

Complete Policy Title:  
**Policy for Referees – Teaching-Stream  
Faculty**

Policy Number (if applicable):  
**SPS B8**

Approved by:  
**Senate  
Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval:  
**April 11, 2018  
April 19, 2018**

Date of Original Approval(s):

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:  
**December 15, 2011**

Responsible Executive:  
**Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**

Enquiries:  
[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

**DISCLAIMER:** *If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails*

---

McMaster University's *Policy and Regulations with respect to Academic Appointment, Tenure and Promotion* (Tenure and Promotion Policy)<sup>1</sup> states, "For a person appointed to a teaching-track position, promotion and permanence are not linked. Promotion may also happen, but is not expected to occur at the same time" [III 24] Members of the teaching-stream faculty who are being considered for promotion may, therefore, already have achieved permanence through an internal assessment process in their fifth or sixth year. Although external letters of reference are **not** required for permanence, if promotion to Associate Professor is being considered at the same time, at least two letters of reference on the promotion issue are required, as outlined below.

Promotion of an individual in a teaching-track position to Associate Professor must either accompany or follow a recommendation for permanence and requires "at least two referees external to the Department or Program in which the candidate is employed, at least one of whom must be external to the University." [III 26]

For promotion to Professor for a teaching-stream individual 'Supporting letters from at least three referees external to the University are required.' [III 27]

---

<sup>1</sup> All Section and clause references [-] are to the Tenure and Promotion Policy

In all instances, since care must be taken to ensure that the referees are at arm's length from the candidate, **if you have any connection with the candidate, please indicate the nature of the connection.**

The Tenure and Promotion Policy also contains the following comments about a candidate's contributions.

“For promotion to Associate Professor of a teaching-stream candidate, the criteria include not only excellence in teaching and satisfactory performance of University duties, but also evidence of recognition external to the Department for the candidate's teaching and/or teaching related contributions. Since performance of university duties will be evaluated within the university, external reviewers should consider the candidate's recognition external to the department in the following areas of activity. A candidate should have significant external recognition in **two or more** areas, but not necessarily in all, in order to be worthy of promotion.

1. Continuing excellence in teaching practice;
2. Adoption of the candidate's teaching innovations by others;
3. Curriculum development and/or evaluation (beyond the individual course);
4. Presentations and scholarship on teaching or pedagogy;
5. Mentoring of other teachers;
6. Research on pedagogical and related issues;
7. Other relevant activities, such as leadership in experiential learning beyond the classroom.

[III 26]

“For promotion to Professor of a teaching-stream candidate, the criteria include not only excellence in teaching and satisfactory performance of University duties, but also evidence of a national or international reputation for teaching and/or teaching related contributions, such as those listed for promotion to Associate Professor. Since performance of university duties will be evaluated within the university, external reviewers should consider the following indicators of national and/or international recognition. A candidate should have significant recognition with respect to **two or more** of these indicators, but not necessarily in all, in order to be worthy of promotion.

1. Significant teaching awards from bodies external to the home university;
2. National and/or international adoption of the candidate's teaching innovations;
3. National and/or international recognition of the candidate's curriculum development, mentoring, and other activities;
4. Peer- reviewed and/or invited conference papers on pedagogy presented at national and/or international conferences;
5. Peer-reviewed materials on teaching with national and/or international audiences;
6. Other relevant activities, such as leadership in experiential learning beyond the classroom.

[III, 27]

While you are asked to include in your report brief answers to each of the questions listed below, please feel free to make any other comments which you believe may assist the University in arriving at a decision.

1. Is there clear evidence of the candidate's continuing excellence in teaching?
2. Is there clear evidence of the recognition of the candidate's contributions to teaching practice and/or research beyond the department at the institutional level, and/or at the national or international level? In your opinion, how significant are these contributions?
3. Is the candidate's work of a sufficient quality to be acceptable for promotion in the context of the criteria detailed above? Please answer this question directly and clearly with elaboration.

Your letter will be regarded as confidential and will be made available only to the Department and Faculty Committees on Tenure and Promotion and to the Senate Committee on Appointments. However, a faculty member who is unsuccessful in this process will be provided with unattributed copies of the originals of any external letters of reference either by the Department Chair or the Chair of the Senate Committee on Appointments. Preparing an "unattributed copy" means removing the letterhead and the author's name; it also entails an obligation, on the part of the appropriate Chair, to go through the text and remove references which would directly or indirectly reveal the name of the writer.