, Appendix O applies to his or her RTP application (see "Notification," below).

RTP for QUFA Members of Clinical Departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences: Procedures for personnel decisions from clinical departments shall conform to all provisions of the Collective Agreement, except with respect to the composition of their RTP Committee. A Members may suggest to his or her Dean the group(s), Unit(s), or office(s) that the Member regards as most competent to assess his or her file. Individuals named for this purpose need not necessarily be Members. If there is any disagreement between the applicant and the Dean about the Committee's composition, the matter should be discussed with QUFA for possible referral to the JCAA or to the Grievance Officer and Faculty Relations, whichever is most appropriate.

Eligibility

Members in an initial tenure-track appointment are normally eligible in the final year of a three-year contract for consideration for renewal. That means that they may apply at the end of the second year of their contract. Members in a renewed tenure-track appointment are normally eligible in the final year of a three-year contract for consideration for tenure and promotion to Associate. Again, this means that they may apply at the end of the second year of their contract, which is usually their fifth year at Queen's.

Early Renewal or Tenure Decisions: In exceptional cases, a Member may be considered earlier than the final year of his or her appointment. Permission to go

forward early for these decisions must be granted by your Dean before the assessment begins. Early eligibility for personnel decisions is sometimes stipulated in a Member's appointment letter.

Please note that evaluation of teaching at Queen's is an important component in the renewal or tenure process, and because teaching assessments from other Universities cannot be substituted in your file except as part of a teaching dossier, going forward early can result in a paucity of data about your teaching.

QUFA recommends that you contact QUFA staff for advice if you intend to go forward early for renewal or tenure decisions.

Postponement of RTP Decisions (Leaves):

If you have become a parent during the initial tenure-track or renewed tenure-track appointment periods and have taken maternity or parental leave, you may take a year's postponement for each birth or adoption.

Similarly, if you have taken sick leave for at least 60 days or a lesser period, and if you can demonstrate that the period of sick leave has had a substantial impact on your research capability (Articles 30.5.6-30.5.7 and 31.4.7-31.4.8), you may elect to have the renewal or tenure decision postponed for the same amount of time you were on leave (rounded up to the nearest year). Previously, a sick leave of unspecified duration entitled a Member to postpone either a renewal or a tenure decision for one year. In other exceptional cases, you may request a delay in the application of one year, and if granted, the review of your renewal or tenure-track appointment will be extended by one year.

Applicants with Non-standard Job

Descriptions: You must be evaluated on the basis of your primary responsibility or responsibilities as described in your

letter of appointment (see Articles 30.6.9 and 30.6.10).

Criteria for RTP Decisions

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 that you have a record as a good teacher and clear evidence of high-quality scholarly or creative work. There is no specification of *quantity* of research, though there must be enough research for referees to make an assessment of its quality.

Tenure: To attain tenure, applicants must provide evidence of 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. There is no presumption either for or against the Member making the application, but the evidence must favour granting tenure. While there is no specification of *quantity* of research, our expectation is that there must be a sufficient amount of research for referees to arrive at a reasonably reliable judgment of its quality.

Promotions to Rank: Promotion to Associate Professor occurs simultaneously with the awarding of tenure. Promotion to Professor may be applied for at your discretion without a specific timeline. At Queen's, the granting of renewal, tenure, and/or promotion affects your professional rank and the employment commitment the University has to you, but it has no impact on your compensation.

With respect to the rank of Professor, for you to be described as "distinguished," there must be a demonstration of multiple and continuing contributions, but there are no specifications about when these contributions are made or how many contributions constitute a

"distinguished" career. At no level is there a stipulation with respect to the *quantity* of research required.

The 2011-2015 Collective Agreement explicitly states what had previously been the practice with respect to the burden of proof in applications for promotion to Professor (i.e., the Member must show that the evidence favours granting the promotion (Articles 30.6.6 and 31.5.6)).

Application Process

Notification: Some of the sections of Article 30 dealing with the RTP procedure have been reorganized so that the required events and actions are set out in chronological order (Articles 30.7 and 31.6). Notification is one such section, where many of the changes are to form and structure rather than to content.

By 15 May of each year, the Unit Head shall notify all Members of the unit of promotion deadlines for the coming year. The Unit Head also must notify all Members eligible for renewal or tenure *in writing* of their eligibility. In notifying all Members eligible for renewal or tenure of their eligibility, Unit Heads must also specifically draw their attention to Appendix O: Aboriginal Participation in RTP Committees (Articles 30.7.2(c) and 31.6.2(c)). The Unit Head shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the Member has received timely notice (Articles 30.7.2(c) and 31.6.2(c)).

By 1 July, you must notify the Unit Head of your intent to apply for renewal, tenure or promotion.

In the 2001-2015 Collective Agreement, there is a new requirement that a RTP candidate notify the Unit Head *by 1 July* if he or she wishes to invoke the provisions of Appendix O (i.e., the same deadline for advising whether he or she intends to apply for renewal, tenure, or promotion). The Unit Head then advises

the RTP Committee if any of the candidates has invoked Appendix O (Articles 30.7.3-30.7.4 and 31.6.2(c)).

Deadline for RTP Application

Submissions: *By 15 August*, you must submit your renewal, tenure, and/or promotion application to the RTP Committee.

Referees: The section on Referees (Articles 30.8 and 31.7) has been significantly reorganized for clarity, but there are no substantive changes.

Selection of referees is critical for the success of your application because referees play the primary role in assessing the quality of your research and are designated as the “experts” for the purpose of the RTP processes. You should seek specialists in the sub-field which you define as your area of expertise. Specifying your area of expertise is an exercise of your academic freedom. Consult with QUFA if you require assistance in selecting names for the list or in obtaining consensus on your referees list with the RTP Committee.

Within a reasonable time after receiving notification of your eligibility, and *no later than 15 July*, your Unit Head must arrange a meeting with you to discuss and give advice on the preparation of the application file and to discuss the suitability of your potential list of referees.

By 31 July, you must provide your list of potential referees to the RTP Committee. Be prepared to provide *more* names than there are letters required at each level: for renewal, 3 referees are required, at least 1 of whom is external to Queen’s; for tenure or promotion to Associate Professor, 4 referees are required, at least three (3) of whom are external to Queen’s; and for promotion to Professor, 5 referees are required, at least 4 of whom are external to Queen’s. Along with the person’s name and contact information, you must submit an

explanation of your relationship with each potential referee. The Committee gets to choose one name for your referee list, which can either be one that the Committee suggests or one from the list you submitted.

It is to your advantage to choose referees who will be favourably disposed to the kind of work you do and knowledgeable about your sub-field. It should be someone at arm’s length, that is, not someone whose reputation or work will benefit from your success (e.g., not recent co-authors, co-grant applicants, or your PhD supervisor).

Referees of “international stature” (Article 30.8.5) are individuals with international reputations and do not need to be academics living outside this country. Be wary of choosing referees who are unfamiliar with the North American academy and the vocabulary normally used here to describe an applicant’s accomplishments (e.g., in many European countries, there is only one “distinguished” professor in a field, and this may lead to a misunderstanding of the language in our Collective Agreement).

The most important criterion with respect to the rank of potential referees is whether the person is qualified to assess your scholarship. All things being equal, it is valuable but not essential to get full Professors to provide a reference, unless you are seeking promotion to Professor.

Because the tenure file includes your entire six years’ career contents, do not use the same referees for both your renewal and your tenure process. It is better to have fresh voices for the tenure decision.

It is neither necessary nor advisable to ask permission in advance from your referees.

Once the referees are selected by the Committee, the Unit Head sends out a template letter to each of them requesting a report. Along with this template letter, the Head sends each referee your curriculum vitae, your teaching dossier, and copies or examples of your work selected by you. You can also provide electronic links to your publications where appropriate. Referees may also request additional pieces of your work to make an informed evaluation of your scholarly or creative work. Referees’ letters are returned to the Committee Chair for inclusion in your file.

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 your referees. All solicited student letters are masked. In either case, no masking of a referee’s identification that occurs in the body of the letter is considered necessary.

Unsolicited Student Letters: No unsolicited student letters are included in your file with the exception of those letters you may submit as part of your teaching dossier.

Member’s Application File (Article 30.9.1)

By 15 August, you must provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae; a separate summary of teaching experience, which can be in the form of a teaching dossier; copies of all relevant scholarly or creative work (or at least citations for such work) and description of work in progress; and a summary of your service to the unit, the University, your discipline or profession, and the wider community. This self-produced material forms the core of your application.

QUFA highly recommends that all faculty members produce a teaching dossier. Assistance can be provided in the first instance through the Centre for Teaching

and Learning (CTL) Web site: <http://www.queensu.ca/ctl/resources/publications/teachingdossier.html>, or with CTL staff or QUFA if further advice is required.

Student Input: The RTP Committee develops a list of your present and former students who may be contacted to solicit their views. You will be shown this list in advance, and you are allowed to strike out up to 25% of the names from the list. The Committee will then make a random selection of students for the survey.

Colleagues' Input: By 15 September, your Member's Application File, and any other material you choose to include, shall be made available to unit colleagues for their review. For the purposes of RTP reviews, "colleagues" include all current Members (and in Health Science departments, non-bargaining-unit clinical faculty) within the unit, with the exception of members on the RTP Committee, Heads, Deans, Associate Deans, and students. Retirees from your unit are excluded. Colleagues' opinion letters must be written and signed, and they must be based on the merits of your application. In the case where the Member holds a joint or cross appointment, the Member's file shall be made available to the relevant units.

Material from the Official File: QUFA strongly urges every RTP applicant to read about what constitutes appropriate contents of an Official File (Article 34.2) and to check the contents of your Official File before submitting an RTP application. Article 34.3 provides directions for accessing your Official File. You have the right to have anonymous or other inappropriate material removed from your file (Article 34.2). In connection with Article 28 (Annual Performance Review), the Head cannot put annual reports into the RTP Files (Articles 30.12.1 and 31.10.1). Contact QUFA if you require advice or action

concerning the contents of your Official File.

RTP File

Your RTP File consists of all the materials you provided in the Member's Application File and all other material, reports, and assessments subsequently added.

After the complete file has gone to the RTP Committee, only you are allowed to add new material (other than your written response to a recommendation or other information added by the assessors), and only if the new material is sufficiently significant that it might affect the recommendation or decision (Article 30.13.5).

A new provision in the 2011-2015 Collective Agreement allows the Dean to add new material to an RTP file provided it "is sufficiently significant that it might affect the recommendation or decision" (Articles 30.13.5 and 31.11.5).

Your Access to the RTP File at Each Stage of the Assessment: After your RTP file is assessed by the RTP Committee, it is sent on to the Unit Head, and then to the Dean of your Faculty in departmentalized faculties. In non-departmentalized units, it is sent straight to the Dean of your Faculty after the RTP Committee's review. After the Dean's recommendation, the file goes to the Provost. In the case of applications for promotion to Professor, your file would go from the Dean to the University Promotions Advisory Committee first before being sent to the Provost.

You are entitled to have access and time to respond in writing to any recommendation or assessment of the RTP file: after any new material is added, before the file is sent to the RTP Committee, before the file goes to your Department Head (if applicable), before your file goes to your Dean, and before your file goes to the Provost.

If you have any concerns about what has been put in your file at any of these stages, how your file is proceeding, or indeed any concerns that are beyond the normal anxiety most Members experience in these processes, you should get in touch with QUFA for advice or assistance as soon as possible.

The 2011-15 Collective Agreement allows for the Faculty Relations Office to respond in writing to any material or response submitted by a Member that includes an interpretation of the Collective Agreement or past practice. The written response is to be placed in the RTP file. In the past, Members have occasionally submitted material (usually in response to an emerging negative recommendation) that either interprets a provision of the Collective Agreement or alludes to an existing practice, and these submissions have formed part of the RTP file without any opportunity for the University to affirm or challenge them. Under the new provision, the Committee, Head, Dean, or Provost (as the case may be) must immediately forward the material to the Faculty Relations Office, which in turn has 10 days to submit a written response for the RTP file (Articles 30.13.6 and 31.11.6).

Recommendations

You should not be concerned if you require short delays in meeting the various deadlines in the progression of your file, as these delays can be allowed on a case-by-case basis by agreement of QUFA and Faculty Relations, and this is not uncommon. Such an agreed-to delay does not prejudice the assessment of your file.

Recommendations about your file must be made on the basis of information in the RTP file only. At each stage, the decision-maker must develop a recommendation and give reasons in accordance with appropriate criteria (e.g., assessment of your teaching

effectiveness for RTP decisions is subject to the broad context outlined in Article 29: Assessment and Evaluation of Teaching). This recommendation is forwarded to the next stage of the process and to you at the same time.

You should be notified at each stage of the process of the file's availability to you and be given the time to respond to your unit committee's recommendation. (Articles 30.14.7(a) and (c), 31.12.7(a) and (c)). In most cases, you have 10 working days to respond to a recommendation, positive or negative, or to an emerging negative recommendation (see "Emerging Negative Recommendation, below). After the Committee's positive recommendation in a departmentalized faculty, however, you have only 7 working days to respond. If you need assistance in responding to anything you find troubling in your file or in the recommendation, or if you need additional time to respond, consult with QUFA immediately.

At every stage of the process, if a decision-maker disagrees with any recommendation at the lower levels, that individual must explain in writing the reasons for disagreement with the previous recommendation and must have contacted the earlier decision makers.

The 2011-2015 Collective Agreement makes explicit the previously implicit requirement that decision-makers in the RTP process (i.e., Committee, Unit Head, Dean) must clearly indicate whether they support or oppose granting RTP (Articles 30.14.5, 30.14.7(b) and 31.12.4, 31.12.7(b)).

The sections of Article 30 dealing with decision-making (Article 30.15) and the University Promotion Advisory Committee (UPAC) (Article 30.16) have been restructured, with the only substantive changes being the provision for delegation of the UPAC chair to the

Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic), and the specific reference to the Faculty Relations Office as the University officer to whom disclosure by UPAC members may be made regarding violations of the Collective Agreement (no related Article 31 provision).

Emerging Negative Recommendation: In the case of an emerging negative recommendation at any stage of the process, you must be informed promptly with clearly stated reasons. You should contact QUFA immediately to obtain timely assistance in responding to the recommendation. You have 10 working days to submit a response or any additional material, which will be added to your RTP File. This is not yet a decision, but rather an opportunity to address concerns that might otherwise lead to a negative recommendation by the decision-maker at each stage in the process.

University Promotion Advisory Committee (UPAC): If you seek promotion to Professor, your file is sent to UPAC, a university-wide body that reviews whether you have met the criteria.

The Provost makes the final decision to grant or deny RTP based on your file, all the recommendations, and your responses by 1 April for renewal, by 15 April for tenure or promotion to Associate Professor, and by 15 May for promotion to Professor.

Terminal Appointment: In the case where you are not granted tenure, you will automatically receive a terminal appointment of one year beyond the expiration of your current appointment rather than have your appointment expire at the end of the current contract.

Your Right to Grieve

A negative decision is grievable. See Article 19: Grievance, Step 2. QUFA strongly recommends that where a

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decision involves the termination of employment that you contact us immediately.

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