

MEMORANDUM

**Office of the Provost
and Vice-Principal (Academic)**

To: Faculty Deans and Vice-Provost & University Librarian
Academic Department Heads

From: Matthew Evans, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)
Lynne-Marie Postovit, Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)

Copy: Associate Vice-Principal (Faculty Relations)
Faculty Staffing Officers
Department Managers

Date: June 19, 2025

Subject: Renewal, Tenure, Promotion (RTP) 2025-26

I am writing to you following my review of the Renewal, Tenure and Promotion (RTP) files for 2024-25. Overall, my assessment of the files was mostly positive, however, I wanted to bring to your attention some more general feedback on the quality of the files and expectations in future review cycles.

The focus of this memo is on the RTP process for tenure-track and tenured faculty, which is governed by the Queen's-QUFA Collective Agreement, and in particular Article 30. Analogous processes for librarians and archivists (Article 31), and pertaining to the reappointment and promotion of adjunct members (Article 32) are not addressed in this memo.

The deadlines for the upcoming RTP cycle have been posted on [For the Record](#), and Academic Unit Heads should be meeting with applicants to advise them on the preparation of the application and to discuss the suitability of potential referees (30.8.5). I ask that Deans and Unit Heads consider the feedback outlined in this memo as they support those going through the process this year, as well as future applicants within the Unit.

Feeback on the quality of the applications.

The following areas of improvement were identified across several Faculties/Schools/Departments, and therefore we strongly encourage Deans and Department Heads to consider how to address these issues with faculty within their Unit, and in particular early career faculty.

- **Increase the number of graduate students.** In many cases, we found that the level of graduate supervision was lower than expected. We understand the complexities around graduate student recruitment, and the different opportunities and barriers that faculty members may face. We strongly encourage faculty members at all career stages to work with their Unit Head and seek support from the School of Graduate Studies, where appropriate, to strive to increase the number of student trainees.
- **Increase external research funding.** External research funds, and in particular tri-council funding, is essential for supporting the research mission at Queen's. We understand the enormous efforts that go into obtaining tri-council funding, and therefore we strongly encourage early career faculty, in particular, to work with their Unit Head and to seek appropriate support from University Research Services with the applications for external research funding.
- **Opportunities for a variety of teaching.** It is important that tenure-track faculty are given an appropriate teaching reduction in the initial years of their appointment (Article 37.2.6 (a)), in order to support the establishment of their research program. However, it is also important that, ideally prior to tenure review, that faculty have an opportunity to teach a variety of courses, including, where appropriate, large, undergraduate courses, in addition to smaller and/or graduate level courses.
- **Increase research productivity and scholarly outputs.** As noted above, tenure-track faculty generally have a reduced teaching and service workload in the initial years of their appointment, so they can focus on establishing their research program. It is expected that this reduction translates to an appropriate level of research productivity, including the publishing of academic journals, which should be evidenced by the renewal stage. Deans and Unit Heads are encouraged to support faculty members in the establishment of their scholarly record, which should include peer-reviewed,

academic venues such as academic journals, university presses and conference proceedings, as well as scholarly work that focuses on advancement and translation of knowledge, community partnerships and global impacts. While continuing work is important, emphasis should be placed on published high-quality peer-reviewed scholarship. When reviewing the record of scholarly work, the diverse backgrounds of Members and the type of scholarship appropriate to their research areas, as well as the diverse range of scholarly methodologies and ways of measuring impact, will be taken into account when assessing the quality of scholarly or creative work (see Article 30.6.4 regarding tenure, and Articles 30.6.6-9 regarding promotion). Unit Heads should work with faculty to ensure they focus on both quality and quantity of their academic output, which will support the University's international research reputation, enhancing our ability to attract international students, research funding, and top talent from around the world.

- **Supporting Faculty Impacted by Covid-19.** The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic impacted most faculty's research productivity, due to a variety of factors. Some faculty members, in particular those who do field-based research or had significant delays in the establishment of their laboratories, continue to be impacted. I strongly encourage Deans and Unit Heads to support their faculty who are still in the process of rebuilding their research teams, and to support them as they reestablish their research program and strive towards increasing their scholarly output.

Process and Application Packages:

The following areas in the process were identified as areas for improvement for this upcoming and future RTP cycles:

- **Early applications for tenure.** Requests to apply for renewal or tenure earlier than the final year of their Initial or Renewed appointment must be agreed to by the faculty member and the Dean in writing prior to the assessment beginning (Articles 30.5.2 and 30.5.4). These requests should clearly outline the reasoning for the exceptionality, and should be reserved for exceptional applicants who are clearly exceeding expectations.

Exceptional should be generally defined as not only exceptional when compared to peers at Queen's, but as exceptional when compared to international peers within the discipline.

- **Clear guidance for referees.** The letters from external referees are a critical component of the RTP process. Referees should be suitably qualified, at arm's-length from the applicant, and have international stature where appropriate (Article 30.8.4). In addition, referees should be given clear guidance on the process and applicable criteria at Queen's, as well as direction on what is expected in their letter of recommendation. Updates to the template letter for referees will be forthcoming and will include additional guidance.
- **Information on collaborative projects.** Queen's values the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of many areas of research, and we encourage faculty to engage in collaborative research projects, grant applications and publications. In their RTP application packages, faculty are strongly encouraged to clearly define their role and contributions to these collaborative projects, so that assessors can properly evaluate their contributions.
- **Publication conventions:** We appreciate that publication conventions differ greatly between disciplines. We thus suggest the inclusion of a small paragraph describing these.

Support for Faculty, Unit Heads and Staff Administrators

- **Central Supports.** Several central units on campus can support faculty members in the areas described above, including the Centre for Teaching and Learning, University Research Services and the School of Graduate Studies. All faculty members, and in particular early career faculty, are strongly encouraged to seek out these resources during their tenure-track appointment. These units can offer assistance with a variety of services, including, but not limited to, preparing their teaching dossier, curriculum development, the recruitment and supervision of graduate students, grant writing and incorporating I-EDIAA into teaching and research.

- **Early Career Development and Navigating the Tenure-track Stream session.** Our office will hold a session for pre-tenure faculty in the spring of 2026 that will review the process, timelines, preparation of applications, criteria and expectations around the RTP process. Deans and Department Heads are asked to strongly encourage pre-tenure faculty to attend.
- **Administrative Resources.** An [RTP Resource Repository](#) is available for direct access to various templates and process and guideline documents. These documents will be updated over the next month for the upcoming 2025-26 cycle. In addition, Staffing Officers and Departmental Administrators supporting the RTP process will be invited to administrative training sessions in late June. Unit Heads and Appointment Committee Chairs who would like to become more familiar with the RTP timeline and process are welcome to attend.
- **Provost Office Support.** Our office is always available to help support Deans, Unit Heads, faculty and staff throughout this process. For any questions related to the criteria and expectations outlined above, please reach out to the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs), Lynne-Marie Postovit at vpaa@queensu.ca. For any questions related to the procedural timelines and process, please reach out to the HR and Staffing Operations Manager, Amanda LaRose, at Amanda.larose@queensu.ca. Faculty Relations (fro@queensu.ca) can provide guidance on the processes and Collective Agreement provisions.