

## **Department of Social Science**

### **Processes and criteria for evaluating Conversion applications**

Prepared by Kimberley White, on behalf of the Department Executive Committee  
January 2014; adopted by Department Council, January 23, 2014

#### **Conversion Appointments – Professorial Stream**

According to 23.01 of the Collective Agreement, the Affirmative Action Conversion Program is intended to recognize “the substantial contribution to the University community made by long-term employees, and of the obstacles that have faced these employees in their attempts to find academic employment” and to “more fully expand opportunities for these employees”. Such appointments are considered probationary tenure-stream positions.

#### **Process**

Upon receiving the annual notice from the Provost’s Office, the Chair will put out a call to all eligible Unit 2 colleagues who may wish to apply for a conversion appointment in the Department of Social Science.

Applications will normally include: a current *curriculum vitae*; a personal statement on teaching and research (max 1500 words); a sample of scholarly writing; a minimum of three letters of recommendation - at least one of which should be from within York, and at least one of which should be external. *All applicants will be invited to submit self-identification information.*

Complete applications will be submitted to the Chair’s Office by the specified Departmental deadline, and will be reviewed by the Department Executive Committee in time to meet the Faculty deadline for recommendations. The Executive Committee will report all recommendations to Department Council.

Each application will be evaluated according to the following criteria, taking into account any unique/exceptional circumstances, and considering the Department’s hiring priorities.

The Chair will consult with the Program(s) with which the applicant is most likely to be affiliated and, where possible, solicit a letter of support from the Program Coordinator prior to the review of applications. *Normally, the Department will not support an application for which there is not support from at least one of the programs.*

## Evaluation

As conversion appointments are in every respect tenure-stream appointments, we expect that applicants provide reasonable evidence that they will be able to achieve the requirements for Tenure and Promotion in the appropriate time period. Thus, applicants must have a *PhD in hand*, and shall be evaluated in accordance to the three categories set out for Tenure and Promotion:

- *Teaching:* Applicants must demonstrate a strong record of teaching in the social sciences with evidence of their ability to teach courses in at least one of the Departments interdisciplinary programs. There should also be evidence of versatility across different course levels and teaching formats.
- The evaluation of an applicants strengths and versatility in teaching will be based on a range of available information including (but not limited to): course evaluations, teaching statements, letters of reference, course outlines, evidence of engagement with teaching and curricular development, teaching-based professional development courses and teaching awards.
- *Service:* Applicants should provide evidence of interest and willingness to participate in University service.
- *Research and Professional Contribution:* Recognizing the considerable challenges that conversion applicants may have faced in conducting research over the years, it is nevertheless expected that there be evidence of an active research program in one of the social sciences (preferably interdisciplinary) and an ongoing engagement in relevant research-related activities. Applications must demonstrate a promise of excellence in research and the ability to publish in peer-reviewed publications.

The evaluation of an applicant's strengths in research will be based on a range of available information including (but not limited to): publication record; conference presentations; letters of reference; ability to be appointed to a graduate program; research grants; and works in progress.

## **Conversion Appointments – Teaching Stream**

Prepared by Mark Peacock, on behalf of the Department Executive Committee  
April 2016; adopted by Department Council, April 7, 2016

### Preamble

The Council of the Department of Social Science agreed in a meeting of Nov. 5th, 2015, to accept applications for Alternate Stream appointments from eligible Conversion candidates. Council did so on the understanding that Conversion

appointments to the Alternate Stream are not substitutes for and will therefore not displace the allocation of appointments to the Professorial Stream.

### Process

Upon receiving the annual notice from the Provost's Office, the Chair will put out a call to all Unit 2 colleagues who are eligible for conversion to the Alternate Stream in the Department of Social Science.

Applications should follow the form outlined in the LA&PS document "Assembling a file for an Alternate Stream Conversion Appointment" (See Appendix for file dated November 2015). In addition to the materials specified there, candidates may also submit samples of scholarly writing if such are relevant to their teaching. All applicants will be invited to submit self-identification information.

Complete applications will be submitted to the Chair's Office by the specified departmental deadline, and will be reviewed by the Department's Executive Committee in time to meet the Faculty deadline for recommendations. The Executive Committee will report all recommendations to Department Council.

Each application will be evaluated according to the criteria laid out below. Account will be taken of (a) any unique or exceptional circumstances pertaining to the application, and (b) teaching needs within the Department.

The Chair will consult with the Program(s) with which the applicant is most likely to be affiliated and, where possible, solicit a letter of support from the Program Coordinator prior to the review of applications. Normally, the Department will not support an application for which there is not support from at least one program.

### Evaluation

As conversion appointments are tenure-stream appointments, it is expected that applicants provide evidence that they will be able to meet the requirements for Tenure and Promotion in the appropriate time period.

According to the University's Tenure and Promotions – Alternate Stream Document (Approved by Senate 15 December, 1997; Amended 27 November, 2003, and 24 May, 2007), "[t]he minimum requirement for appointment to the Alternate Stream is the Master's degree or equivalent background, normally with teaching experience" (section B). The Department of Social Science deems that, in addition to the requirement of a "Master's degree or equivalent background", a completed Ph.D. is a preferred, though not a required, qualification.

Applications shall be evaluated in accordance to the two categories – teaching and service – set out in Tenure and Promotion – Alternate Stream Document.

1) *Teaching*: Applicants must demonstrate excellence in teaching in the social sciences with evidence of their ability to teach courses in at least one of the Department's interdisciplinary programs. There should also be evidence of versatility across different course levels and teaching formats.

The main forms of evidence relevant to the evaluation of a candidate's teaching are listed below. Candidates who supply an appropriate rationale may include other forms of evidence.

- (i) Course evaluations
- (ii) Teaching statement
- (iii) Letters of reference, two of which must be based on peer review of classroom teaching
- (iv) Course outlines
- (v) Curricular development
- (vi) Teaching-based professional development courses
- (vii) Teaching awards
- (viii) Pedagogical innovation
- (ix) Research on pedagogy.

The criteria listed do not constitute a set of necessary conditions, and only an "ideal" candidate will meet all the criteria. Rather, to be recommended for an Alternate Stream appointment, a candidate must meet a balanced combination of the criteria.

*N.B.* Since Alternate Stream faculty members are not required to engage in "basic research", appointment to the Alternate Stream will not normally take achievements in basic research into consideration (Tenure and Promotion – Alternate Stream Document, Preamble).

2) *Service*: Applicants should provide evidence of interest and willingness to participate in University service.

## Appendix



### Assembling a file for an Alternate Stream Conversion Appointment (November 2015)

#### Assembling the File

- a) The assembly of the application file is the responsibility of the candidate; support for doing so will be provided by the Teaching Commons, <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca>
- b) Applications for Teaching Stream appointments will focus primarily on teaching. Thus, with reference to the standards for teaching documentation laid out in the Senate Tenure & Promotion guidelines, the Office of the Dean will prepare and provide a checklist (see part c below) of those elements that ought to be contained within any application file. The Senate document on the Alternate stream is found on the Senate webpage at [http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/Alternate\\_Stream\\_Doc.pdf](http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/Alternate_Stream_Doc.pdf)
- c) The elements of an application for a Teaching Stream appointment include: i) application letter;
- ii) candidate's CV using the format recommended by Senate available on the Senate webpage at <http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CVFormatUpdatedSept2009.pdf> ; iii) letter of support from potential host unit or units; iv) three letters of reference from colleagues, at least two of which should be from referees who have observed the candidate's teaching;
- v) tabular summary of numerical course evaluations, accounting for all courses taught in at least the past three years, along with the full set of student comments from 2 or 3 courses; vi) brief contextualizing analysis of course evaluations, provided by the sponsoring unit or units; vii) Testimonials of quality teaching, e.g. awards or nominations for teaching awards and up to three signed student letters;
- viii) statement of teaching philosophy\*\* of approximately 500 words; ix) examples of two course syllabi and of two assessment instruments or teaching innovations or other teaching-related materials . \*\*For guidance on preparing a statement of Teaching Philosophy or a Teaching Dossier, click on <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/resources-2/teaching-dossiers-2/>

#### Submission of Files

It is preferable for files to be submitted to the “sponsoring” unit or units, which will appraise the applications according to their established procedures. It is recommended that units interview alternate stream applicants. Members of the conversion pool may choose to apply directly to the Office of the Dean