

Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs

**Teaching Standards Communication**

To: All Chairs and Directors

Copy: All RFA Faculty Members  
Deans and Associate Deans  
Provost and Vice President Academic  
RFA

From: Michael Dewson  
Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs

Date: January 11, 2010

Subject: **Teaching Standards for Mode II Tenure Stream Faculty**

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to you to clarify a number of issues which have arisen in respect of the processes described in Article 10.18 of the RFA CA, and to provide a summary/guideline document to assist you in carrying out your roles in considering the development of a new or different teaching standard for your department/school.

**Teaching Standard Process for Mode II Faculty Members:**

*The following is a summary document. The provisions of Article 10.18 of the RFA Collective Agreement supersedes the content of this summary.*

In the last round of collective bargaining between the University and the Ryerson Faculty Association the parties agreed to number of changes to the Article 10 – WORKLOAD as it relates to Mode II tenure stream faculty members. As you probably know, this included a new Teaching Standard of five half course equivalents during an academic year, effective

2009-2010. Another new provision provides a process for School/Departments to develop or alter a Teaching Standard.

Many Departments/Schools have started to develop their teaching standards and should continue to do so. Those that have not should consider whether it is necessary for them to do so. If they conclude that it is, they should set up a Department/School Teaching Standards Committee and initiate the process of developing such a standard.

The following summary is intended as a guide for Departments/Schools interested in developing a Teaching Standard pursuant to the processes set out in Article 10.18 - DEPARTMENTAL/SCHOOL TEACHING STANDARD FOR MODE II TENURE STREAM FACULTY.

**Who does the teaching standard apply to?**

Article 10.18 applies ONLY to the teaching standards for Mode II tenure stream faculty; it does not apply to Limited Term Faculty (see Article 10.19) or to Mode I members of faculty.

The Department/School and Faculty committees are composed entirely of Mode II faculty which may include LTF faculty members..

**Does my Department or School need to develop a new Teaching Standard?**

The decision to create a Department/School Teaching Standard Committee and undertake the development of a new standard is entirely voluntary on the part of the Department/School, except where the Dean asks it to do so under the terms of Article 10.18. Department/Schools without a teaching standard will be operating under the more general provisions of 10.12.C.i (attached) which does not specify the nature of a course and other attendant variables mentioned in 10.18.D. Where necessary, the decision should be taken by a vote of Mode II faculty members in the Department/School.

**Requirements of any new or altered teaching standard:**

Each Department/School may develop or alter a teaching standard provided that;

- the standard conforms with Article 7 (Obligations);
- addresses, as appropriate, all academic responsibilities of members (Article 10);
- ensures that the academic program obligations of the Department/School can be met; ensures that the assignment of scheduled duties of members is carried out as equitably as possible;
- has been ratified, by the Mode II Members of the Department/School in a properly constituted Department/School meeting, following review by the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee; and
- has been approved by the Dean.

**Teaching Standard:** The parties agree that the teaching standard may vary from discipline to discipline. The teaching standard shall address and, where

appropriate, stipulate guidelines concerning a number of workload considerations which are listed in 10.18 D, which is appended to this document.

**Process and Timelines:**

- The Department/School determines whether it wishes to develop a new teaching standard.
- Should it decide to develop a new standard, the Department/School shall elect a committee of Mode II Members in the Department/School through its normal internal election processes.

***ACTION:* Please provide a written communication to your Dean indicating whether or not your Department/School is planning to undertake the process and the membership of the committee. This will assist the Dean in planning for meeting with your committee and ensure the Dean is aware of the processes being followed in the application of the RFA-CA.**

- The Departmental Committee shall invite the Chair/Director and the Dean to address it on the academic program obligations of the Department/School, and/or resources of the Department/School and any other relevant matters.
- The proposed teaching standard is to be forwarded to the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee (FTSC) for comment and advice and the FTSC will respond within 3 months.
- Following receipt of the FTSC's advice, the proposed teaching standard is to be ratified by the Mode II faculty members of the Department/School in a properly constituted meeting within 9 months of an initiation of a review or alteration of the teaching standard.
- The Departmental/School Committee is to provide to the Dean a copy of the ratified teaching standard within 2 weeks of its ratification. The Dean is to respond to the Department/School, with a copy to the FTSC, within 3 months of receipt of the ratified teaching standard.
- The Dean shall accept a ratified teaching standard provided it permits the department to fulfill its academic program obligations. If the Dean is unable to accept the Departmental Committee's ratified teaching standard he/she is to indicate in writing his/her concerns as described in 10.18.I to the Committee and Department. S/he should also meet with the Departmental Committee to address his/her concerns and endeavour to come to an agreement on an acceptable teaching standard.
- If the Dean and the Departmental Committee are unable to resolve their issues the matter is referred to the FTSC and this committee will consider the issues put forward by both the Department/School and the Dean and shall formulate written recommendations within 3 months, and it will forward their recommendations to the Dean, the School/Department, and the Provost.

- The Dean and the School/Department will review the FTSC recommendations and attempt to resolve their differences. If the Dean is still unable to approve the proposed standard, the matter will be referred to the Provost and Vice President, Academic.
- The Provost and Vice President, Academic will meet with the Dean and the Department/School to review the issues and the Provost will issue a final decision within 90 days whether to accept, deny or modify the teaching standards, stating his/her reasons and recommendations in writing to the Department/School, the Dean, the affected faculty members, and the FTSC.

**Composition of Faculty Teaching Standards Committee (FTSC)**

Each Faculty will constitute a Faculty Teaching Standards Committee, which is comprised of the Chair/Director of each School/Department and one elected Mode II faculty member from each School/Department. A chair is elected by and from the members of the FTSC.

**Purpose of the Committee:** The purpose of the FTSC Committee is to review and comment on the Department/School proposed teaching standards to promote, equity, transparency, and academic quality across the Faculty. This committee will develop its own procedures.

***ACTION:* Please provide the Dean with the name of the elected Departmental/School representative to the FTSC.**

## Appendix

**In addition to the two RFA-CA sections reproduced below, faculty involved in the teaching standard process should also review Article 7 - Obligations, as well as the balance of Article 10 – Workload.**

### Article 10.12.C.i

The teaching standard for tenure stream faculty members will be five half course equivalents during an academic year, with three half course equivalents assigned in one semester and two half course equivalents in the other semester. This is the cap, but in the case of individual departments, it may be lowered through the process described in Article 10.18. Also departments who have already achieved lower teaching assignments that are financially sustainable and academically sound will not be affected by the introduction of this teaching standard.

### Article 10.18

#### **10.18 DEPARTMENTAL/SCHOOL TEACHING STANDARD FOR MODE II TENURE STREAM FACULTY:**

- A. Each Faculty will constitute a Faculty Teaching Standards Committee which shall consist of the chair and one elected Mode II faculty member from each school or department. A chair will be elected by and from the members of the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee. The purpose of the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee is to review and comment on Departmental/School proposed teaching standards to promote equity, transparency, and academic quality across the Faculty. This committee will develop its own procedures.
- B. Each Department/School may develop or alter a teaching standard provided that the standard:
  - 1. conforms with the provisions of Article 7;
  - 2. addresses, as appropriate, all academic responsibilities of members per Article 10;
  - 3. ensures that the academic program obligations of the Department/School can be met;
  - 4. ensures that the assignment of scheduled duties of members in the Department/School is carried out as equitably as possible;

5. has been ratified, by the Mode II Members of the Department/School in a properly constituted Department/School meeting, following review by the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee;
  6. has been approved by the Dean.
- C. The Department/School teaching standard in effect shall be made available to Mode II members through Department/School offices and shall be distributed to all new Mode II members.
- D. The parties agree that the teaching standard may vary from discipline to discipline. The teaching standard shall address and, where appropriate, stipulate guidelines concerning the following:
- a) normal teaching activities, including but not limited to: curriculum development and revision; preparation and presentation of courses (including mode of delivery); supervision of students (including placement, practicum, field, clinical, thesis and research supervision); evaluation; academic counseling; supervising teaching and academic assistants; course administration; instructional development;
  - b) normal expectations regarding supervision of interns, clinical activities, research, theses, and/or other academic supervision of undergraduate and graduate students;
  - c) normal expectations of scholarly, research, and creative achievements;
  - d) normal expectations of administrative contributions;
  - e) changing distribution of workload components over members' careers;
  - f) workload expectations for the diversity of types of appointments and specialized functions within a school/department;
  - g) the academic program obligations of the School/Department;
  - h) mechanisms for dealing with extraordinary administrative or other tasks;
  - i) the expectations for promotion, and tenure;
  - j) the courseload norms and practices established in similar disciplines in universities with similar academic obligations, taking

into account expectations in the three broad areas of academic workload;

- k) the nature of specific courses including: course enrolment, method of instruction, method of evaluation, the role of technology, course level, the number of times the course has been taught by a Member, and the availability of teaching assistance. The Committee will develop, where appropriate, guidelines for the relationship between course characteristics and the provision of teaching assistants, including markers, lab assistants and instructors, and the provision of a local cap on marking;
- l) ensuring program quality and meeting student needs;
- m) financial viability of proposed teaching standards; and
- n) ensuring the provision of appropriate service to other programs.

- E. A proposed teaching standard, which includes the definition of a course, and any proposed alteration of a teaching standard, shall be formulated by a committee of Mode II Members in the Department/School elected by the Department/School. The Committee shall invite the Chair/Director and the Dean to address it on the academic program obligations of the Department/School, and/or resources of the Department/School and any other relevant matters.
- F. The proposed teaching standard shall be forwarded to the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee for comment and advice. This committee shall respond within three (3) months.
- G. Following receipt of the advice of the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee, the proposed teaching standard shall be ratified by the Mode II Members of the Department/School in a properly constituted meeting within nine (9) months of an initiation of a review or alteration under Article 10.18.B. and/or N.
- H. The Departmental committee shall provide a copy of the ratified teaching standard to the Dean within two (2) weeks of its ratification.
- I. Upon receipt of a ratified Teaching Standard from a department/school, the Dean shall respond to the Department/School, with a copy to the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee, within three (3) months. The Dean shall accept a ratified teaching standard provided that it permits the Department/School to fulfill its academic program obligations. If the Dean is unable to accept the ratified teaching standard, he/she shall:

1. indicate in writing, where appropriate
    - i) how the proposed teaching standard does not allow the Unit to fulfill its academic program obligations in a sustainable fashion,
    - ii) why the proposed teaching standard is not equitable, financially viable, and/or consistent with the strategic plans of the School/Department and the Faculty;
    - iii) what changes to program delivery and/or resources of the unit or changes to workload would be necessary to gain approval of the proposed teaching standard; and
  2. meet with the Committee to address his/her concerns and endeavour to come to some agreement on an acceptable teaching standard.
- J. In the event that the Dean and the Department/School are unable to resolve their differences in respect of establishing a new or altered teaching standard, the matter shall be referred to the FTSC who shall consider all the issues presented by the department/school and the Dean and shall formulate written recommendations within three (3) months. The FTSC shall forward copies of their recommendations to the Dean, the school/department, and the Provost.
- K. The Dean and the school/department shall review the recommendations and attempt to resolve their differences. If, after attempting to find a resolution, the Dean is still unable to approve the department/school proposal, the matter shall be referred to the Provost and Vice President, Academic, who shall meet with the Dean and the Department/School to review the issues. The Provost shall render a final decision within ninety (90) days whether to accept, deny, or modify the Department/School standard, stating reasons and recommendations in writing to the Department/School, the Dean, the affected faculty members, and the Faculty Teaching Standards Committee.
- L. Until such time as an agreement on the teaching standard is reached, the previous teaching standard will continue to apply.
- M. The Association shall be given notice of any formulation or alteration of a teaching standard.
- N. A Department/School and/or the Faculty Dean may initiate a review of the teaching standard if one or more of the following applies:



1. There has been a significant change in the resources of the Department/School;
  2. There has been a significant change in the academic program obligations of the Department/School;
  3. There has been a significant change in some or all of the variables listed in 10.18.D. as being relevant to the formulation of a Teaching Standard;
  4. The current teaching standard does not adequately lead to a fair allocation of workload in the Department/School and/or a fair balance between scheduled and unscheduled duties;
  5. The current Teaching Standard provides for a scheduled review.
- O. A Department/School may alter its teaching standard, provided the process of consultation, ratification, and acceptance as outlined above, to adopt the original teaching standard is followed.
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