

Provostial Guidelines: Operationalizing Criteria Related to the Advancement of Sessional Instructors

In a Letter of Intent (February 2015), the CUPE 3902-Unit 3 and the University agreed to the development of Provostial Guidelines on operationalizing criteria related to the advancement of Sessional Instructors.

These Provostial Guidelines are intended to regularize processes and offer consistency in order to help committees and instructors.

Divisions may develop Divisional Guidelines consistent with the Provostial Guidelines. Copies of Divisional Guidelines are forwarded to the Provost's Office and to CUPE 3902-Unit 3.

These Provostial Guidelines speak solely to operationalizing the criteria for advancement described in Appendix A and Appendix A-2 of the Collective Agreement. They do not supersede any provisions of the Collective Agreement (e.g., Eligibility, Process, etc.).

1 Operationalizing Criteria for Advancement of Sessional Instructors:

Letter to the candidate:

The Collective Agreement describes the letter that must be sent to the candidate within ten working days of receipt of the candidate's letter requesting advancement. In addition to the requirements outlined in the Collective Agreement, this letter must specify:

- The number of course outlines, bibliographies and assignments to be included in the teaching dossier, which should correspond with the number of courses used to calculate the candidate's eligibility for advancement;
- The number of classroom observations that will take place (1 or 2), the name(s) of the observer(s), and the date(s) of the observation(s);
- Whether members of the full-time teaching staff who have co-taught with the candidate will be asked to submit letters regarding the contribution of the candidate to the course;
- In the case of Advancement to Sessional Lecturer III, whether an external review of the advancement file will be undertaken.

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1.1 Currency with the subject matter

“Currency with the subject matter” is defined as regular engagement in the discipline that supports teaching, including keeping abreast of advances in both content and pedagogy. This should be demonstrated in relation to the subject matter of all courses taught for the advancing department¹ by the cumulative evidence provided by the following:

- the teaching dossier, especially the use of up-to-date reading materials and approaches to the subject matter (e.g., reading list, textbooks used, assignments and exam questions);
- the teaching statement’s explicit discussion of currency with the subject matter, including with pedagogical approaches necessary to convey the subject matter effectively to the specific student body;
- classroom observations that comment explicitly on whether, in the observing member’s judgment, currency with the subject matter was demonstrated;

and where relevant by:

- letters from full-time teaching staff who have co-taught with the candidate that comment explicitly on whether, in the full-time member’s judgment, currency with the subject matter was demonstrated.

1.2 Mastery of the subject matter

“Mastery of the subject matter” is defined as comprehensive understanding of the subject area and relevant pedagogical approaches. This should be demonstrated in relation to the subject matter of all courses taught for the advancing department by the cumulative evidence provided by the following:

- the teaching dossier, especially materials that demonstrate research-informed teaching and pedagogy (for example, teaching and pedagogy informed by recent review of the literature);
- the teaching statement’s explicit discussion of mastery of the subject matter, including mastery of pedagogical approaches necessary to convey the subject matter to the specific student body;
- the Curriculum Vitae, including a range of scholarly activities such as publications, conference presentations, talks, or public lectures related directly to the course subject matter and relevant pedagogy;

¹ Throughout these Guidelines, when eligibility for advancement is based on courses taught in two or three departments, the courses and course subject matters taught in all departments affecting eligibility must be considered.

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- classroom observations that comment explicitly on whether, in the observing member's judgment, mastery of the subject matter was demonstrated;

and where relevant by:

- letters from full-time teaching staff who have co-taught with the candidate that comment explicitly on whether, in the full-time member's judgment, mastery of the subject matter was demonstrated.

1.3 Superior classroom teaching

"Superior classroom teaching" is defined as reflective teaching practice that is innovative or highly effective; stimulates learning; and maintains a positive learning environment appropriate for the discipline, course and students. This should be demonstrated in all courses taught for the advancing department by the cumulative evidence provided by the following:

- quantitative and qualitative responses to course evaluations considered in conjunction with other materials;
- classroom observations that comment explicitly on whether, in the observing member's judgment, superior classroom teaching was demonstrated;
- the teaching dossier, especially assignments or other materials using innovative or highly effective approaches to teaching the subject matter;
- the Curriculum Vitae showing teaching awards where applicable;

and, where relevant by:

- letters from full-time teaching staff who have co-taught with the candidate that comment explicitly on whether, in the full-time member's judgment, superior classroom teaching was evidenced.

1.4 Continued currency with the subject matter

Demonstrated as in 1.1. in all courses on which SLIII eligibility is based. It is expected that the candidate will have demonstrated a sustained level of currency in the years since being advanced to SLII.

1.5 Continued mastery of the subject matter

Demonstrated as in 1.2 in all courses on which SLIII eligibility is based, and by previous teaching in the subject area. It is expected that the candidate will have demonstrated a sustained level of mastery in the years since being advanced to SLII.

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1.6 Continued superior classroom teaching

Demonstrated as in 1.3 in all courses on which SLIII eligibility is based. It is expected that the candidate will have demonstrated a sustained level of superior classroom teaching in the years since being advanced to SLII.

Use of Course Evaluation Data

The course evaluation framework recognizes that students' learning experiences are a function of multiple factors. Responses to individual items, composite means, and students' written comments should be considered together. Composite means and/or students' average rating of the overall quality of their learning experiences in the course must not be the sole evidence used to meet the criteria for advancement. Data from course evaluations should be considered in the context of other forms of information and feedback on an instructor's teaching.