
Standards for Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion

Academic Operations Manual

Approving Authority: SJU Senate Council

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Office of Accountability: Vice President Academic and Dean

1. Policy Statement

This policy establishes general standards for assessing applications for renewal, tenure, and promotion of full-time academic staff at St. Jerome's University (SJU). The process for renewal, tenure, and promotion, and the mandate of the Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion Committee (hereafter "RTPC"), are contained in the Full-time Collective Agreement between the St. Jerome's University Academic Staff Association and the St. Jerome's University Board of Governors (hereafter "Collective Agreement").

Peer assessment of teaching, scholarship, service, and, where applicable, professional librarianship forms the basis for determining the suitability of an academic staff member for the granting of renewal, tenure, and promotion.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all tenure-track and tenured academic staff members at St. Jerome's University hired after the policy's establishment date, as well as those hired before the establishment date who are eligible to choose to be evaluated under its terms per the Collective Agreement.

3. General Performance Standards

Academic staff members ought to maintain high standards in all aspects of their work. To this end, the University exercises judgments on performance in the basic areas of an academic staff member's academic responsibilities: teaching, scholarship, and service. For librarian academic staff members, the basic areas to be judged are professional librarianship, research, service, and, where applicable, teaching. Such judgments must be made with the greatest possible care and fairness since they form the basis of decisions regarding renewal, tenure, and promotion.

3.1. Standards for Renewal of a Probationary Appointment

A probationary-term appointment is a tenure-track academic staff appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor / Assistant Librarian for a contractually limited period of time (see the appropriate article in the Collective Agreement). The expectations for renewal of a probationary appointment are:

- a) the development of a record as a teacher committed to academic and pedagogical excellence, or in the case of librarian academic staff members, the development of a record of commitment to excellence in professional librarianship and, where applicable, teaching;

- b) evidence of the development of a solid research agenda; and
- c) a record of service appropriate to this type of appointment.

3.2. Standards for Granting Tenure

The granting of tenure is the primary safeguard of academic freedom (for a definition of “academic freedom” see appropriate article in the Collective Agreement). The pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and the attainment of understanding through scholarship and teaching, which are essential functions of a university, occur best in an atmosphere in which free inquiry and discussion are fostered. Free inquiry may at times bring an academic staff member into conflict with society, governments, or the University itself. In the belief that the University and society at large benefit from honest judgments and independent criticisms rendered by scholars who are free from fear of consequences that might arise from giving offense to individuals or groups, tenure provides security of employment against pressures that might arise from such conflicts. Once academic staff members receive tenure, they retain that status should they move from one position to another, or from one rank to another, within the institution. Tenure means that an academic staff member can be terminated only for just and sufficient reasons in accordance with the Collective Agreement.

The expectations for the granting of tenure are:

- a) an established record as a teacher committed to academic and pedagogical excellence, or in the case of librarian academic staff members, an established record of commitment to excellence in professional librarianship and, where applicable, teaching;
- b) an established record of high-quality and peer-assessed scholarly or creative work; and
- c) a record of service that meets Senate Council standards of commitment, quality, and impact.

3.3. Standards for Promotion to Rank of Associate Professor or Professor

The granting of tenure to an Assistant Professor carries with it promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. Consequently, the standards for promotion are coterminous with those in 3.2.

The expectations for the granting of promotion to the rank of Professor are:

- a) a distinguished record of high-quality and peer-assessed scholarly or creative work;
- b) a distinguished record as a teacher committed to academic and pedagogical excellence; and
- c) an established record in service that meets Senate Council standards of commitment, quality, and impact.

Although evidence of a distinguished record of teaching is required, normally for promotion to the rank of Professor, the greatest emphasis is placed on scholarship and achievement within an individual’s discipline. Usually, a sustained program of scholarship with positive peer review by nationally and internationally recognized scholars is essential for promotion to Professor. The candidate's record is to be judged in comparison with the records of faculty members recently promoted at SJU and other universities of comparable standing. Promotion to Professor is not an assured step in the career of a faculty member, nor is it required, and some will not attain this rank.

3.4. Standards for Promotion to the Rank of Associate Librarian or Librarian

The granting of tenure to an Assistant Librarian carries with it promotion to the rank of Associate Librarian. Consequently, the standards for promotion are coterminous with those in 3.2.

The expectations for the granting of promotion to the rank of Librarian are:

- a) a distinguished record of commitment to excellence in professional librarianship and, where applicable, teaching;
- b) a distinguished record of high-quality and peer-assessed scholarly or creative work; and
- c) an established record in service that meets Senate Council standards of commitment, quality, and impact.

For promotion to the rank of Librarian, equal emphasis is placed on recognized excellence in professional librarianship and in scholarly work. Usually, a sustained program of scholarship with positive peer review by nationally and internationally recognized scholars is essential for promotion to Librarian. The candidate's record is to be judged in comparison with the records of recently promoted Librarians at other universities of comparable standing. Promotion to Librarian is not an assured step in the career of a librarian, nor is it required, and some will not attain this rank.

4. General Performance Assessment

The general standards outlined in this policy guide all decisions made at each stage of a regular academic staff appointment (i.e., a tenure-track or tenured appointment). Because these standards apply university-wide to academic staff members engaged in complex intellectual endeavors, they cannot be expressed in narrow or absolute quantitative terms. Nonetheless, they do provide a framework around which qualitative judgments can be made by academic administrators, peers, and those serving on the Renewal, Tenure, and Promotions Committee (RTPC).

Peer assessment of teaching, scholarship, and service forms the basis for determining the suitability of an academic staff member for renewal, tenure, and promotion. For librarian academic staff members, peer assessment of professional librarianship, research, service, and, where applicable, teaching will serve as the basis for determining the suitability of an academic staff member for renewal and tenure. Insofar as possible, the RTPC shall base its assessments on evidence that is first-hand and direct.

The RTPC, external assessors, and all others involved in renewal, tenure, and promotion assessments shall base their assessments on sources of information prescribed in the Collective Agreement and the standards in this policy.

4.1. a) Teaching

Standards for teaching pertain first to expectations around undergraduate teaching. In addition, full-time academic staff members may elect to teach graduate courses and participate in graduate project and / or thesis supervision. In such cases, standards must also take into account such involvement.

Classroom performance may be judged in terms of preparation, organization and currency of course material, proficiency in the subject matter, presentation and communication skills, ability to stimulate student interest and scholarship, suitability of assignments and examinations, willingness to provide individual feedback and help outside the classroom, and creation of opportunities that involve students in the research process. University teaching involves much more than classroom performance and, hence, it is important to develop a fair assessment of competence and effectiveness across the candidate's full spectrum of teaching activities.

4.2. b) Professional Librarianship

Professional Librarianship must include effective performance in areas such as:

- a) obtaining, evaluating, organizing, and providing access to information;
- b) engaging with users to provide reference service and information literacy instruction;

- c) library administration and management, as applicable;
- d) participation in and engagement with the academic pursuits of students, faculty, staff, and community members in the University and beyond; and
- e) contributions to the field of professional librarianship.

Professional Librarianship may be measured based on consistency of performance, judgement, leadership, the ability to work collaboratively with staff in and beyond the Library, and demonstrated contributions to the overall effectiveness of the Library within the University.

4.3. Scholarship

Academic staff members normally engage in active and ongoing scholarship. The volume of scholarly output is less important than its quality, originality, and impact as determined through peer assessment.

Scholarship may take several equally valuable forms, some of which may be non- traditional. Forms of scholarship may differ from discipline to discipline, and scholar to scholar (see Collective Agreement for acceptable forms of professional scholarship). Regardless of the discipline and type of scholarship, the key ingredients are the originality, quality, and impact of the scholarly work.

Academic staff members are expected to meet the ethical standards for scholarship in their particular fields of endeavour; to observe the University's guidelines and policies with respect to ethical conduct in research; and more generally, to act with integrity, truthfulness, and honesty in the conduct and communication of their scholarly work (see Collective Agreement for definition of academic misconduct).

4.4. Service

Academic staff members participate in the effective functioning of St. Jerome's University and the University of Waterloo through service such as committee work, student advising, coordination of activities, and administrative positions. Many academic staff members also provide valuable service to groups outside the University, such as disciplinary or professional organizations, conferences, journals, and granting councils. Community service related to an academic staff member's scholarly activities is normally considered as service to the University. See the Collective Agreement for details.

Service is measured according to standards of commitment, quality, and impact. Commitment involves the degree to which an academic staff member undertakes service duties and the weight of the workload. The onus is on academic staff members to ensure that they are making a meaningful service contribution. Moreover, the use of the word "meaningful" in the service criterion is intended to signify the importance of both the quality and quantity of service. For example, mere membership on committees does not meet the University's performance standard for service. The words "quality" and "impact" refer to the degree to which service facilitates University governance, contributes to the University's public engagement, and enhances students' academic experience.

The University should ensure that all academic staff members, including new academic staff members, have meaningful service opportunities; academic staff members should demonstrate a reasonable willingness to serve.