

P&T Guidelines for External Reviewers

Letters of evaluation should not be solicited from individuals currently employed by the University of Florida or persons previously employed in the past 10 years whose term at UF overlapped that of the candidate.

A copy of a typical letter requesting the letters of evaluation should appear in the packet. All solicited letters received must be included in the OPT packet.

The focus of the letters of evaluation by qualified external reviewers should be to present evidence of recognized contributions and not simply to support or recommend. Letters should evaluate the candidate's record holistically to determine if it supports the claim that the candidate's work has made a significant contribution to the field, as well as being nationally and/or internationally recognized. All letters of evaluation completed by external reviewers must be in English in the original version.

Letters of evaluation should normally be written by faculty of higher rank than the candidate is seeking. Letters from faculty who are at the top of the candidate's field and at the very best institutions are particularly valued. Each case will want the highest ranking and most influential letters (peer or aspirational peer institution or state/government agency) that can opine on whether the candidate meets the criteria.

Only faculty in non-tenure-accruing or non-permanent status titles whose assignments have been solely in teaching and service or whose promotion will be decided based almost solely on their performance in teaching and service may substitute some or all of the letters of evaluation from within the University for the outside evaluations.

University reviewers consider conflict of interest when assessing the weight given to a letter of evaluation. It is therefore important that the candidate and department/center administrators realize that the quality and independence of the letters and their writers play an important role in tenure and promotion decisions. Letters from individuals who have or have had a personal, professional, or mentoring relationship with the candidate could create a conflict of interest. Similarly, internal letters for candidates in non-tenure accruing or non-permanent status titles (as described above) that come solely from within the unit may create a perception of conflict of interest. The guiding principle is whether the individual stands to benefit from the success of the candidate, either professionally or personally. In general, for example, this includes those who have shared a common grant or coauthored a publication within the previous 5 years, or those who served as dissertation advisor or post-doctoral supervisor, or were close collaborators. Exceptions can be made in the case of very large national clinical trials where multiple authors have a very distant relationship or in the case of serving on national research or service panels. This is not meant to exclude individuals who have a familiarity with the candidate because of professional contact in a community of scholars.

A biographical sketch of each reviewer will be included in the nominee's packet. To aid in the preparation of the bio-sketches, the department/center may wish to ask for copies

of the evaluator's *curriculum vitae* when soliciting the external letter of evaluation.

The bio sketch must indicate whether the reviewer came from the Chair's or the candidate's list.

It is not appropriate to argue that a discipline or field is so small that everyone in that community presents a demonstrable conflict of interest and, would, therefore, be excluded by this approach. Scholarship of the quality that is commensurate with success in the promotion and tenure process should have a substantial impact, beyond any small community of scholars.

If a reviewer has a potential conflict of interest, the Chair must explain the rationale for using that reviewer.