

Promotion and/or Tenure Guidance

#4: Initial Solicitation of External Reviewers



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

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Once the list of prospective reviewers has been constructed (cf guidance document #3), draw from this list to recruit reviewers.

Typically, there will be three communications with those selected to serve as an external reviewer; one example of each communication should be placed in the dossier.

- Inquiry regarding availability to serve
- Formal request for evaluation
- Acknowledgement of receipt of letter

Since 6-7 external evaluations are typically desired (with an absolute minimum of 5), it is common to send an initial inquiry to perhaps 8-10 prospective reviewers, with the assumption that some of those contacted will say no. However, exercise your best professional judgment in this – if scholars in your discipline are generally receptive to such requests, or conversely if scholars in your discipline are notorious for their unwillingness to serve as reviewers, adjust the number of initial inquiries accordingly.

If a prospective reviewer declines to serve as a reviewer:

- Retain a copy of that reviewer's declination message, to serve as required documentation in the dossier. If the declination is received orally – *e.g.*, by telephone – provide a note in the dossier to that effect, including any reason(s) stated for the declination.
- Contact additional prospective reviewers in order to ensure timely receipt of an appropriate complement of reviews, ensuring that a clear majority of the reviewers do not appear only on the candidate's list of suggested reviewers.

A template for the initial inquiry regarding availability to serve as an external reviewer is provided on the following page. Note that this inquiry is most commonly sent via e-mail to prospective reviewers. Modification is acceptable, but it is very important not to “lead the witness” – avoid making statements in the vein of, “We are trying to promote Professor X.”

Guidance document #5 will address the formal request for reviews, sent to those prospective reviewers who respond in the affirmative to the initial solicitation.

Sample Inquiry Regarding Availability to Serve as External Reviewer

Subject Line: Request for tenure review

June 1, 2014

Professor _____
Department of Accounting
University of Texas at Austin
1 University Station B6000
Austin, TX 78712

Dear Professor _____:

The Department of Accounting at the University of Oregon is evaluating _____, Assistant Professor of Accounting, for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. The senior faculty have identified you as a scholar who could provide particularly valuable insights regarding Professor ____'s scholarly contributions. I realize that with your stature in the field, you undoubtedly receive many requests of this type, and I sincerely hope that you will be able to accept my invitation to participate in this important evaluation. I have attached a copy of Professor ____'s vita for your reference.

[Select one of the two following sentences in order to reflect the candidate's waiver status, which must be expressed in writing before external letters are solicited.]

Because Professor ____ has waived access to the evaluative file, this will be a closed, confidential process.

or

Because Oregon law permits full access of a faculty member to his or her personnel file unless such access is voluntarily waived, your letter will be seen by Professor ____ should [he/she] request access to [his/her] file.

Please let me know by June 15, 2014, whether or not you will be able to serve as a reviewer. If you agree to provide a review, I will forward a package containing Professor ____'s personal statement and CV and representative examples of Professor ____'s scholarship, as well as the Department's statement of expectations for tenure and promotion. Should you accept, I would anticipate receiving your evaluation by September 16, 2014.

I sincerely hope you will be able to assist in this important decision and look forward to your response.

With my best wishes,

_____, Title
Address
Telephone
e-mail address