

# Tenure and Promotions – Teaching Stream Document

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## A. Preamble

In the large multifaceted institution that York University has become, it is apparent that the duties required of some members of faculty are significantly different from those required of most faculty members. In contrast to the functions performed by members of the Professorial Stream – teaching, research, and service to the University – the main responsibility of faculty in the Teaching Stream is teaching. Thus, extensive preparation and a large number of contact hours per week in the classroom, laboratory or studio are required of individuals in this stream.

In addition, it is expected that these individuals will participate in related activities in the undergraduate program, such as serving on committees and engaging in administrative work including, perhaps, the supervision of other persons engaged in teaching. Because of their specific responsibilities and their time commitment to teaching, it is not expected that members of the Teaching Stream will engage in basic research, that is, research that is not directly related to their teaching responsibilities. It may be that some individuals in the Teaching Stream will, without prejudice to their other duties, find time to engage in basic research. Since it is basic research which is the very essence of the differentiation between members of the Professorial and Teaching Streams, these individuals should be advised that the requirements for advancement in the Teaching Stream will not normally be met by basic research. Of course, any research related to the Teaching Stream member's course work will be considered with his/her teaching performance.

Although the qualifications for appointment and the career aspirations of individuals in the Teaching Stream differ from those in the Professorial Stream, and although the only common element in the streams is the procedure of evaluation for tenure and promotion, it is the wish of the University that both streams be afforded full dignity and recognition. Appropriate procedures and criteria have been developed over the years to enhance and protect the dignity of the Professorial Stream. The University hopes that this document will do the same for individuals in the Teaching Stream.

Since the Teaching Stream sets up a career orientation that is substantially different from that of the Professorial Stream, this document does not foresee the possibility of transfers or joint appointments between the streams. In those cases where qualifications and aspirations change, movement across the streams would, of course, be possible on the basis of a new appointment in competition with other qualified applicants. It must be stressed, however, that neither stream can be permitted to be a holding place for the other. The use of the Teaching Stream as a staging ground for individuals to attempt to become qualified for the Professorial Stream would be antithetical to the spirit of this document and, indeed, would undermine the very integrity of the Teaching Stream that this document wishes to promote.

The University's need for specialized teaching skills in certain areas is the *raison d'être* of the Teaching Stream, and thus the consequent emphasis on teaching therein is reflected in the criteria for evaluating members of the stream. Indeed, this need is the basis for requiring that nothing less than excellence (superiority) in teaching and competence in service to the University be the required standard for the granting of tenure to an individual in the stream.

This document establishes one Teaching Stream in the University and provides the foundation for sub-units of the University to build upon it. In this way York may strive for a high standard across the University while allowing for some flexibility at the local level. Each sub-unit with persons in the Teaching Stream is asked to submit a statement of its guidelines in this respect to the Senate Committee on Tenure and Promotions through its Faculty Council periodically, to ensure that such guidelines, as they are revised from time to time, are consistent with this document.

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## **B. Eligibility for Appointment to the Teaching Stream**

The minimum requirement for appointment to the Teaching Stream is the Master's degree or equivalent background, normally with teaching experience. Units with faculty members in the Teaching Stream must develop hiring criteria through their Faculty Councils that will ensure that the highest standards possible are maintained in appointments to the Teaching Stream.

### **B.1. Ranks and Patterns of Appointment in the Teaching Stream**

The academic ranks in the Teaching Stream are:

- Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Professor, Teaching Stream

#### **B.1.1. Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream**

All persons appointed to the Teaching Stream will normally be appointed at the rank of Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream. An Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, is one who has achieved proficiency in one of the areas of specialty of the particular unit to which he/she is appointed and who has some proficiency in imparting that special knowledge to students. In a normal appointment an individual would remain at this rank for his/her probationary period.

#### **B.1.2. Associate Professor, Teaching Stream**

An Associate Professor, Teaching Stream is a superior teacher who has also demonstrated a competent level of service to the University that one would expect from a colleague in whose hands the care of the University has been placed by the granting of tenure.

It is because of this trust and because of its desire to give instruction of the highest quality that the University establishes a minimal threshold over which individuals in the Teaching Stream must pass to become part of that trust. In recognition of attainment of a level of distinction as a superior teacher whom it wishes to retain, the University grants a promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, Teaching Stream with tenure. It is expected that the Associate Professor, Teaching Stream will maintain, enhance and perhaps broaden his/her capabilities as a teacher over time. As a tenured member of the faculty of York University, an Associate Professor, Teaching Stream is governed by the general rules of the University relating to tenured faculty.

#### **B.1.3. Professor, Teaching Stream**

The rank of Professor, Teaching Stream denotes an individual who exhibits leadership and makes a substantial contribution as a teacher and colleague.

Promotion to the rank of Professor, Teaching Stream is not coincident with a minimum period of time at the Associate level, nor is it a routine progression. The promotion is granted in recognition of distinguished accomplishments in teaching and service.

## **B.2. Procedures**

The procedures and levels of consideration given to tenure and/or promotion cases in the Teaching Stream shall duplicate exactly those used in the Professorial Stream, including the concepts of Pre-Candidacy and Candidacy. See the *Tenure and Promotion Policy, Criteria and Procedures* approved 21 March 2002, as amended 24 May 2007 and 28 June 2007, for more information.

### **B.2.1. Letters of Reference and Evaluations**

(Excerpted from the *Tenure and Promotion Policy, Criteria and Procedures*, Section F.3.1.7.)

- (a) The File Preparation Committee shall inform referees that letters of reference must be written in such a form that the writer's name, address and all contextual information will be contained in a header and shall inform referees that the header and signature will be removed or masked and the remaining text of the letter will be photocopied and provided to the candidate.
- (b) In order to be used as part of the tenure/promotion file, comments on teaching evaluation forms shall be signed. The comments will be presented in their entirety to the candidate, minus contextual identifiers and student signatures. Comments included in tenure/promotion files will indicate from which courses they were drawn. Teaching evaluation forms shall inform students of this procedure.

### **B.2.2. Evaluation of Teaching**

Since teaching is the prime responsibility of members of the Teaching Stream, it is essential that teaching performance be evaluated both in terms of content and presentation. Because the relative emphasis of some of the essential elements of teaching will vary from unit to unit in the University, the responsibility for defining the criteria and the methods for evaluating the criteria are left to the various sub-units. The lists of criteria and methods must be submitted to the Senate Committee on Tenure and Promotions for approval prior to implementation.

The evaluation of teaching is a difficult, complex process that must involve both colleagues and students. Because colleagues have expertise, previous experience and an overview of the curriculum of the unit, their evaluations will be given the most weight in addressing the question of the teaching proficiency of the candidate. Student evaluations by class questionnaires can be very helpful in assessing the candidate's ability to communicate the content of the course. The opinions of former students who have had time to assess the value of the course are also valuable in assessing the quality of the teaching.

The evaluation of teaching should be an annual process. This annual process is valuable in determining the strengths and weaknesses of a candidate's teaching abilities, forming a basis for the potential award of merit pay and arriving at decisions with respect to contract renewals, as well as forming the basis of a case for the University to consider the question of awarding tenure and giving recognition to its best people.

#### **B.2.2.1. Evaluation by Colleagues**

The File Preparation Committee of the initiating unit is responsible for obtaining independent collegial evaluations of the candidate's teaching abilities. The teaching should be judged, of course, by those colleagues who are most familiar with the candidate's area. In addition, the File Preparation Committee will normally solicit evaluations from the department or program coordinator and course directors. The detailed, confidential reports of the evaluators must satisfy the basis of the evaluation (for example, class visitation, examination of course materials) and must be submitted to the File Preparation Committee.

#### **B.2.2.2. Evaluation by Students**

The File Preparation Committee of the initiating unit must solicit confidential letters of evaluation from randomly selected students in the candidate's class and from former students, preferably those who have graduated.

A formal questionnaire must be distributed to all the candidate's classes, laboratories or studio groups and must be returned to the initiating unit.

The initiating unit must provide the candidate annually with a summary of the teaching evaluations, together with constructive comments where appropriate, and shall make the questionnaires available to the File Preparation Committee.

### **B.2.3. Evaluation of Service**

It is expected that each faculty member in the Teaching Stream will be involved in serving the University. Thus, the candidate may fulfill service responsibilities to the University in a manner which best meets the needs of each particular sub-unit, but will probably involve one or more of the following:

- (1) service on committees at the Department, Faculty, Senate or Presidential level;
- (2) fulfilment of administrative responsibilities.