

# Scholarly Activity: Professional Contributions – Promotion Guidelines

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Taken from the [2020 SAC Guide to Reappointments, Promotion and Tenure](#):

## **Scholarly Activity**

3.1.1 Under the Agreement, **scholarly activity** "means research of quality and significance, or, in appropriate fields, distinguished, creative or professional work of a scholarly nature; and the dissemination of the results of that scholarly activity."

3.1.2 Judgment of scholarly activity is based mainly on the quality and significance of an individual's contribution.

3.1.3 Evidence of scholarly activity varies among the disciplines. The Agreement gives consideration to different pathways to academic and scholarly excellence. Diverse substantive contributions to knowledge and methods of dissemination, as recognized within the field of inquiry, will be valued (see Article 4.03). Scholarly activity can take three forms: (1) traditional scholarship; (2) scholarship of teaching; and/or (3) professional contributions. Cases can be based on one or a combination of these forms but the form of scholarly activity should be determined in advance in discussion between the Head and the candidate so that appropriate referees are chosen and appropriate criteria are applied at all stages of the review.

## **Professional Contributions**

3.1.13 Such evidence as distinguished architectural, artistic or engineering design, or distinguished performance in the arts or professional fields, shall be considered in appropriate cases.

3.1.14 Cases where scholarly activity is through professional contributions may arise in any Department or Faculty.

3.1.15 Under the Agreement's provisions on "Scholarly Activity", creative or professional work of distinction ranks equally with scholarly research. Since it is not always easy to assess the quality of this work, the following notes are offered in order to assist in assembling the evidence concerning it and in evaluating it.

3.1.16 To make a positive addition to a case for reappointment, promotion or granting of tenure, professional contributions should not be of a routine or repetitive character. Merely practicing a profession as a typical consultant or professional might do is insufficient. Thus, consulting per se does not constitute a professional contribution of high quality.

3.1.17 Consider, for example, two extracts from submissions from Deans that give examples of professional activities that are not considered to be a form of scholarly activity:

“We encourage all staff members to maintain strong professional interests, but discourage them from undertaking consulting work which can readily be handled by the many well-established and very good...consultants in the regions.”

“We would regard, for example, the work of individuals who offer income tax advice, set or mark professional examinations, offer legal advice, or appraise property values as essentially routine, in that:

- their work is routinely available for a fee from professionals operating within the existing body of knowledge and rules,
- the work is unlikely to benefit substantially from the exercise of creative imagination.”

3.1.18 A definition of a meritorious professional contribution is more difficult to agree upon. Creativity has been mentioned as the criterion of excellence, but creativity is difficult to define. Nevertheless, it is felt that a positive case has been made if it is shown that an individual is a leader in a field or possesses outstanding stature or rare expertise in a field.

3.1.19 For example, evidence that might be viewed as demonstrating the leadership, rare expertise or outstanding stature expected in a professional contribution includes work with significant impact such as advice or policy analysis that results in: the drafting or implementation of new and significant legislation; an integrated and innovative summary of existing legislation and policy; or developing a new predictive model of property valuation whose predictive power has been empirically validated by market data.

3.1.20 A useful guideline for assessing the unique and significant stature and appropriate rank of faculty members who are making professional or artistic contributions is the following: promotion to Professor should require the candidate to have achieved an international reputation, and promotion to Associate Professor should require the candidate to have made an impact and have achieved a reputation well beyond UBC and preferably a national reputation.

3.1.21 Work that is not published in a refereed system that is relied on as making a significant contribution should be specifically referred to in referees’ letters so that its merit is clearly apparent. Where possible, this work should be made available to referees.

3.1.22 Written work (arising, for example, from consulting or other professional activity) must be available for peer assessment if it is to form part of the case for reappointment, promotion or tenure, and, as above, referees’ reports should assess its merits. Reports that are strictly confidential should not be listed as publications, although the professional activity which led to them (e.g., membership on a Commission) may well be significant evidence of the professional stature of the candidate and should be presented as such.

## **Faculty HR Team Notes & Examples:**

- As set out in *Collective Agreement* (2016 – 2019), “in professional or clinical studies scholarly activity may be evidenced by research on or the creation of...significant forms and applications of professional or clinical practice.”
- Being a competent health care practitioner is not sufficient. There must be evidence of changes to policy, decision-making, or clinical practice beyond their own medical practice, etc.

- Faculty of Medicine historic examples include:
  - significant contributions to public policy related to Aboriginal health through non-refereed publications.,
  - founding member of the Canadian Orthopaedic Trauma Society which became world renown for its orthopaedic outcomes research through randomized multicenter trials,
  - advocacy with the BC Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Association led to improve the administrative and legal approach to injured alcohol-impaired drivers who are treated in the Emergency Department
  - redefining best practice for care by developing a novel interdisciplinary approach for the treatment of vulvar pain syndromes.
  - development of a national competency framework for interprofessional collaboration.

## **Attached Resource**

Levinson W, Rothman AI, Phillipson E. Creative professional activity: an additional platform for promotion of faculty. Acad Med. 2006;81(6):568–570