



Tenure and Promotion: Approaches to Adjudication

Office of the Faculty Council



Agenda



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Preamble: Collegiality



From the University *Tenure and Promotion Policy, Criteria and Procedures*:

“Thus the decision to grant tenure to a candidate is more critical than the decision to promote; in granting a continuing career appointment to a candidate, the University is entrusting itself to his/her care in concert with his/her tenured colleagues; in granting promotion, however, the University recognizes the personal achievement of a meritorious candidate.” (Preamble)



Preamble: Process



“The principal substantive assessment of a candidate’s file takes place in an Adjudicating Committee within the candidate’s home unit. (F.3.2.1a)”

“Except in extraordinary circumstances, any promotion and tenure decision must be based solely on information contained in the candidate’s file. (D.2.2)”



Role of the AC



From the University *Tenure and Promotion Policy, Criteria and Procedures* (emphasis added):

For tenure files, the Adjudicating Committee will review the evidence in the file and include in a report the detailed results of votes on professional contribution and standing, teaching and service rated as excellence, high competence, competence or competence not demonstrated, and the vote on the recommendation for tenure and promotion. For promotion to Full Professor files, the Adjudicating Committee will review the evidence in the file and vote only to promote or delay. (F.3.2.1c)

The Adjudicating Committee report shall contain a decision to recommend tenure and promotion, tenure without promotion, promotion (in the case where a candidate already has tenure), delay, or rejection (deny), with detailed reasons for the decision. In exceptional cases tenure without promotion may be recommended. (F.3.2.2a)



Role of the AC



The role of the AC is pivotal:

- The Dean relies on the substantive assessment of the AC in order to either concur with or dissent from its judgement (F.3.3)
- The Senate Review Committee relies on the substantive assessment of the AC in order to determine that the procedures have been properly followed (F.3.4)
- If the *Tenure and Promotions Policy, Criteria and Procedures* are not followed, the file may be referred back to the unit, which may require months of additional work for everyone involved in the process



Prep Work: Before You Adjudicate



1. Review the University Policy and Unit standards, and confirm that the Unit standards were positively reviewed and provided to the candidate at the time of hire and at the Advancement to Candidacy stage in accordance with section H (Temporal Equity).
2. Ensure that your AC is constituted in accordance with F.3.2.1d (six to eight probationary/tenured faculty and normally two to three students).
3. Ensure that you meet quorum for all adjudications. Only members present at the time of adjudication and for the entirety of the discussion may vote. Members who are absent may provide the AC with written comments to be considered in the discussion, but cannot submit votes. Members who have provided a reference letter for the file still participate in the adjudication and vote on all criterion areas and on tenure and/or promotion (B.4).



Prep Work: Before You Adjudicate



4. Understand what type of file you are assessing:

Tenure only	Associate Professor/Lecturer is applying for tenure	AC ranks three criterion areas and makes a recommendation on tenure
Tenure and promotion	Assistant Professor/Lecturer is applying for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor/Lecturer	AC ranks three criterion areas and makes a recommendation on tenure and on promotion
Promotion to Associate Professor	Tenured Assistant Professor/Lecturer has been previously granted tenure, and is applying for promotion to Associate Professor/Lecturer	AC ranks three criterion areas and makes a recommendation on promotion
Promotion to Professor	Associate Professor is applying for promotion to Professor; Associate Lecturer is applying for promotion to Senior Lecturer	AC makes a recommendation on promotion



Prep Work: Before You Adjudicate



5. Ensure that the file is complete. This means that:
 - the FPC has assembled a file that is complete (*F.3.1.5*) and that fairly and accurately reflects the candidate's academic career
 - the FPC has written its commentary (*F.3.1.1c*)
 - the candidate has had the opportunity to review the completed file and respond (*F.3.1.7*)
 - there is enough evidence for the AC to make a fully informed recommendation

The AC may conclude that the file is incomplete. In such cases, a formal memorandum should be signed by the AC chair and added to the file, and the file returned to the FPC. This memorandum should provide specific instruction to the FPC on the additional work that needs to be done. The FPC chair should write and sign a formal memorandum in response once the additional work is complete.



Prep Work: Before You Adjudicate



6. The AC members must read the file thoroughly and carefully prior to adjudication.



Discussing the Evidence



Apply your unit tenure and promotion standards!

- Ground your discussion of the file in the standards. Reference the specific information in the file and **draw a relationship** between the evidence in the file and the specific criteria outlined in the standards.
- Speak directly to the evidence in the file (e.g. collegial referees, student referees, course evaluation data, external referees, the curriculum vitae) and use page numbers to reference specific documents.



Discussing the Evidence



Teaching:

- What is the consensus opinion of the collegial referees on the candidate's teaching? What is the consensus opinion of the student letters?
- What conclusions can be drawn regarding undergraduate teaching? Graduate teaching?
- What conclusions can be drawn from the course evaluation data? How does the candidate compare to the mean scores within the unit or for a particular course?
- Has the candidate supervised graduate students or participated on such committees?
- What pedagogical accomplishments has the candidate made? (i.e. courses developed/revised, minor/major curricular initiatives, textbooks, etc.)



Discussing the Evidence



Professional Contribution and Standing:

- What is the consensus opinion of the external referees on the candidate's professional contribution and standing?
- What are the holistic scholarly accomplishments of the candidate? (i.e. publications, book chapters, reports, conferences, grants, etc.)
- Is there agreement that all external referees are at arm's length from the candidate? If some are not, has the FPC provided the appropriate rationale (F.3.1.3c)?
- What are the norms within the candidate's discipline with respect to scholarly work? (i.e. external funding is expected, co-authorship is common, one journal article per year is normal, etc.)



Discussing the Evidence



Service:

- What service responsibilities has the candidate undertaken at the level of the unit? The Faculty? The University?
- What is the consensus opinion of the candidate's service work from the collegial letters?
- What are the normal service expectations within the unit?



Discussing the Evidence



When discussing evidence, it is important to:

- Address the impact and significance of both positive and negative evidence (e.g. Is there a difference in the nature of the comments made by student referees versus collegial referees in Teaching? How and why do the comments differ?)
- For negative evidence: What is the nature of the negative comments? How much weight should be given to negative comments (how significant are they)?
- For tenure files, review the Advancement to Candidacy letter. What specific advice was provided to the candidate? Have any identified shortcomings been addressed since that time?



Recommendations and Voting



In order to reach a recommendation regarding tenure and/or promotion, the AC needs to vote on the three criterion areas (Teaching, Professional Contribution & Standing, and Service), on tenure, and on promotion.

The only possible rankings for the three criterion areas in tenure and promotion files are excellence, high competence, competence, and competence not demonstrated.

Strive for consensus prior to voting. It might be helpful to hold a 'straw vote' to identify areas where more discussion is necessary or where there are divergent opinions. Straw votes are not recorded.



Recommendations and Voting



The minimum standards for tenure and/or promotion to Associate Professor are as follows (B.4):

	Teaching	Professional Contribution & Standing	Service
Scenario 1	Excellence	Competence	Competence not demonstrated
Scenario 2	Competence	Excellence	Competence not demonstrated
Scenario 3	Competence	Competence	Excellence
Scenario 4	High Competence	High Competence	High Competence



Recommendations and Voting



A faculty member who meets the minimum criteria for tenure and promotion is recommended for both.

AC members vote on all three criterion areas, as well as on tenure and promotion; if the votes on the three criterion areas meet the minimum standards, then the votes for tenure and promotion will be positive. Members who wish to abstain from voting should abstain from voting entirely (for all portions of the file).

If consideration of a file takes place over more than one meeting, only those who are present for the entire discussion should vote.



Writing the AC Report



The AC report is an **extremely important** document. The Dean, the Review Committee, and the President all rely on a detailed and transparent AC report in order to make fully informed recommendations. They cannot do their job properly if the AC report is inadequately documented.



Writing the AC Report



The report of the AC must **clearly** make the case for its recommendation:

- Address the specific evidence in the file and document a thorough relationship between it and the unit standards for all three criterion areas
- Address both positive and negative evidence and provide a clear indication of how such evidence was weighed
- Discuss all of the evidence in each area (i.e. teaching evaluation scores)
- Avoid extensive use of quotations from referees—an interpretation of the evidence is far more useful than simply repeating it



Writing the AC Report



The report of the AC should also make its voting patterns clear:

- Document the vote for each criterion area
- If voting is not unanimous, the report should specify the divergence of opinion in detail and explain how the minority reached a different conclusion
- Document the vote on tenure, and the vote on promotion
- The votes on tenure and promotion shall be consistent with the rankings in the three criterion areas



Advancements to Candidacy



From the Senate Procedures Governing Decisions on Advancement to Candidacy:

Faculty members listed as being in Precandidacy-3 as of July 1 of any given year must be reviewed for advancement to Candidacy by November 1 of the same year. The home unit makes the decision on advancement.

Advancements to Candidacy are an assessment of the pre-candidate's progress in Teaching, Professional Contribution and Standing, and Service. The evidence to be addressed by the AC shall include as a minimum:

- A curriculum vitae
- Available course evaluations (from York and/or previous institution)
- A candidate's statement (optional, but encouraged)



Advancements to Candidacy



The AC makes the decision by considering the possibility that the pre-candidate will satisfy, or fail to satisfy, the University tenure and promotion standards and the unit standards at the appropriate time. This decision shall include specific feedback on all three criterion areas in order to communicate, to the pre-candidate, those areas that may require additional strength.

The unit should forward all advancement material to the Office of the Faculty Council by no later than **October 15** in order to give the Dean time to review the material.



Resources for ACs



Senate T&P Toolkit

www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/tnp/toolkit/index.htm

T&P Tipsheets

http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/tnp.htm

LA&PS Tenure and Promotions Toolkit

http://www.yorku.ca/laps/council/faculty/tandp_tools.html