

# Changes to Tenure and Promotion—What you need to know

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## Preamble

In the new Collective Agreement (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2016) there are a number of changes to the Tenure and Promotion articles. This presentation goes over some of the main changes, and this handout has Frequently Asked Questions; however, everyone is encouraged to read the appropriate articles, and ask the MRFA if there are additional questions.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why are there changes to tenure and promotion?

Last year, a committee with broad representation was struck to examine tenure and promotion criteria. They gathered feedback from a number of different groups, including Chairs, Deans, the MRFA, and various committees involved in the granting of tenure and promotion. In addition, an extensive survey on tenure and promotion was sent to all full-time faculty. There were some areas where people felt we could do better or be clearer. The two negotiating teams worked on trying to make some of these changes possible. It should be noted that some of these changes were made at the request of the BOG's team, while others were initiated by the MRFA's negotiating team.

### When do the changes go into effect?

The changes to tenure and promotion go into effect January 1, 2015 (other changes to items such as contract hiring, etc. went into effect when the agreement was ratified). This means that people who are applying for promotion to full professor in the new year will be doing so under the new rules.

### What about people in the tenure stream? If someone was hired under the old rules, do we switch in mid-stream? Do we have to run two systems (again)?

The changes go into effect January 1, 2015 for tenure-track people too regardless of where they are in the tenure process. We don't have to run two systems because the criteria by which people are being judged have not become more onerous. We have made some process changes, but those changes should not disadvantage tenure-track members.

### You say the criteria didn't become more onerous. Did they become easier?

No, we don't think so. There used to be four general criteria, covering areas of teaching, scholarship where applicable, service, and professionalism. We have taken that fourth criteria "evidence that duties have been carried out in a responsible and professional manner" and folded it into the other three. We

have also indicated who is responsible for commenting on an individual's professionalism. Usually that person will be the Chair and/or Dean.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Tenure**

**What happened to the TPC (Tenure and Promotion Committee) in the academic unit?**

Tenure committees (TC) will still be based in the academic unit; promotion committees (PC) will be at the faculty level.

**Do we have to have an elected TC in our academic unit?**

Maybe. It depends on the size of your academic unit. A TC can be no more than 9 members including the Chair of the academic unit. If you come from a very small unit, you may need to bring in tenured members from an associated area since a TC must be at least 5 members including the Chair. In consultation with the Dean a unit is able to structure the election of the TC so that all disciplines or programs in the academic unit are adequately represented on the committee.

**Who chairs the TC?**

The Chair of the academic unit unless there is a conflict of interest. We have clearer definitions of conflict of interest in the CA now. The Chair only votes in the case of a tie.

**When does the TC have to meet?**

It depends on where the tenure candidate is in the process. Candidates now submit for annual review by first Tuesday in September (not the end of April). There is no annual review in the fourth year, and the fifth year/application date remains in January.

- Year 1 review—done in September/October of year 2
- Year 2 review—done in September/October of year 3
- Year 3/mid-term review—done in September/October of year 4
- Year 4—none
- Year 5—final—binder due end of January of 5th year

**What goes in the tenure binder?**

The contents of the tenure binder are described in the Tenure and Promotions Guidelines document. Any records of disciplinary action placed within an employee's personnel file within the last four years must be included in tenure and promotion applications.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Promotion

What happened to the TPC (Tenure and Promotion Committee) in the academic unit?

Although tenure committees (TC) will still be based in the academic unit, promotion committees (PC) will be at the faculty level. Promotion involves activity and reputation beyond the individual academic unit. A PC will be composed of the Dean and one tenured member (and an alternate) from each academic unit in the Faculty/School. These individuals will be elected in each unit by secret ballot.

I'm a tenured faculty member, but I'm not in a Faculty. What about me?

Counselling has a formal relationship with the Faculty of Arts for tenure-related evaluation; Counselling would be part of the PC for Arts. Through an MOU, the Library is currently working on a PC structure that will provide perspectives beyond the individual academic unit. If you are cross-appointed between faculties, a special PC will have to form according to the processes in the article on Cross-Appointments.

I'm in a multi-disciplinary academic unit; how will my academic unit representative be able to judge discipline-specific aspects of my binder?

That's what the external referees are for. The PC examines the promotion binder and external referee letters; it then recommends to the larger university committee.

Does the Dean still put in a separate recommendation?

No, the Dean chairs the PC and does not submit a separate recommendation. The Dean only votes to break a tie.

What about my Chair? Is my Chair part of the PC?

The Chair of the academic unit shall attend the meeting to discuss the application but won't be part of any vote and is not present for the decision of the committee.

How do I pick my references? Can I contact them ahead of time?

Think of these people not as job references, but as peer reviewers of your binder. You provide four names; your chair provides two more names, and the Dean picks three. There are clear conflict of interest guidelines in the new article. It is OK for your Chair to ask you if the names he or she is going to give meet those guidelines. You cannot contact any potential reviewers ahead of time to ask if they would be willing to review your binder. The Dean will do that.

What goes in the promotion binder?

You should consult the Tenure and Promotions Guidelines document. You also may want to ask people who have successfully applied for promotion if you can see their binders. You need to make the case that you have met the specific criteria. Any records of disciplinary action placed within an employee's personnel file within the last four years must be included in tenure and promotion applications.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Limited-Term Employees**

**Are limited-term employees evaluated by the TC?**

It depends. If the limited-term appointment is more than one year, the limited-term employee should be evaluated by the TC in fall along with the tenure-track members. A lot of times, however, the limited-term contract is over in spring or summer. In that case, the TC would not meet to evaluate the limited-term employee. Instead, the Chair of the academic unit would write a summary evaluation at the end of the contract.

**Does this mean that I cannot apply to use my limited-term year for a tenure-track position later because the TC didn't meet?**

Not at all. Mount Royal accepts applications for years granted towards tenure from other institutions on the basis of work done and evaluated. You need to make sure that you have all the required evaluations done (both student and peer), and you need to make sure that you have a letter from the Chair of the academic unit summarizing and evaluating your work.

**But if I finish one contract in spring and begin another in fall, could I have the TC review my previous year's work? Or if I had two contracts a couple years apart, could I have the TC review earlier work?**

Why? You are creating extra work for yourself and for the TC. There is no benefit as far as the (potential) tenure process is concerned. If you are looking for formative evaluation from your academic unit, there are probably better ways to get it. And it is important to get the chair's letter and evaluation before the contract ends. That is what will count towards tenure evaluation.