

Guidelines for Assessing COVID-19's Impact on the Assessment of Academic Performance

This document has been created as a companion document to *the Report of the "Micro" Task Force to Address COVID-19's Impact on Assessments of Academic Performance*. Its two principal objectives are:

- a) to support the ability of academic staff to communicate effectively, in contexts where their academic performance will be assessed, how COVID-19 may have affected their work and productivity; and
- b) facilitate the equitable assessment of academic performance by those responsible for making determinations of merit, reappointment, tenure, and promotion of academic staff (e.g., the Provost, Deans, Chairs/Directors, reappointment/tenure/promotion committees).

1) Governing principles

- Multiple factors have come into play since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that may have affected academic performance and productivity. In many cases, the impact of these factors will endure, potentially for several years, even after we are able to resume, to the fullest extent possible, pre-pandemic academic life.
- Academic staff seeking reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion will have an opportunity to explain the effects of COVID-19 on their files, documenting especially how pandemic conditions may have slowed down or disrupted their work plans or progress. Likewise, academic staff ought to be given a chance to explain any negative impact of COVID-19 on their work in the context of the annual merit exercise.
- Colleagues responsible for assessing academic performance for the purposes of merit, reappointment, tenure, and promotion must consider whether and to what extent the onset of COVID-19 conditions affected the staff member's academic performance. The pandemic's bearing on performance will differ from one colleague to the next. Hence, those charged with performance assessment must make a reasonable assessment of the materiality of the circumstances affecting academic performance noted in an annual activity report (merit) or dossier (reappointment/tenure/promotion) .

2) For academic staff: an opportunity to explain

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 adverse 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.

All colleagues will be permitted to include this one-page submission with:

- activity reports for the purpose of **merit**, for all academic staff for the year ahead (2023); and

- dossiers submitted for the purposes of **reappointment**, **tenure**, and **promotion**, for any colleague who was appointed to a pre-tenure position before August 2022.

The following is a **non-exhaustive list** of factors engendered by COVID-19 that might have adversely affected a colleague's work, which may be cited in these one-page submissions. The submission should refer to the individual situation of the staff member:

- a. increased family care responsibilities
- b. restricted access to research facilities, sites, or other resources
- c. slowed infrastructure development necessary to conduct research (including building, installation, repairs, and commissioning of equipment)
- d. delayed procurement

- 3) For Chairs and reappointment/tenure/promotion committee members: assessing with fairness and rigour

The explanations that colleagues provide pursuant to Point #2 above, in the contexts of merit and