

Information Session: Departmental and University Tenure Committees

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McGill

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Tenure at McGill

- *Regulations Relating to the Employment of Tenure Track and Tenured Academic Staff*
- *Regulations Relating to the Employment of Librarian Staff* available from the Secretariat website:
 - <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies-and-regulations>

Tenure at McGill

Tenure Candidates: 2011-2021

Total # of Candidates	715
Number of successful candidates (ie., who did not withdraw from process or tenure denied)	671
Success rate	94%

Levels of Review

1. **DTC/LTC** – Departmental/Library Tenure Committee, usually chaired by Department Chair, plus at least 4 other members
2. **UTC** – University tenure committee, chaired by Dean, plus 5 other members
3. **Principal or delegate** (Provost)

For information on the composition of internal committees, including for candidates with **joint appointments**, please consult the Regulations.

Timing of Tenure Consideration

Mandatory consideration (from year of initial appointment):

- Assistant Professor/Librarian: 6th year
- Associate Professor/Librarian: 5th year
- Full Professor/Librarian: 4th year

Early consideration:

- Assistant Professor: from 3rd year (Chair may initiate the process in any year with Candidate's consent)
- Associate or Full Professor: any year

Timing of Tenure Consideration (con't)

Delayed consideration:

1. A faculty member may **elect** to exclude authorized leaves of longer than 3 months as service for tenure consideration. Result: placement in following year's tenure cohort.
2. A faculty member may also **elect** to defer their tenure consideration by one year on account of the impact of COVID-19 on academic performance and productivity.

Timing of Tenure Consideration (con't)

Delayed consideration (con't):

3. In either or both of cases (1) or (2) above, the election must be communicated to Provost's office in writing no later than June 1st of normal year of tenure consideration.
4. Maximum of 2 non-COVID extensions permitted as well as 1 COVID-related extension (note: this includes extensions related to leaves pre-reappointment).

Academic Duties

PROFESSORS	LIBRARIANS
Teaching	Position Responsibilities
Research	Professional and Scholarly Activities
Other Contributions (Service)	Other Contributions (Service)

Minimum Assessment for *Tenure*

- ✦ **Superior** performance in **two** categories
(NB: for librarians, one of two Superior assessments must be for Position Responsibilities)
- ✦ **Reasonable** performance in the **third**

Relevant Period and Content

- Remember to focus on performance, not promise.
- The period assessed includes all years up to the year of tenure consideration during tenure-track period, rather than before. (**Exception**: early tenure candidates)
- How to avoid “double counting” of achievements.
- The candidate’s dossier is what matters – no one else’s; the tenure analysis is **not comparative**.

The Tenure Dossier as Prepared by the Candidate

- *Curriculum vitae*
- Personal statement (outlining your performance of academic duties)
- Record of **research**, scholarship, professional activities and contributions
- Record of **teaching** (note TLS support)
- Record of **general contributions to University and scholarly communities**
- Other materials the Candidate may wish to submit

The Tenure Dossier: Guidance for the Candidate and their Committees

- Guidelines for Developing a Teaching Portfolio
- Guidelines for Developing a Research Portfolio
- Guidelines for Developing a Service Portfolio**

These are Appendices A, B, and C respectively of the [Regulations Relating to the Employment of Tenure Track and Tenured Academic Staff](#)

[Examples of the Range of Research Accomplishments, Recognition and Impacts Valued at McGill](#)

** “Informal” service work is **valued** at McGill

Academic Performance in the COVID-19 context

COVID-19 has affected members of the academic staff in different ways. Working with MAUT, McGill has developed measures that seek to ensure the equitable assessment of all academic staff recognizing the potential adverse effects of the pandemic on performance and productivity.

See: [Guidelines for Assessing COVID-19's Impact on the Assessment of Academic Performance](#):

*In all situations where their academic performance is assessed, academic staff shall be given a meaningful opportunity to explain how COVID-19 affected their work – whether in nature, scope, or pace. This opportunity to explain the pandemic's impact on work responsibilities shall take the following form of **a one-page submission** where academic staff may explain how COVID-19 exerted an impact on performance/productivity. Chairs and Directors (or Deans in the case of Faculties without Departments) will encourage academic staff members to avail themselves of this opportunity.*

Academic Performance in the COVID-19 context

- One-page submission for:
 - Annual activity reports/merit exercise
 - Reappointment
 - Tenure
 - Promotion
- COVID-19 tenure deferral is an option for all faculty members.
- See:
 - [Guidelines for Assessing COVID-19's Impact on Assessment of Academic Performance \(2021\)](#)
 - [Report of the "Micro" Task Force to Address COVID-19's Impact on Assessments of Academic Performance \(2021\)](#)

The Tenure Dossier: Additional Items

Added to tenure dossier after Sept 1st:

- External Evaluator reports (3)
- Items added by DTC Chair (pre-Nov. 15) (if any)
- Items added by Candidate (pre-Nov. 15) (if any)
- New material, if requested by DTC, UTC or the Principal (or delegate) to clarify an issue that has arisen during deliberations (post-Nov. 15)

External Evaluators

- Evaluate the Candidate's research and scholarship
- Must be of recognized standing and qualified to provide an evaluation
- Must not be in a conflict of interest (e.g., supervisors, professional or close personal relations, recent colleagues/collaborators)
- Must not be employed by McGill University

Responsibilities of the DTC and UTC

- Be guided by objectivity, equity, integrity, and impartiality (NB COIs and the role of mentors on DTCs and UTCs)
- Make recommendations based solely on the the performance of the candidate's academic duties as set out in the tenure dossier – no benchmarking
- Whether/when/how to seek additional information
- Provide substantive reasons to support assessments
- Avoid COIs (e.g., collaborators, mentors)
- Respect procedures established by the Regulations, including deadlines

Responsibilities of the DTC and UTC

- Establish effective process for meetings (set two meetings, 2nd may not be needed)
- Clarity of responsibilities re report-writing including delegation of task and/or minority report if applicable)
- Ensuring attendance at meeting(s)
- Ensuring clear correspondence via the Secretariat
- Preserving anonymity of external evaluations
- Provision to candidate of fair opportunity to respond to committee concerns → for TTN meetings, the Secretariat can provide guidance and letter templates

Equity in the Tenure Evaluation Process

1) Understand and reduce unconscious bias:

- What is it?
- How can it play out in the tenure assessment process?
- How can it be reduced?
 - Taking one's time to read the dossier very carefully
 - Being mindful of one's bias and setting aside assumptions
 - Watching for potential bias in evaluation letters/assessments
 - Paying attention to potential unevenness in opportunities and resources (e.g., mentorship, space, support) and in loads (e.g., teaching and service responsibilities)

Equity in the Tenure Evaluation Process

2) Assess all elements of the dossier equitably:

- The role and place of leaves and career decelerations
- What “counts” as valid research: see https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/examples_of_research_final.pdf
- Recognize and value ‘informal’ work and contributions, notably those who are members of underrepresented groups (e.g., BIPOC faculty, women faculty – notably in STEM fields)
- Read the dossier carefully: facts matter more than the capacity to self-sell
- Are student evaluations of courses and teaching biased?

The Tenure Calendar

PHASE 1

By May 1: Candidate and Chair agree on list of 8 external evaluators. Chair forwards list to Dean.

By June 1: Candidates intending to elect to defer tenure consideration must have done so by this date.

By June 30: UTC ranks list of external evaluators. Secretariat contacts externals over the summer.

By September 1: Candidate submits dossier to Secretary-General:
- internal package
- external package
(internal package minus teaching)



PHASE 2

Sept-Jan DTC/LTC meets

November 15
Deadline for addition of material by DTC/LTC Chair

Deadline for submission by Candidate of additional material

Post-November 15
If requested by DTC/LTC, Candidate adds new material to dossier

November 25
Secretary-General transmits external evaluators' reports to DTC/LTC and UTC.



PHASE 3

Jan – Apr UTC meets

January 25
Deadline for DTC report.*

UTC may seek further information from the Candidate, Chair or from one or more additional external evaluators.

April 30
Deadline for UTC report.*

May-June
Decision by the Principal and recommendation to the Board of Governors.*

Outcomes

Tenure is **granted** (most frequent outcome) → appointment for an indefinite term, starting on June 1.

If a committee or the Provost is **tending to a negative decision** → the Candidate has the right to:

- be informed of concerns
- have access to the substance of external evaluators' reports
- address concerns during an in-person meeting, with an advisor

Tenure is **denied** → appointments may continue for up to a year (if 37 weeks notice has not been given) and the Candidate may **appeal** the decision.

Some Tips for Candidates

- Seek out advice and consult with colleagues and your mentor(s).
NEW → [Provost's Faculty Mentorship Network](#) (write to equity.provost@mcgill.ca for info).
- Ask a trusted colleague or two (but not anyone who'll serve on your tenure committees) to review and provide feedback on your draft dossier.
- Keep your cv up-to-date and file all materials/documents that demonstrate your excellence as a teacher, researcher, and member of the McGill and wider academic communities.
- Make sure to put your best foot forward in your dossier – this is not the time to undersell yourself! Document and explain all you have done and accomplished, including the things that might not be formal and visible (e.g., time spent coaching and mentoring students and trainees, support you've given colleagues, your students' accomplishments to which you have contributed, funding applications that you applied for but were not successful, impacts of your scholarship both within and beyond the academy, e.g., in community sectors).
- Explain any extenuating circumstances such as delays in setting up a lab.

Further Information and Support

- Interpretation of the Regulations: angela.campbell@mcgill.ca
- Timing of tenure: academic.personnel@mcgill.ca
- Tenure submission deadlines or procedures: bonnie.borenstein@mcgill.ca
- Teaching Portfolio assembly or questions: tls@mcgill.ca