

Guidelines for determining Arm's Length Status of Referees for Clinical Departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences

The determination of arm's length status of referees for the reappointment, tenure, and promotion (RTP) process for clinical faculty in Queen's Health Sciences is guided by the principle that such referees should not have been involved in producing the work that they would be asked to assess and should not be in a position to benefit from the RTP decision. Such benefits could be in the context of the referee's private, professional, business, or public interests. Additionally, faculty members from the same unit/division are generally not considered arm's-length because the reappointment or tenure decision of their colleagues could affect academic operations in their unit and have a significant effect on their working environment.

A non-exhaustive list of people who would hold a potential conflict of interest with an applicant, and thus would not be considered arm's length, includes those who:

- are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the applicant;
- are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the RTP decision;
- have had long-standing scholarly or personal differences with the applicant;
- are members of the same academic unit/division*;
- are closely professionally affiliated with the applicant as a result of having in the last five years:
 - been a supervisor or a trainee of the applicant*;
 - collaborated, published or shared funding with the applicant, or have plans to do so in the immediate future; or,
- feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the application.

*Members of the same academic unit and/or trainees of the applicant may be eligible to provide letters of recommendation via an alternative method, i.e., requests for colleague letters and student feedback.

If units require assistance in determining arm's length status for a referee, they can contact Queen's Health Sciences Staffing Office.