

Guidelines for Soliciting External Letters of Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure Dossiers

The guiding documents for soliciting external letters of evaluation for promotion and tenure are [AR 2:1-1](#), and the annual [promotion and tenure memo from the Provost](#). Based on these documents, some general guidelines for soliciting letters from external evaluators are:

1. Selection of evaluators

- The chair is responsible for selecting and contacting all evaluators
- Two letters should be from evaluators suggested by the candidate
- Four letters should be from evaluators not suggested by the candidate
- Evaluators should be recognized experts in their disciplines
- Evaluators should be at peer or benchmark research institutions
- Evaluators should stand at arms-length from the candidate (e.g. not a dissertation advisor or post-doctoral supervisor)
- Candidates may provide a list of reviewers to avoid due to conflict of interest, but the chair is not required to abide by these suggestions
- If evaluators do not fall within guidelines 1d-1g, the chair must address the reasons for their selection of the reviewer within his or her own letter of evaluation

2. Within the letter of solicitation, evaluators should be reminded of the following items:

- Professional judgement of a candidate's performance is to be offered without malice or fear of retribution
- The courts have made clear that judgements that are professionally rendered and free of personal bias are protected
- Letters are confidential, and will be handled confidentially
- Upon request, a candidate does have the right to review letters included in his or her dossier
- All letters from external evaluators will be made available to the consulted faculty within the candidate's department, for consideration in writing their own letters of evaluation. The exception to this is external letters which are received too late for the department faculty to consider, in which case, the external letter will not be included in the dossier

3. The chair should ask evaluators for the following items:

- A brief biographical sketch, not a CV
- The evaluator's analysis of the candidate's contributions in their areas of DOE assignment. Ask for a substantive, professional judgment of the value and significance of the candidate's performance
- An opinion on the extent to which the candidate's accomplishments have advanced the candidate's scholarly field
- An opinion on the significance of the venues in which the candidate has been published, the grants the candidate has received, and the Extension work performed
- An opinion on whether or not the candidate meets or exceeds the CAFE department's requirements for promotion and tenure as outlined in the department's [statement of evidences](#) as applicable. Note that it is not helpful for evaluators to offer an opinion on if the candidate would meet promotion standards at the evaluator's institution
- A description of any professional or personal relationships they have had with the candidate

4. Department chairs are responsible for sending the following items to external evaluators:

- Solicitation letter
- Candidate's CV
- Candidate's personal statements
- Samples of work (i.e. publications)
- [Department Statement of Evidences](#), when required
- The AR governing the candidate's title series (Regular- [2:2-1](#); Extension- [2:3](#); Special- [2:4](#); Research- [2:5](#); Clinical- [2:6](#))