

Complete Policy Title

**University Scholar**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by

**Senate**

Date of Most Recent Approval

**December 9, 2020**

Date of Original Approval(s)

**November 12, 2014**

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

**November 12, 2014**

Responsible Executive

**Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**

Policy Specific Enquiries

[Provost and Vice-President \(Academic\)](#)

General Policy 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.*

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**Link to the [University Scholar](#) policy effective November 12, 2014 to December 8, 2020**

## PREAMBLE

1. Academic life involves achievements in many domains, including the discovery, communication and preservation of knowledge, excellence in education and pedagogy, as well as a commitment to the communities that we serve. In keeping with McMaster's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, research excellence is understood in the broadest and most inclusive possible terms, as encompassing diverse methodologies, contributions to knowledge, and modes of communicating research and research creation.<sup>1</sup> The ranks that are held by members of faculty represent an acknowledgement of the levels of achievement that each member of the community has attained in their academic life. Excellence is prized here; thus it is not surprising that our professoriate includes members whose achievements are extraordinary.
2. In establishing this award, McMaster University seeks to recognize faculty members in mid-career who have already distinguished themselves as scholars in a wide range of ways. To that end, McMaster University has established the title **University Scholar**, with the following terms, criteria, and nomination and selection procedures, and welcomes nominations from across all areas of research, research creation, and scholarship at McMaster.

### Title

3. The title of the category shall be *University Scholar*.

### Terms

4. The title is awarded by the Senate only to full-time members of the faculty, subject to Article XIV, clause 173 of the Senate By-laws.
5. The title is awarded for a period of four (4) years. It is not renewable and may be held by a faculty member only once during their career at McMaster.
6. This award is intended to help to elevate the stature of faculty members in mid-career, defined as colleagues within five (5) years of promotion to Associate Professor or fifteen (15) years of the completion of their PhD. The selection committee however, will be allowed to exercise some discretion in the application of this condition.
7. Each University Scholar will be supported with a modest research award provided jointly by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and the Faculty Dean.

### Criteria

8. This title will be conferred only on faculty members who have demonstrated distinction and impact in one or more fields of endeavour, while on faculty at the University.

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<sup>1</sup> SSHRC defines research creation as "an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation." <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx>.

9. In keeping with McMaster's position as a research-intensive university of global repute those holding the title of *University Scholar* must have demonstrated an exceptional research record that demonstrates excellence, impact, and the potential for even greater further contributions to come.
10. This award is at the same time meant to recognize the complete scholar. Thus, the ideal candidate will have demonstrated excellence and/or innovation in teaching and learning, including the supervision of emerging scholars along with a history of service that has had an impact on the community, whether within or without the University.
11. It should be noted that the criteria just described are similar in many ways to those applied in the selection of Distinguished University Professors. However, they are to be differentiated by the level of achievement anticipated and its impact as well as the period over which it has been sustained.
12. In assessing candidates the selection committee will actively engage with principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, in a manner that is aligned with the university's Faculty Recruitment and Selection Policy and guided by the Policy's companion Handbook, and which strives to understand and incorporate how research productivity and impact is determined and communicated in different domains and fields of scholarship.

### **Number of University Scholars**

13. The number of University Scholars shall be restricted to no more than 2% of all full-time faculty members appointed in the tenure-track, teaching-track, CAWAR and special appointment (with the latter appointment counted using a weighting factor of .02). These positions are allocated to each Faculty based on the above formula, with the total number of positions available reviewed and updated every three (3) years.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Nominations**

14. The nomination procedures for *University Scholars* will take place on an annual cycle.
15. Each Faculty will establish a diverse selection committee, composed of outstanding scholars within the Faculty and including members of equity-seeking groups.<sup>2</sup>
16. The Dean will appoint members of the selection committee based on recommendation from the Faculty's executive committee or Chairs and Directors group, as appropriate, ensuring as broad a membership as possible, taking into account the need for balance and inclusion.
17. Where a Faculty already has a Faculty awards committee it may be assigned to undertake this task. The Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee shall not constitute the Faculty awards committee. The Faculty selection committee should be chaired by the Faculty Dean or designate.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this Policy, the term "*equity-seeking groups*" refer to groups of people who have historically been underrepresented and underutilized in higher education, and who continue to face barriers in employment and career progression. These groups include: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, persons who are members of racialized communities in accordance with the Act's definition of "visible minorities", persons with disabilities, women, and persons who identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) or members of marginalized sexual orientation and gender identity groups.

18. The chair or designate will work to ensure the committee's attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the deliberations; to support a fair and equitable process. The Faculty committee members should have anti-bias training and should meet prior to receiving applicant files in order to review the evaluation criteria.
19. The Provost will issue a call for nominations to the rank of *University Scholar* to the McMaster Community by October 1, as part of the call for nominations to the rank of Distinguished University Professor.
20. The selection process shall occur in three phases. In the first phase nominations will be sought. The Faculty Deans should strongly encourage chairs and directors to actively review the CVs of all eligible candidates, including candidates in equity-seeking groups, and to make a nomination on behalf of the department/program.
21. Nominations shall consist of the following:
  - a) a letter of nomination (maximum 3 pages), addressed to the Faculty Dean, signed by four individuals, at least two of whom must be McMaster professors. (Self-nomination is not acceptable). The letter should outline why the nominee is deemed to fit the criteria for this title;
  - b) the nominee's CV; and
  - c) nominations will be due on November 1.
22. The selection committee will meet to select the most suitable nominees to move forward to the final selection process. The nominators of those candidates will then be asked to obtain three external letters of reference attesting to the scholar's excellence, distinction, and impact to support the nomination. They will be due by February 1.
23. Referees are asked to address, as appropriate:
  - a) the nominee's excellence in research or research creation;
  - b) the distinction and impact of the nominee's research or research creation to date and the potential for future contributions;
  - c) the nominee's record of excellence and/or innovation in teaching and learning and in the mentoring of new scholars; and
  - d) the significance of the nominee's service within and/or beyond the university, and its impact on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
24. The full selection committee will then meet to develop a slate of candidates to be recommended to the Senate Committee on Appointments, due no later than March 1. Upon ratification by this body the slate of candidates will be forwarded to the Senate for final approval.