

College of Science Promotion and Tenure External Letters

7-1-2021

A. Professorial Candidates.

According to the Faculty Handbook external letters evaluating the candidate's dossier should be solicited from leaders in the candidate's field. The letters should not come from co-authors, co-principal investigators, or former advisors, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook. The candidate should suggest the names of 5-8 external evaluators. An additional list of external evaluators is then developed using a unit-defined process. The unit head or their designee solicits 8 letters (total) from the two lists. No more than half of the letters in the final dossier may be from the list suggested by the candidate. The candidate should not contact the potential reviewers to ask for support, all contact in relation with the promotion and tenure case should come from the unit head or designee.

The university rules are strict on selecting letter writers. Although this process can be tedious, it is not complicated. After the appropriate *potential* external reviewers are identified, it is a good procedure to write them in spring and ask them if they are available for reviewing a dossier in the time frame set by the department. If they answer no, this correspondence does not have to be listed in the dossier. If they answer yes, all further correspondence has to be tracked and mentioned in the dossier. They are now an external reviewer. There are many reasons a person is not able to help with a review, and assuming that they do so because they have a negative opinion of the candidate's work is not correct.

External letters for professorial candidates are required to be from outside OSU. They should in general be from professionals at the full professor level or with equivalent status, unless the person can give very specific information for the case under consideration.

Retired OSU faculty members are not external, in particular if they have an emeritus appointment. They should not be asked to write letters for professorial cases.

It is required to include the log of all contacts with external reviewers. There should be a one paragraph description of the external reviewer, including why they were selected, and from which list they were. A sample letter to the external reviewers has to be included. If the candidate was awarded an extension to the tenure clock, that should be mentioned together with the statement that the dossier should be evaluated against the normal time frame, not the extended time frame. The external reviewers should be asked to use letterhead and list their titles. External letters should be signed.

On occasion, the academic unit may be in possession of 4 letters from the candidate's list and only 3 letters from the academic unit's list; this can occur unintentionally and for a variety of reasons. When this occurs, the academic unit should attempt to secure an additional letter from

the academic unit's list. However, when the situation is such that there is concern about the quality of the letter and/or potential bias that may be introduced by a "last minute" request made relatively close to the unit's P&T process deadline, the academic unit should *remove the last letter received from an external evaluator on the candidate's list*.

Decisions made to exclude any letters received from external evaluators must be noted in the records with an explanation for the removal decision and a detailed description of the process used to identify which letter was to be removed.

B. Instructor Candidates.

For Instructors four letters of evaluation are to be obtained. In general, the letters must be from individuals who hold a rank at or above the level for which the candidate is being considered, or an experience level equivalent to such a rank. Ability to objectively evaluate is the driver in selecting evaluators. Evaluators may be internal or external to OSU. Internal evaluators may be individuals who have worked with the candidate but can objectively evaluate the candidate's dossier.

External reviewers for instructors can be internal to OSU. *The college requires* that they should be external to the department and be mostly from reviewers who have a strong teaching experience. Ability to objectively evaluate is the driver in selecting evaluators. Internal evaluators may be individuals who have worked with the candidate but can objectively evaluate the candidate's dossier.

Retired OSU faculty members are not external, in particular if they have an emeritus appointment. They should not be asked to write letters for instructor cases in their home department.

Instructor candidates must submit a list of four evaluators who meet the criteria stated above and, from this list, two letters will be generated for the final dossier. If additional names are needed, these will be obtained from the candidate by the unit head. The other evaluators are to be selected by the unit according to practices determined within the unit. All letters must be requested by the unit head or designee. The candidate should not contact the potential reviewers to ask for support, all contact in relation with the promotion case should come from the unit head or designee.

Provide a brief (paragraph) description of the outside evaluators that makes it clear that they meet the criteria. Additional detail must be provided if an evaluator is not of a rank at or above the level for which the candidate is being considered, if they have been suggested based on experience level equivalency, and/or if they are internal to OSU and have worked with the candidate. Clearly indicate which outside reviewers were chosen by the candidate. If an evaluator was suggested by both the candidate and others, that evaluator will be considered among the candidate's pool of evaluators unless there is clear indication in the description of that evaluator why he/she should be included in the "other evaluator" pool. In the final dossier, no more than half of the letters of evaluation can be from the list suggested by the candidate.

On occasion, the academic unit may be in possession of 3 letters from the either the candidate's list or the academic unit's list; this can occur unintentionally and for a variety of reasons. The academic unit should *remove the last letter received from an external evaluator on the list*.

Decisions made to exclude any letters received from external evaluators must be noted in the records with an explanation for the removal decision and a detailed description of the process used to identify which letter was to be removed.

C. FRA and Research Associate Candidates.

According to the university guidelines the current process for these groups is the same as for instructors. For this group the procedure is far too complicated. A very important opinion should be expressed by the evaluation of the direct supervisor. The direct supervisor is required to contribute to section VII of the dossier. As a result, the supervisor should not take part in the unit discussions. The unit committee, however, does not have access to these administrative letters. Therefore, the unit committee should call in the direct supervisor to provide information.

The university allows external letters for this group to be from inside the department. The college has no additional restrictions.

FRA and Research Associate candidates must submit a list of four evaluators who meet the criteria stated above and, from this list, two letters will be generated for the final dossier. If additional names are needed, these will be obtained from the candidate by the unit head. The other evaluators are to be selected by the unit according to practices determined within the unit. All letters must be requested by the unit head or designee. The candidate should not contact the potential reviewers to ask for support, all contact in relation with the promotion case should come from the unit head or designee.

Provide a brief (paragraph) description of the outside evaluators that makes it clear that they meet the criteria. Additional detail must be provided if an evaluator is not of a rank at or above the level for which the candidate is being considered, if they have been suggested based on experience level equivalency, and/or if they are internal to OSU and have worked with the candidate. Clearly indicate which outside reviewers were chosen by the candidate. If an evaluator was suggested by both the candidate and others, that evaluator will be considered among the candidate's pool of evaluators unless there is clear indication in the description of that evaluator why he/she should be included in the "other evaluator" pool. In the final dossier, no more than half of the letters of evaluation can be from the list suggested by the candidate.

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