

**OISE/UT Divisional Guidelines for
Assessment of Creative Professional Activity
March 7, 2001**

Introduction

In May 1984, the University of Toronto's Working Group on Creative Professional Practice made the following recommendation in its Final Report:

That the University delegate to divisions the responsibility for developing specific criteria and documentation requirements consistent with the University-wide definition for use whenever creative professional activity is assessed, viz. initial appointment to the University, awarding merit increments to salary, three-year probationary review in the tenure-stream, Tenure Review, appointment to the Graduate Faculty and promotion in academic rank.⁽¹⁾

The purpose of these Guidelines for the Assessment of Creative Professional Activity is to define, provide examples, and to illustrate appropriate evidence of creative professional activity within OISE/UT. The Guidelines are meant to provide a framework for those making cases for Creative Professional Activity (CPA) as well as for committees assessing such cases.

The OISE/UT Guidelines for the Assessment of Creative Professional Activity supplement the references to CPA contained in the *Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments* (which covers tenure), and the *Policy and Procedures Governing Promotions*. In addition, annual reviews of faculty activity resulting in merit pay decisions should evaluate creative professional activities in ways that are consistent with these Guidelines.

Within these Guidelines, creative professional activity is considered to be a component of scholarship/research. As such, creative professional activity may, in some cases, provide an alternative approach to these activities. In other cases, creative professional activity might complement traditional research activities and assessment will involve a combination of the two. In no situation, however, is creative professional activity required of all faculty.

The Guidelines recognize both the several contexts in which creative professional activity is referenced in the U of T policies and the wide diversity in definitions of creative professional activity across the U of T divisions. While providing interpretations of these activities that are relevant to the academic pursuits of OISE/UT faculty, the Guidelines allow considerable flexibility for departments and programs to adapt assessment procedures to their particular needs.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to describe the relationship of creative professional activity to other scholarly activities and to provide relevant evidence. This component of the dossier is then treated, like other scholarly activities, as input to the tenure, promotion, and merit processes.

The Guidelines are designed with the objectives of ensuring that assessments are fair and equitable to all parties, that assessments are not used for purposes other than those stated, and that the legitimate interests of parties in privacy and confidentiality are respected. Assessment of creative professional activity must be consistent with the legal rights and responsibilities of all parties.

⁽¹⁾ University of Toronto, Working Group on Creative Professional Practice, Final Report, May 28, 1984, pg. 5

Defining Creative Professional Activity (CPA)

Education is a diverse, interdisciplinary field of inquiry that intersects with a wide range of international, national, and local communities, governments, professional bodies, and scholarly organizations. There are, however, certain common elements that serve to define the extensive range of possible activities that can be subsumed by the term creative professional activity at OISE/UT:

1. CPA involves innovation. These activities are defined by the original or creative application of scholarship or artistic ability in order to advance educational practice and/or human understanding.
2. CPA is characterized by sustained involvement.
3. CPA involves a substantive contribution to the field of education, broadly defined.

Creative professional activity, therefore, can be broadly defined as a form of scholarship where a faculty member has a sustained involvement in an innovative artistic or applied scholarly activity leading to a substantive contribution to the field.

Assessing Creative Professional Activity

The University of Toronto's 1984 Working Group on Creative Professional Practice noted that "creative professional activity, in the University's current policies, is seen as a parallel, equivalent and clearly alternative criterion to that of traditional scholarship achievement or conventional research work" (p. 2). The difference between creative professional activity and traditional research is not in the quantity or intellectual quality of the activity, but in the nature of the outputs. The procedures for assessing creative professional activity, as a form of scholarship, are established in University policies governing appointments, merit, tenure, and promotion. An important step in all of these procedures is for the candidate to describe and provide relevant evidence of teaching, scholarship and service.

In terms of creative professional activity, it is important to note that:

- it is the responsibility of the candidate to recommend which components of her/his scholarly work should be assessed as creative professional activity.
- it is the responsibility of the candidate to describe the creative professional activity and provide relevant evidence of this activity in the dossier submitted for tenure and promotion decisions and the annual report submitted for PTR/Merit reviews.

The description of creative professional activity provided by the candidate should clearly state how this activity relates to the definition provided above. Examples of possible evidence that might be collected and submitted for a tenure or promotion dossier, or as part of an annual activity report for a PTR/Merit review, are provided later in this document.

Creative professional achievement should be assessed using one or more of the following criteria:

1. Discipline development, where the candidate has contributed to the development of the academic discipline through significant advances in the generation of knowledge, curriculum design, methodologies, relationships between the discipline and the broader community, and/or the organization of the discipline. Discipline development may be evident where the candidate has played a significant role in the creation or reform of an academic program, where the candidate's work has been recognized by relevant organizations, or where the candidate's role in advancing the discipline is widely acknowledged by peers.
2. Innovations in practice, where the candidate has contributed to innovations in practice that are widely recognized and disseminated, and/or have resulted in significant changes in practice, broadly defined.
3. Peer acknowledgement, where the candidate is recognized by peers as an exemplary and/or innovative practitioner; peer acknowledgement may take the form of requests for consultation or advice, membership on important advisory bodies, and the like.
4. Public impact, where the candidate's work has had an impact beyond her or his own profession; public impact may be evident through requests for consultation or advice from those outside the profession. In the case of artistic contributions, public impact may be evident when issues are raised to a broader audience and the candidate is invited to display or perform this work. Other evidence of public impact might include media coverage, reviews, and letters of support.

Examples of Evidence

It is the responsibility of the candidate to describe the nature of the creative professional activity and to provide appropriate evidence of these activities so that they can be assessed through the tenure, promotion, and merit processes. Given the diverse range of possible creative professional activity that might be associated with faculty at OISE/UT, it is impossible to prescribe a single type or form of evidence that would be associated with all cases. With this in mind, the following list is designed to provide possible examples of evidence that might be submitted in support of a case for CPA:

- representations of artistic contributions
- media materials that describe the impact of the candidate's creative professional activity
- letters from community members describing the candidate's work and the impact of this work
- letters of invitation to participate on important advisory committees
- letters requesting the candidate's advice
- letters of support illustrating the candidate's creative professional accomplishments
- technical reports
- policy documents
- minutes of meetings that assist in documenting the candidate's role in a particular activity
- documents that confirm the candidate's role in consultations
- publicity material related to artistic performances, presentations or the release of artistic work
- documents confirming innovative discipline development, including curriculum materials

Note: External letters of reference and support should come from acknowledged leaders in the candidate's field.