

Guidelines for Decanal & Vice-Provostial Review & Selection (September 2019)

1. Overview:

- a. Not more than 18 months, and not less than 12 months, before a sitting Dean's term (or Vice-Provost's term) expires, the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) will explore the incumbent's interest in being considered for re-appointment.¹ Following this discussion, the Provost's Office will set in motion the processes for striking a Review & Selection Committee in consultation with the Secretariat's Office and the Office of the incumbent Dean/Vice-Provost. At this time, the Provost will also ask the incumbent to prepare a Dean's/Vice-Provost's Report (see **3. Documentation**).
- b. The composition of Review & Selection Committees (see **2. Review & Selection Committee Composition and Principles** below), which are charged with undertaking the decanal review and appointment process, is established through University Senate and Board policy, as specifically outlined in "[Appointment Procedures for Senior Academic and Administrative Officers of the University.](#)"
- c. In instances where the incumbent is to be considered for re-appointment, the University's normal practice is to invite members of the campus community to provide written comment on the incumbent's leadership and administrative performance and/or to consider engaging External Reviewers to review the leadership of the incumbent (as well as the challenges and opportunities facing the Faculty/School/Portfolio) during the next five-year period.
- d. When the incumbent is in their second term or has indicated they are not interested in a second term, Western's normal practice is for the Review & Selection Committee to consider the merits of engaging External Reviewers to undertake a review of the state of the Faculty/School/Portfolio and the challenges and opportunities facing the unit during the next five-year period. If External Reviewers are engaged, the Provost, as Chair of the Review & Selection Committee, may determine the number and identity of the External Reviewers in consultation with the Committee, incumbent, and other members of senior administration. In some instances, it may prove more practical and timely for the Review & Selection Committee to conduct the decanal review internally.

¹ With some exceptions, normal practice at Western is to limit Deans and Vice-Provosts to two 5-year terms.

- e. It should be noted External Reviews are focused on leadership performance, *not* program quality. The Senate Subcommittees on Undergraduate Program Review (SUPR-U) and Graduate Program Review (SUPR-G) review the academic quality of Western's undergraduate and graduate programs on a regular basis in accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP). In Faculties offering professional degrees extensive accreditation reviews also take place on a regular basis. Executive summaries of the most recent program and accreditation reviews, combined with other key documents as outlined below, serve among several inputs that inform the decanal review and selection process.

2. Review & Selection Committee Composition and Principles:

- a. Each Review & Selection Committee has a specific composition, set out in "[Appointment Procedures for Senior Academic and Administrative Officers of the University](#)." This document also includes information on Committee procedure and the appointment terms of the academic administrative post. Committee members should be familiar with the appropriate clauses of the document. To facilitate this, the Chair/Provost will provide each member with a copy.
- b. In nominating and electing members to serve on Review & Selection Committees, it is important that all qualified persons be considered. Members of designated groups on campus (including women, visible minorities, Indigenous people, and persons with disabilities) should be encouraged to take an active role in seeking election to the Committees, and those who elect Committee members should ensure they have duly considered such prospective members at the time when the choice is made. Likewise, in departmentalized Faculties, consideration should be given to ensuring a diversity of representation from a cross-section of disciplines within the Faculty.
- c. Review & Selection Committees are invested by the University (by virtue of their election by Senate and Faculty Councils) with the mandate and authority to determine if incumbents should be recommended to the Board of Governors for re-appointment, or whether new candidates should be sought and recommended to the Board for appointment. *Invested with this mandate and authority, Review & Selection Committees have flexibility to determine the most appropriate processes through which new candidates will be identified, qualified and assessed.*
- d. Committee members do not, and cannot, represent a constituency in their role. This is true even if they have been elected, for example, by a vote of their Faculty Council. Each member is expected to serve the broad interest of the University in identifying and recruiting the best possible candidate. Placement on the Committee reflects the trust others have in that individual's judgment to make the best decision for the benefit of the Faculty/School/Portfolio and University as a whole.

- e. Committee proceedings are strictly confidential. This means conversations and documents exchanged in Committee meetings are not to be reported to others, and are not to be shared outside the Committee room. Confidentiality is necessary so that the Committee can receive and share information among its members frankly and without restraint. All Committee members must feel free to express themselves fully and openly to the rest of the group, with complete assurance that any remarks will be held in the strictest confidence.
- f. It is essential that bias be prevented, and eliminated if identified, in Review & Selection Committees. Bias may be thought of as a propensity or predisposition that could unduly weight a Committee member's judgment in such a way as to impair their ability to make an impartial, objective assessment of a candidate.
- g. Any member of a Committee aware of any reason why the impartiality and objectivity of his or her judgment might be cast in doubt should make this known to the Chair and ask to withdraw from deliberations. That is, a Committee member should act on the principle that, should their presence create a reasonable apprehension of bias, they should withdraw. However, to make certain that the element of bias does not go formally unchallenged prior to the Committee's deliberations, the Chair should pose the following question: *"Does any member of this Committee know of any reason why they or any other member of the Committee should not be party to these proceedings?"* If a person is identified, the Chair shall advise whether that Committee member should withdraw and, if so, determine the need to initiate the process for electing a new Committee member.

3. **Documentation:**

The following documents shall be compiled by the Provost's Office in partnership with the Dean's/Vice-Provost's Office and made available on a secure web platform (e.g., OWL) to the Committee and External Reviewers to help inform their work:

- a. Faculty/School/Portfolio Academic Plan, and Strategic Research Plan where one has been developed
- b. Most recent position profile for the Dean/Vice-Provost
- c. The last External Reviewer's Report and Dean's/Vice-Provost's Response produced for the Faculty/School/Portfolio
- d. Publicly available data on Faculty/School/Portfolio budgets, research revenue, enrollments and staffing for the previous five-year period

- e. Executive Summaries of SUPR-U and SUPR-G program reviews, accreditation appraisals, and, in the case of departmentalized Faculties, Department/School reviews conducted as part of the Chair/Director review and selection process.
- f. Comments solicited and collected from members of the Faculty/School/Portfolio community on the incumbent's administrative performance and leadership qualities.
- g. Dean's/Vice-Provost's Report

For incumbents being considered for re-appointment, the Dean's/Vice-Provost's Report shall be up to 10 pages in length, with the first half of the report focused on describing the unit's progress in pursuit of its stated goals (e.g., as articulated in the Faculty Academic Plan), and how the incumbent has contributed toward the unit's achievements.

The first section of the report should provide commentary on aspects of the incumbent's leadership skills and style, such as: communicating and building support for vision; facilitating collegiality and influencing workplace culture; managing fiscal and human resources; engaging key stakeholders and fundraising; etc. The latter section should focus on opportunities and challenges facing the Faculty/School/Portfolio, and the incumbent's aspirations for the unit if re-appointed.

For incumbents not considered for re-appointment, the Dean's/Vice-Provost's Report shall be 5 to 10 pages in length, focused on a summary of recent unit achievements and a description of the opportunities and challenges facing the unit.

4. Scope of External Reviews:

- a. As noted above, there may be a significant amount of documentation arising out of a wide range of assessments and reviews of the unit's programs that will inform the decanal review and selection process. Therefore, it is not expected that External Reviewers will duplicate program or accreditation review efforts, but rather that they will focus primarily on the assessment of three matters:
 - i. Where the incumbent is interested in a further term, the leadership and administrative performance of the incumbent;
 - ii. The level to which a research-intensive culture has been promoted and supported, including an assessment of the success and impact of the Faculty's/School's research/scholarship activity;

- iii. Leadership characteristics and experience of the ideal candidate best suited to serve as Dean/Vice-Provost during the next 5 to 10-year period, given the state of the Faculty/School/Portfolio and the challenges and opportunities it faces.
- b. Other issues to include in the scope of the work of the External Reviewers in a particular case will depend on the unit concerned, other types of reviews that have been conducted during the incumbent's term, and the Selection Committee's own assessment of the incumbent's performance.
- c. After identifying and recruiting External Reviewers, the Provost will provide terms of reference and timelines for completing the review. The Provost's Office will also coordinate all aspects of the External Reviewers' site visit. Once charged, the External Reviewers will receive the following documentation:
 - i. Terms of reference specific to the requirements of the External Review
 - ii. External Reviewers' report and Dean's/Vice-Provost's response from the last External Review
 - iii. The University's Strategic Plan and Research Plan
 - iv. Most recent academic and strategic research plans of the unit
 - v. Executive summaries of program/accreditation/dept./school reviews
 - vi. Publicly available data on the University budget, plus data on research revenue, enrollments and staffing for the previous five-year period
 - vii. Dean's/Vice-Provost's Report, described above
 - viii. Most recent position profile of the Dean/Vice-Provost
 - ix. A summary of written comments solicited/collected from the University community in relation to the leadership review process.
 - x. Schedule of meetings for the External Review (typically two days on campus)
 - xi. Other documentation as may be requested by the External Reviewers and agreed upon by the Provost in consultation with the Review & Selection Committee

- d. The scope and structure of the site visit will be outlined by the Provost's Office, in consultation with the incumbent and Selection Committee, and the Provost will ensure representatives of the unit's key stakeholder groups (e.g., faculty, staff, students, university leaders, etc.) are invited for an opportunity to provide input.
- e. At the end of their visit, External Reviewers will provide a preliminary oral report of their initial impressions to the Review & Selection Committee, pending later submission of a formal written report.
- f. The External Reviewers' written report will be due within two weeks of the site visit. The report will be submitted to the Provost, and may contain recommendations, criticisms, suggestions, and comments within the scope of the invited review.
- g. As the report may contain sensitive comments that identify specific members of the Faculty/School/Portfolio, including the incumbent, or reference to other highly sensitive matters, the report will be held in strict confidence and made available only to the Provost and members of the Selection Committee.
- h. The Provost may, however, request that an executive summary of the full report be produced as a means to sharing high-level information of the report in public forums.
- i. In some instances, the Provost may also request to receive a separate private report from the External Reviewers that will remain confidential to the Provost.
- j. The Provost will invite the incumbent Dean/Vice-Provost to provide a response to the External Reviewers' report as a means to providing further context that will inform the Review & Selection Committee's next stage of deliberations.
- k. As the External Reviewers' report and Dean's/Vice-Provost's response are documents intended to be advisory in nature to the Provost and the Review & Selection Committee, the two documents will be combined as a single document that remains strictly confidential to the Provost and Committee.
- l. The Dean/Vice-Provost is responsible for the consideration and, where appropriate, implementation of recommendations advanced during the External Review process. The accountability for acting upon the results of the review forms part of the annual Planning Process for Faculties/Schools/Portfolios, as is described in the Planning Guidelines provided to academic unit leaders in the fall term of each academic year.

5. Advertising Decanal Positions:

- a. Upon completing its review, if the Review & Selection Committee determines a full external search should be undertaken, the leadership position shall be advertised internally (e.g., posted on Western's career website) and external media outlets determined by the Committee. Advertising is part of a more general principle that all suitable candidates — including Deans and Vice-Provosts from smaller schools, associate deans, department heads and others with significant leadership experience — should be actively pursued and encouraged to let their names stand for the position.
- b. University policy requires that an incumbent be considered a candidate until they indicate a disinterest in serving another term by standing for consideration as part of the external decanal search process. The status of the incumbent Dean/Vice-Provost must be considered in the early stages of the process.
- c. The Provost's Office will ensure that all the appropriate advertising for any position has taken place and that all pertinent information has been included, including a clearly specified deadline for receipt of applications. Copy shall be forwarded by the Provost's Office for inclusion on the University's website. Advertising in external media will also be placed by the Provost's Office (in instances where a search consultant has been hired, advertising placement may be coordinated through the consultant). It is essential that no suitable candidate be excluded from serious consideration. A special effort should be made to identify candidates who might not immediately come to the minds of the Committee members, and conscious effort should be made to encourage members of designated groups who have suitable qualifications to stand. In accordance with University policy, advertisements will contain the following statement: *"Western is committed to employment equity and diversity in the workplace and welcomes applications from women, members of racialized groups / visible minorities, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, persons with any sexual orientation, and persons of any gender identity or gender expression. Accommodations are available for applicants with disabilities throughout the recruitment process by contacting our search consultant. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, all qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and Permanent Residents will be given priority."*

6. Candidate Identification and Interviews:

- a. At the Provost's discretion, an external search consultant may be engaged to support the Selection Committee's work in identifying and interviewing suitable candidates, including position profile and advertising development.

- b. Once a comprehensive pool of potential candidates has been identified through advertising and the work of the Committee and search consultant, the Committee will typically review the CVs of all viable applicants with a view to identifying a list of candidates to invite to a closed interview with the Committee. This first round of candidate interviews with the Committee will be held in strict confidence; the identity of the candidates will not be shared or publicized with anyone outside the Committee. Typically, these first-round interviews will all be held in quick succession at an off-campus location to facilitate confidentiality and a timely comparison of candidates.
- c. On the basis of the candidates' first-round interview performance, the Selection Committee will determine who may be invited back for a further round of interviews and/or stakeholder meetings. The format of these follow-up interviews/meetings will be determined by the Committee — including whether or not it would be appropriate to organize them within a public forum so that candidates may engage with relevant stakeholder groups, or whether the process should continue to remain confidential to the Committee.
- d. In instances where stakeholders outside the Committee have opportunity to engage with the candidate(s), those stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide written comments about their impressions of the candidate(s) to the Selection Committee. These comments will be received by the Committee in strict confidence, and the comments will be used to inform the Committee in its next stage of deliberations.

7. Decanal/Vice-Provostial Appointments and Announcements:

- a. Following the candidate interview process, the objective of the Selection Committee's next stage of deliberations is to reach consensus on a preferred candidate to recommend for appointment to the Board of Governors, through the President & Vice-Chancellor, at the request of the Provost & Vice-President (Academic)— or to reach consensus that the search for a suitable candidate should continue or possibly be deferred to a later date.
- b. Once a preferred candidate is identified, the Provost will conduct negotiations with the successful candidate, facilitate the appropriate approval of the appointment through the President and Board of Governors, and coordinate the public announcement to the campus community and media.

8. Example of Critical Path:

TIME FRAME	TASK
December-January	Provost discusses pending review/selection process with sitting Dean/Vice-Provost
February-March	Provost initiates the Selection Committee members election process within the Faculty/School/Portfolio; Senate nomination and appointment processes are also initiated through the Secretariat's Office; Provost requests Dean's/Vice-Provost's Report
April-May	Decanal Selection Committee members nominated and appointed by Senate and Faculty Council
May-June	Committee meetings begin; unit review documents gathered; Dean's/Vice-Provost's Report submitted; organization of External Review and campus community consultation begins, including identification and recruitment of External Reviewers
August-September	External Reviews and consultations with campus community get underway; external search consultant selected by Provost if the committee is known to be going straight to search
October-November	External Review completed; decision to re-appoint the sitting Dean and announce, <i>or</i> proceed to external search; external search consultant selected and engaged by Provost; advertising and candidate identification initiated
December-January	Candidate identification completed; candidate interviews initiated
February-March	Candidate interviews completed; Committee deliberations conclude and preferred candidate recommendation made to President/Board or decision made to continue search for suitable candidate; Provost negotiations with candidate; Board of Governors review and approval
March-May	Decanal appointment publicly announced
July-September	Decanal appointment comes into effect