

# QSSET for Heads and Deans

## Using QSSET

### Using QSSET in the Evaluation of Teaching: For Heads, Deans, and RTP Communities

The purpose of this document is to assist Heads, Deans, RTP committees and any others who are the evaluators of teaching per Article 29 of the Collective Agreement, in using QSSET responses as part of the evidence of teaching effectiveness they must consider in merit, renewal, tenure, promotion and continuing appointment decisions.

### QSSET and the Evaluation of Teaching

Article 29.3.1 provides that a survey approved by QUFA and the University, now QSSET, will be used in the assessment and evaluation of teaching. However, it is important for evaluators to recognize that this survey is not in itself an assessment and/or evaluation of teaching but one source of evidence which Heads, Deans, members of RTP committees and others will consider in the course of assessing and evaluating teaching.<sup>i</sup> The assessment of teaching as it is described in

**responsible for the design and presentation of the course materials. In such cases, appropriate questions under “Course” should be considered as well.**

may also be influenced by the Instructor's own interpretation of the results which the Instructor has supplied in a teaching dossier.

Finally, it is important to note that scholarship regarding student evaluations of teaching indicates that responses can be biased with respect to factors not relevant to teaching quality. With respect to gender bias in student evaluations of teaching, research findings are complex and often contradictory, but the general conclusion is that when biases exist, it is female instructors who are disadvantaged.<sup>ii</sup> Further, it appears that students have different expectations of male and female instructors based upon gender stereotypes.<sup>iii</sup> For example, female instructors are generally rated higher on questions pertaining to interpersonal skills, however, when they are perceived to be weak in this area, they are rated more harshly than male counterparts. Gender biases have been shown to exist both in the quantitative survey items and the comments. It should be noted that while gender bias is the most studied, other forms of bias based on race, attractiveness, age, and accent have been shown to exist. The problem of bias is intractable because the bias lies in the students, rather than in the survey tool itself. Evaluators of teaching need to be mindful of potential bias when considering QSSET results.

---

<sup>i</sup> It is the Instructor's responsibility to provide materials that support a full assessment. In all RTP processes save Renewal of Tenure Track appointments the burden of demonstrating that the required standard has been met is on the Member. In the case of Annual/Biennial reviews, 28.2.4 requires the Member to provide "sufficient detail of activities and their outcomes to enable the Unit Head to assess the Member's performance" and where the Member fails to do that the Unit Head is to base their assessment and evaluation on the "information reasonably available" to them.

<sup>ii</sup> MacNell, L., Driscoll, A., & Hunt, A. N. (2015). What's in a name: Exposing gender bias in student ratings of teaching. *Innovative Higher Education*, 40(4), 291-303. Young, S., Rush, L., & Shaw, D. (2009). Evaluating Gender Bias in Ratings of University Instructors' Teaching Effectiveness. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 3(2), 1-14.

<sup>iii</sup> Mitchell, K. M., & Martin, J. (2018). Gender bias in student evaluations. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(3), 648-652.