

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING ACADEMIC PROMOTION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PAEDIATRICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

University promotion recognizes academic achievement and should be the goal of every faculty member of the Department of Paediatrics. In order to be promoted, a candidate must be able to demonstrate excellence in at least one of three domains: Creative Professional Activity (including Quality Improvement), Teaching and Education or Research. In addition, each candidate must demonstrate at least “competence” in teaching. Promotion to Associate Professor requires that the candidate has a national reputation, and promotion to Full Professor requires that the candidate has an international reputation. There is a well-established system for moving through the Promotion process in the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Toronto.

Q: When should I start thinking about promotion?

Promotion is a process. You should start thinking about it quite early in your career and collect supporting documentation that you may need (e.g. teaching evaluations, invitations to present). You should review your progress towards promotion at each Annual Review with your division head.

Q: I think I'm ready for promotion – what should I do?

If you think you're ready for promotion, make sure that you have the support of your division head and make an appointment to see the Chair of the Promotions Committee. Prior to that meeting, make sure that you read the [promotions manual](#), specifically the areas that concern individual applicants. At the meeting with the Chair of the Promotions Committee, a discussion will ensue regarding whether it is appropriate to proceed with promotion or whether additional activities are required to support the application.

Q: What is the Department of Pediatrics Promotions Committee and how does it work?

The Promotions Committee is made up of Full Professors (usually 10 to 12) who represent the different job profiles that exist in the department. Ad hoc members include the Associate Chairs of the department. If you apply for promotion, your dossiers (CV, dossiers in education, CPA and research) will be reviewed by the Promotions Committee. Each candidate is assigned a primary and secondary reviewer and each dossier is discussed by the committee. The committee makes a recommendation to the Chair of the Promotions Committee whether or not the candidate should proceed with the promotion; the Chair has the ultimate approval about whether a candidate should proceed.

Q: What if I think I should be promoted but the Promotions Committee does not make that recommendation?

If the candidate disagrees with the decision, there is still an opportunity to appeal the decision and move forward on one's own to the University's Decanal Committee. However, this is not supported

by the department.

Q: How many years does it normally take to get promoted?

Time to promotion reflects the number of years it takes to document clear-cut national (for associate) or international (for full) excellence which is required for promotion. The University Decanal Committee discourages early movement to promotion and will not consider a candidate who has not been on faculty for at least five years. One has to have achieved extraordinary success to be promoted at five years, but it is definitely possible at both the Associate and Full Professor level.

Rough guidelines for our departments are around eight years on university faculty to be promoted to both Associate and from Associate to Full Professor.

Q: I had a faculty appointment for several years before joining the University of Toronto. How does that affect my timing for promotion?

You will definitely be “credited” for the time spent in your previous academic appointment; in fact, it will be seen as equivalent (in years on faculty) to your U of T appointment.

Q: Do certain job profiles have advantages over others in getting promoted?

It is clear that the University has become much more cognizant of the scholarly work of clinicians and promotion based on creative professional activity (CPA) as well as quality improvement work which is now a very accepted platform on which to base an application for promotion. It does not appear that any job profile carries more advantage than another but rather it is the ability to achieve, and document, national or international excellence. The bar may be easier to measure for faculty who are promoted on their research as publications in high impact journals, large national grants and invited presentations carry a great deal of weight. Such metrics are more challenging to find for CPA but they may also include publications, review articles, book chapters, invitations to speak, development of practice guidelines, new ways to approach care, outstanding clinical care with an international reputation etc. This will all be reviewed when you meet with the Chair of the Promotions Committee.

Q: Should I speak to my referees about the promotion?

One of the most important elements in the promotion is the opinion of external referees. The Departmental Promotions Committee will try to assemble at least 10 referees who can review the candidates file and speak to the national or international reputation of each candidate. You will be asked to suggest a number of referees. You must not contact these referees. We will do so on your behalf.

Q: The process seems daunting – where can I get assistance?

While the process does seem daunting, there is a lot of help available for you in the department. First of all, your Division Head should provide support and help decide when to go forward for promotion and what you may need to help reach that stage. The Associate Chairs for Research, Education and Clinical are always willing to meet with candidates to review dossiers and help direct appropriately. The Chair of the Promotions Committee is prepared to meet with all candidates to

also assist with the process. It is sometimes helpful to discuss the process with your peers who may have recently gone through the promotion process. We will also send you electronic folders of candidates who have recently succeeded at promotion.

Triennial Review dossiers and supporting documents are also useful in preparing CPA, research and teaching dossier; it may be advisable to plan your application for promotion around your Triennial review.

Q: I have worked in an academic center for a long time but really haven't published or developed a national or international reputation. Can I get promoted?

Our faculty comprises many individuals who have spent the majority of their time on clinical care and teaching and have not achieved a national or international reputation. There is a special category for promotion available to such individuals, and it is based on sustained excellence in teaching. People in this category are generally known as outstanding teachers, have often won Department, and/or University teaching awards and taught at multiple levels (e.g. medical school, resident, post-graduate trainees, inter-professional, lay public) with excellent teaching effectiveness scores. This generally should be sustained over an approximate 20-year period. The Chair of the Promotion Committee will request a special waiver from the Dean for candidates who wish to advance in this category. In this circumstance, the candidate does not require external reviewers. Documentation of teaching excellence (in addition to awards and teaching effectiveness scores) can include letters of support from colleagues, directors of teaching programs in your centres and other educators who may be aware of your teaching prowess. It would also be helpful to get a report of direct observation of your teaching (you can speak with Vice-Chair, Education about this).

Q: What is the timing around the Promotions process?

You will receive a message from the Department of Paediatrics informing you of the promotions process in April of the year prior to which you might consider applying for promotion. If you are planning to apply for promotion, you must meet with the Chair of the Promotions Committee. No candidate will be put forward if this meeting does not occur.

Your documents must be submitted in electronic form by August 1. The Promotions Committee meets in early August to deliberate whether the application has merit. Those deemed meritorious will be presented to the Chair of the Department of Paediatrics who ultimately decides whether the candidate moves forward.

We will approach the suggested referees of the candidates who are recommended to proceed to ask if they would be prepared to act as an external referee. Those who agree will be sent electronic copies of your dossiers. In addition, students will be approached to ask whether they will be prepared to write student testimonials (they will not receive your dossiers).

Once the referee letters have been received, the Promotions Committee will meet again (usually in mid-November) to discuss whether the referee letters are supportive of candidates moving forward; if so, your documents will be submitted to the Decanal Committee at the University (first or second week of January) accompanied by a supporting letter written by the Chair of the Promotions Committee and the Chair of the Department.

The University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine's Decanal Committee usually meets in the second week of February; they review candidates submitted from all Departments in the Faculty of Medicine. They may request additional information and may give an opportunity to appeal candidates who were deemed unsuccessful. Appeals are made by Chair of the Promotions Committee and the Chair of the Department. This usually occurs in the third week of March. The final decision regarding promotion must be approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and ultimately the University Provost.

Candidates are then informed of the decision (usually in late May).

Q: Can the development of national guidelines mentioned in pathways to excellence in category of CPA be used in pathway to excellence in category of education?

Yes, it depends on how it is framed. Generally, if you describe that these pathways are used to teach within your programs and fellowship programs, then they can be used.

Q: Is USA included as international?

Yes.

Q: Do we provide student quotes, or do they come from teaching evaluations?

When you put your entire package forward, you will be asked to provide the names of 10 external referees and 10 students. The referees will be asked to review your entire dossier. The students will just be asked to provide testimonials. They do not see your records. Dr. Ronald Laxer will pull the quotes from the referee letters and from the student letters. Please do not speak with the students or ask them to write a letter. Similarly, do not email your external referees and ask for that.

Q: How do I best handle the overlap between education and CPA?

If you have something that is relevant to both, you should mention it in both areas but describe it fully in only one of the platforms. Do not repeat yourself. You can list it in two places but explain it in the one where you think it is having the most impact and relevance.

Q: Do you consider an event that is hosted here but one that includes international delegates to be international, local, or other?

If there is an international meeting that is held in Toronto, then it is considered an international conference or talk. For example, the Paediatric Update Conference held annually at SickKids takes place at SickKids but is advertised nationally, so we consider it a national conference.

Q: Are there any tips on finding student referees (residents) since many of them move away quickly and are hard to locate?

Keep a list of students that you have had and think you have a good relationship with. Most students are happy to write a testimonial for someone who they've had a good relationship with. We ask for 10 students, but we only need 3. So, if you are unable to provide 10 names, it is not the worst thing so long as we get 3 responses back. Students can be at any level (e.g. undergraduate, research fellow, clinical fellow, paediatric resident, etc.). If you are going from an associate level to

full, we suggest you do not use the same referees you used the first time.

Q: What is the benchmark for 'competent in research' for academic clinicians?

Participation in research that somebody from outside could judge (e.g. being on a couple of papers, being a co-investigator on a grant, contributed patients to a study, etc.). It is fairly easy for most people to achieve this.

Q: Ron suggested that each individual meet with himself and then all 3 associate chairs. What should we bring to these meetings and how best do we prepare? If we're not going forward in research or education, do we still need to meet with all the associate chairs in those areas?

Whoever you meet with, it is helpful to at least have your CV a few days ahead. It would also be helpful to have your research statement and a list of your 5 most significant publications. It is not completely necessary to meet with all associate chairs. Since you meet with Ron first; he can further direct you.

**This response primarily applies to faculty with research appointments and so may necessary for all.*

Q: As an academic clinician, how is participation in industry studies viewed? It is time-consuming and I wonder if it is better to spend time on my personal research projects?

The way industry studies are viewed has changed a lot in the last few years. Institutions are more interested in industry studies for obvious reasons, which give them a higher level of recognition. We recognize that these studies can take a very long time, so a description of what you have been doing could be very useful until you have an output (publication).

Q: On my CV, would I put an oral presentation twice as a published abstract and then again in the presentation section?

No. Where you list your abstracts, list in parentheses whether it was an oral presentation or a poster presentation. If it was a keynote, you can elevate it to a presentation. In general, try to avoid repetition.

Q: Using the U of T CV format, where should the information about the national and international leadership go? Should a specific section named leadership be created explaining the most important ones?

Everyone does it a little differently. You can have a separate section called leadership. That is why a table of contents could potentially be helpful.

Q: Are the list of trainees and other accomplishments only from the time of the last promotion?

You want to have your whole list on your CV. So much of what we do in research is based on sustained productivity and sustained mentorship and training.

Q: Should we include invited presentations that were scheduled but cancelled due to COVID-19?

Yes. We recognize that there could be a period of months or years where presentations have to be

virtual or cancelled due to the pandemic.

Q: What if one cannot find 10 referees?

Probably would be helpful to discuss with Division Head or mentors about suitable referees.

Q: Can research training nominations count as teaching awards nominations?

Mentorship of trainees or students crosses CPA, research, and education. It may depend on where is the best place to emphasize it. Repeating is not wise but cross-referencing some things could be helpful.

Q: Is combining platforms of creative professional activity and sustained teaching a good strategy?

You do not necessarily have to choose your platform. Most of the people who excelled on CPA also excelled in education. We can decide where you rank when we meet as a committee. Your strategy should be to do what makes you happy and satisfied in your career. Your goal should be to have a really good career, and if you do that, you are going to be successful and you will be able to land in the right box on CPA and teaching and education. Majority of applicants excel in both.

Q: The new power teaching evaluations do not have summary TS overall scores but individual scores for categories. Do I list them all or do a range?

The official evaluation should be included in the appendix. Choose one or two of the categories and summarize the mean scores for those evaluations. Put that number, explain how it was calculated, and provide the evaluations so people can see it. The reviewer is much more likely to take note of that if it is an important, central activity for you.