

Religious Education Rank and Status Document

(revised Jan. 12/11)

The mission of Religious Education at Brigham Young University is to assist individuals in their efforts to come unto Christ by teaching the scriptures, doctrine, and history of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ through classroom instruction, gospel scholarship, and outreach to the larger community.

Membership in the Brigham Young University faculty community is a privilege and a blessing. Our feelings toward the University and Religious Education are informed by knowing that the resources we use to feed and house our families, teach classes, and conduct research are consecrated by the faith and devotion of those who sacrifice to make those resources available. In Religious Education, we express appreciation for our God-given talents, financial resources, and time by using them wisely in the service of others. Citizenship, teaching, and scholarship are acts of discipleship, and thus we engage in them with a spirit of consecration.

Rank and status review—initiated midway through the third year of employment, after the fifth year, and when applying for promotion—is an opportunity for faculty members to evaluate progress, celebrate strengths, and identify areas in need of improvement. While the process serves as the basis for decisions regarding retention and promotion, it also guides in defining the course for a productive and happy career. At the appropriate time according to University and college calendars, faculty members prepare and submit their portfolios, and administrators, review committees, and peers evaluate them. Professorial faculty will be evaluated in the areas of citizenship, teaching, and scholarship. Professional faculty will be evaluated primarily in citizenship and teaching.

Rank and status decisions in Religious Education are governed by this document and by the University Rank and Status Policy (<http://policy.byu.edu/view/index.php?p=103>). Faculty members applying for review, and committee members and administrators are to make decisions based on both documents.

I. Citizenship

The Principles

Citizenship is a manifestation of charity, service, discipleship, and a commitment to the success of others, colleagues, the University, and the academy. Citizenship is a fundamental expectation of the faculty in Religious Education. Members of the faculty live their personal lives and perform their professional responsibilities in accordance with the teachings and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are loyal to the leadership of the Church and respectful of colleagues, students, and others with whom they interact. They support the missions of Brigham Young University and Religious Education. They are actively engaged in dialogue, work, and service to improve their department, college and university. Dedicated to enhancing faculty collegiality and constructive association, they actively participate in department, college, and university functions and decisions. They willingly accept and fulfill

assignments within the department, college, and university. They give service to their disciplines and the academy. They abide by and support the Honor Code as “example[s] of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

The Measures

Religious Education faculty members participate and contribute to the life of the University and their respective disciplines. They serve without the need to be “compelled,” and they are “anxiously engaged in a good cause and do many things of their own free will” (see Doctrine and Covenants 58:26–27; 2 Nephi 2:26). Citizenship may be evaluated by criteria such as those listed below. For additional information, see section 3.2 in the BYU Rank and Status Policy at <http://policy.byu.edu/view/index.php?p=103>.

- Participating in activities that strengthen the university, including administrative service, committee service, assignments in the Jerusalem Center and Study Abroad, and the teaching of General Education, Honors and interdisciplinary courses
- Encouraging, advising, and collaborating with colleagues, including both formal and informal mentoring of new members of the faculty
- Participating in rank and status reviews, curriculum review and development, hiring processes, and student advising
- Providing peer review of teaching and scholarship
- Giving service to the profession, including holding offices and committee assignments in professional associations, organizing professional meetings and panels, editing journals and newsletters, serving on editorial boards, and serving as referees of scholarship
- Providing professional expertise in service to the community and the Church
- Attending and participating in department, college, and university meetings, devotionals, forums, convocations, etc.
- Working to improve the college and the department by participating in councils and discussions and providing input

II. Teaching

The Principles

“The high quality education of students is, and should be, the most important activity of Brigham Young University faculty. Good university teachers are themselves eager learners who imbue their teaching with the excitement of learning. They care about their students. They are enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge with students and helping them learn. They have high standards, set clear expectations, and hold students to high levels of academic performance. They

are well prepared and well organized, and they make good use of class time. They prepare well-aligned and well-designed syllabi, course materials, assignments, and examinations. They provide helpful evaluations of student work in a timely manner. They are consistently available to help students at least during reasonable designated consultation hours outside class. They are always engaged in the process of improving their teaching. They master the content of their courses and stay current with the literature and techniques of their disciplines. They are mentors and role models to students. They provide an education that is spiritually strengthening, intellectually enlarging, character building, and leading to lifelong learning and service” (BYU Rank and Status Policy 3.3.1).

The Measures

Teachers need to have an established record of high quality teaching. At different seasons of their careers faculty may have different assignments. Accordingly, administrators and review committees making rank and status decisions should be sensitive to such things as teaching assignments, the number of students, the number of preparations, committee and administrative assignments, and other expectations. The items listed below are among those that may be considered in the evaluation of teaching, recognizing that no one item will be fully indicative of a teacher’s contributions. For additional information, see section 3.3 in the BYU Rank and Status Policy at <http://policy.byu.edu/view/index.php?p=103>.

- Course materials—characterized by carefully defined student learning outcomes and well-aligned syllabi, instructional materials, assignments and assessments
- Steps taken to improve teaching—staying current in one’s discipline, studying teaching techniques, presenting at or attending seminars, workshops, and conferences on teaching and implementing improvements
- Courses and sections taught
- Supervision of graduate students as a committee chair or member
- Peer evaluations—review of teaching portfolio, classroom visits by faculty colleagues
- Student evaluations
- Products of high quality teaching and mentoring—evidence of student achievement, students’ scholarly or creative works
- Grade point averages reflective of high academic standards
- Other evidence of quality teaching—teaching awards, availability to students, effectiveness in mentoring students

III. Scholarship

The Principles

Religious Education shares in the academic expectations and scholarly obligations of all other faculty at Brigham Young University which is to be engaged in quality scholarly endeavor within an accredited-university academic setting. These expectations are spelled out in the University Rank and Status Policy as follows:

“[Faculty] must be intellectually alive and current in their disciplines, not only through participating in the substantive developments of the discipline, but also through constantly honing the skills and tools of scholarship used in the discipline. In most disciplines this means that faculty will bring to their work the rigor of writing, subject the work to the criticism of scholarly peers, and share their insights with colleagues and students. A scholar is characterized by devotion to discovering and learning, by rigor and thoroughness in that learning, and by the determination to profess what is learned” (3:4:1).

“Because of diversity among the academic disciplines and because of the variety of intellectual tasks with which faculty are concerned, a faculty member's scholarship may take different forms, so long as the work is of high quality. Scholarship includes, among other things, the discovery of new knowledge and original insights that add to the world's body of knowledge and understanding; the application of existing knowledge to the solution of practical problems; the integration of existing knowledge through interdisciplinary work; studying and improving the presentation of existing knowledge; and aesthetic or intellectual expression reflecting achievement in creative or performing arts” (3:4:2).

“Professorial faculty (and professional faculty whose responsibilities include scholarship) are expected to demonstrate consistent productivity of high quality scholarship over their entire careers. The scholar's record shows a growing body of works that have stood the test of exposure to and evaluation by other scholars in the discipline. . . . Both quality and quantity are relevant in assessing a faculty member's scholarly record. It should be recognized that one truly exceptional scholarly or creative work may be more important than several others” (University Rank and Status Policy, 3:4:3).

The Measures

Religious Education faculty research and publish in many different disciplines and to a wide variety of audiences; however, gospel scholarship constitutes the primary focus of our endeavors. Broadly interpreted the term ‘gospel scholarship’ as used herein may be defined as *academically rigorous, peer-reviewed* research including: interpretive studies and commentaries of Latter-day Saint scriptural texts and revelations, scriptural history, archaeology, Latter-day Saint history, social sciences, doctrine, genealogy and family history studies, informed and well-researched inspirational writing, and gospel-related pedagogical studies.

These categories of peer-reviewed gospel scholarship and related disciplines are further defined as follows:

- textbooks, monographs, book chapters, articles, abstracts, translations, and other informed studies published in reputable, academic venues, which contribute to a growing body of knowledge in such fields as ancient scriptural studies, Latter-day Saint Church History and doctrine, document analyses, comparative religions, sociological studies, marriage and family studies and other related topics which target both professional scholars and educated non-specialists;
- original, edifying, insightful and faith-promoting writings and interpretations of profound and enduring quality which are inspired by scripture, doctrine, the teachings of the prophets, tested and reliable commentaries, and one's personal insights, teaching, and research;
- well-informed, highly instructive pedagogical writings in how to teach the Bible, Book of Mormon, and other Latter-day Saint scriptures, prophetic teachings, Church history, family living principles and practices, and other related gospel topics;
- genealogically-based research and writings of specific families, countries, and peoples; instructions on family history research and temple work; and helpful reference guides to materials pertaining to family history research, sources, and information

Other measures and evidences of scholarship may include:

- research published in credible peer-reviewed venues in disciplines other than gospel scholarship;
- peer-reviewed or juried creative works such as paintings, public performances, video productions, exhibits, published poetry, and personal essays;
- scholarly electronic publications or publications in formats other than print that reflect the same high standards of scholarship required in printed works;
- presentations at academic and other professional conferences;
- awards or other recognition for scholarship

Rank and Status committees will evaluate scholarship largely in light of the above measures. Following University guidelines and expectations, over the course of a career a faculty member in Religious Education will usually publish in a variety of venues and categories, typically on average *at least one quality peer-reviewed publication per year*. As research interests intensify with increasing expectations from one rank to another, by the time one applies for full professor he or she will show evidence of a sustained, substantial and consequential research effort evidenced not only by the quantity of publications but also by their superior quality. Writing as a part of a Church assignment is typically included under "Citizenship" for

rank and status purposes. While presentations at academic or professional conferences are indicative of scholarly interest and activity, they are not a substitute for publications.

With respect to scholarly outlets, the reputation and selectivity of scholarly presses and journals are relevant in evaluating the quality and impact of scholarship. These may include journal impact ratings, disciplinary rankings, acceptance rates, quality of the editorial board, evidence of critical peer review, distribution data, and other related factors.

When candidates do not publish in nationally and internationally recognized peer-reviewed scholarly presses and journals, which is sometimes the case with gospel scholarship, the further removed that scholarship is from this format, the greater the responsibility of the faculty member and the department to provide specific documentation of substantial peer review and other critical evaluations that verify the quality of the work (see 3.4.4.1E).