

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

Policy Number (if applicable):
SPS B8

Approved by:
**Senate
Board of Governors**

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Responsible Executive:
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Enquiries:
[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)¹ 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]

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.

¹ All Section and clause references [-] are to the Tenure and Promotion Policy

“For promotion to Associate Professor of a teaching-stream candidate, the criteria include not only excellent teaching and satisfactory performance of University duties ... but also evidence of recognition external to the Department for the candidate’s contributions. These contributions can take the form of curriculum development and/or evaluation (beyond the individual course), presentations and scholarship on teaching or pedagogy, mentoring, or research into the efficacy of different pedagogical approaches. “[III 26]

“Promotion to Professor for a teaching-stream individual would be possible, although it is not expected to be the norm. Promotion to Professor requires evidence of a national or international teaching reputation, such as significant external teaching awards, peer-reviewed scholarship on teaching, and delivery of conference papers on pedagogy.” [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.

- a. Were you aware of the candidate’s pedagogical reputation before now?
- b. What would you say is the general quality of the candidate's work?
- c. To what degree is the candidate's work original and creative? How significant is it as a pedagogical contribution in his or her special area and in the subject more generally?
- d. Do you know of any contribution the candidate made to the development of teaching in Canada or elsewhere, e.g., through activities in learned societies, organizing conferences, governmental commissions and so forth? In your opinion how significant have these activities been?
- e. Is the candidate's work of a sufficient quality to be acceptable for promotion in the context of the criteria detailed above? Please elaborate.

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.