

5.2.2 Letters from Evaluators

A list of all invited evaluators contacted must be included in the dossier. If a potential evaluator declined to write a letter or did not reply to the invitation then this should be so indicated.

All letters of evaluation received must be included in the dossier.

All external evaluators must be disinterested, including those invited from UB for certain ranks. *Disinterested* refers to evaluators who do not have a close personal or collaborative relationship with the candidate. External evaluators should not be friends, students, former teachers and colleagues, mentors, co-authors or co-investigators, or anyone who claims a close personal relationship with the candidate past or present. However, they may know the candidate from professional interactions or as a member of a professional society/organization.

All dossiers should present a **minimum of four letters from disinterested external evaluators (except Volunteer ranks, see below)**, solicited by the Chair.

Chairs should also recognize the special nature of cross-disciplinary scholarship and team science, and ensure that an appropriate evaluation from other participating departments or research centers be included.

5.2.2.1 Letters from External Evaluators for Tenure (Unqualified) Dossiers

The dossier should present a **minimum of four letters from disinterested external evaluators**, solicited by the Chair. It is strongly suggested that 1-2 additional letters from disinterested evaluators be included. The PRB prefers that letters be dated no more than 6-8 months prior to dossier submission. **The evaluators must hold a rank equal to or above the rank to which the candidate would be promoted.** However, letters from evaluators at the professor level are preferred in all rank promotions.

The Chair should avoid requesting letters from interested scholars - those having a personal or close professional relationship (present or past) with the candidate: friends, students, former teachers and colleagues, mentors, co-authors and co-investigators. If the Chair includes such letters, they should be in addition to the four required disinterested letters. In all such instances, the Chair must explain in the Chair's letter the rationale for their inclusion and why the assessments can be presumed disinterested and/or important to the case. Evaluators should be asked to describe the nature of their relationship to the candidate, if any, in their letter.

a) All names of potential evaluators must be searched in the candidate's CV to ensure that they are excluded if they appear as co-authors on publications or collaborators on current or previous grants.

Generally, the evaluators should be selected by an ad hoc faculty committee appointed by the Chair, or by the Chair in consultation with faculty colleagues in the candidate's field of expertise. The Chair is encouraged to seek the counsel of leading scholars from other peer institutions who work in the candidate's field as well as those within the candidate's department or school. The Chair may also consult the candidate for names of disinterested evaluators if necessary. However, if any letters are solicited from names on the candidate's list they should be in addition to the four disinterested letters, not counted among the four, and the names not shared with the candidate.

5.2.2.2 Letters from Internal Evaluators for Tenure (Unqualified) Dossiers

A minimum of two (2) internal letters should be solicited from colleagues at UB, preferably from the candidate's department or from center and institute directors and affiliated faculty where applicable. The Chair should seek internal evaluators who can best comment on the: extent and quality of the candidate's research or creative activity; teaching and mentoring capabilities, including their ability to work with graduate students and trainees; willingness and skill in working with colleagues, serving on committees, and making other meaningful contributions to the university as well as other public or professional service as appropriate.

5.2.2.2.1 Letters from Internal and External Evaluators for External Candidates

In the case of external candidates who are being appointed from other institutions, the Chair should seek equivalent internal letters from colleagues in the department where the candidate was most recently employed. The Chair may provide a synopsis of the report of the local search committee as a substitute for internal letters from UB.

For such candidates, the Chair will also solicit a minimum of four letters from disinterested distinguished referees external to the appointee's institution

5.2.3 Letters for Non-tenure (Qualified) Dossiers

External evaluators for non-tenure academic (clinical and research) **associate professor** ranks may be selected from extramural institutions or from another UB unit or department outside the candidate's specialty or discipline. These external evaluators must hold a rank equal to or above the rank to which the candidate would be promoted and be disinterested; they may not have an adjunct/volunteer appointment with the candidate's primary unit at UB. A minimum of four external letters are required, in addition to two

internal letters from the candidate's department or unit.

External evaluators for non-tenure clinical and research **professor** ranks must be disinterested leaders in their field and external to UB. There should be a minimum of four external letters and two internal letters.

5.2.4. Letters for Volunteer Dossiers

Promotion dossiers for volunteer faculty to **associate professor** ranks must include a minimum of five letters of evaluation from individuals at a rank equal to or above the rank to which the candidate seeks promotion. Two letters must be from external evaluators and two letters must be from internal evaluators; the fifth letter may be from either an internal or external evaluator at the discretion of the Chair. Internal evaluators must be selected from within the University department/unit and/or other schools and affiliated institutions (i.e., Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, VA of WNY). External evaluators must be disinterested and may be selected from outside the candidate's department/unit at UB or an affiliated institution; external evaluators may also be external to UB, although this is not required.

For promotion of clinical volunteer faculty to **professor** ranks, a minimum of five evaluative letters must be solicited from peers at that rank: three external letters from disinterested leaders in their field and external to UB; two internal letters from faculty in the candidate's department/unit.

For clinical volunteer faculty whose strength is teaching, the Chair is advised to solicit evaluative letters from peers with medical educator experience/credentials. For volunteer faculty whose strength is research, the Chair is urged to solicit evaluative letters from peers with a reputable record of scholarly contributions.

5.2.5. Letters from Former Trainees

In addition, it is recommended that the Chair solicit letter(s) from up to 3 former trainees/mentees who can address the faculty member's strengths and effectiveness as a teacher and mentor. These letters would appear in a separate section, and do not count as either external or internal evaluator letters.

5.3 The Evaluator Solicitation Letter

The Chair should address the following points in the invitation letter to evaluators:

- a. Rather than provide a general recommendation or unsubstantiated opinion, the evaluators should be asked to comment on the candidate's credentials: the quality

of the faculty member's current research or creative activity; the quality of publications or other evidence of peer review; and the candidate's potential for future growth and contribution to the discipline. The evaluator should also provide specific comparisons between the candidate and others in the field who, relative to the candidate, are at the same stage in their careers. It is particularly useful if the evaluators use non-specialized language and focus on the candidate's accomplishments and the contribution to the discipline. A summary of the candidate's CV is not sufficient without evaluative comments.

- b. The evaluators must be asked explicitly whether, in their best judgment, the scholarly accomplishments and recognition achieved by the candidate would warrant the same appointment, promotion, or granting of tenure at the evaluator's institution, or at other distinguished public research universities.
- c. The letter of solicitation to the evaluator should not indicate in any way whether the candidate has or has not received the support of the Chair, the Department, or any other officer or unit of the university.
- d. Each letter must indicate that the evaluator's response will be held in strict confidence unless the evaluator gives written permission for the candidate to see it.
- e. The *Confidentiality Statement form* is to be enclosed with each letter of solicitation, with the evaluator indicating which of three options is preferred: that the entire letter be held in confidence; that the letter be available to the candidate with all references to the author deleted; or that the candidate may see the letter in its entirety. This form must be signed and returned with the evaluator's letter. If the evaluator does not provide a completed *Confidentiality Statement form*, their letter is categorized as confidential by default.