



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
Mewbourne College of Earth and Energy

TO: Directors and Committee A
Mewbourne College of Earth and Energy

FROM: Mike Stice 
Dean

RE: External Letters of Evaluation for Tenure & Promotion Candidates

College Guidelines for External Evaluators:

- The College of Earth and Energy requires that at least 4 confidential letters of evaluation be included in dossiers for both tenure and promotion and for promotion-only cases. These letters must be from off-campus scholars or distinguished professionals in the candidate's field and should provide an independent, unbiased evaluation of the candidate's scholarly attainment. A dossier may contain more than the minimum number of letters, and copies of all confidential letters of evaluation that were solicited and received must be included in the dossier.
- To achieve the goal of providing a minimum of 4 letters in the dossier, **we request that you solicit 8 external evaluators.** This will allow for rejections from potential evaluators and late responses. If you are unable to obtain commitments from a sufficient number of persons from your initial list, you should submit additional requests for evaluations.
- Committee A is responsible for the selection of the external reviewers. Units should encourage the candidate to suggest names of potential reviewers. No more than half of the reviewers from whom letters are received may have been recommended by the candidate. If the number of letters received from the candidate's list exceeds the number of letters received from Committee A's list, then additional Committee A letters should be solicited. In the end, the number of external letters from the candidate's list in the dossier should equal but may not exceed the number of letters from Committee A's list of reviewers.
- Letters of evaluation should be from *off-campus scholars or distinguished professionals* in the field who have access to the records or creative work of the candidate.
- **Most importantly, the external evaluators may not have close academic or personal connections with the candidate. For example, Ph.D. advisors and committee members, postdoctoral mentors, coauthors and close personal friends should not be asked to evaluate the candidate.** In rare cases, such as when a candidate has a very narrow and specialized field of expertise, one or two evaluators with a close professional connection may be included, but it

is the responsibility of the unit to explain and justify in writing in the dossier such exceptions to the general guidelines.

- **Note: For additional instructions please see the most recent Provost memo “Call for Tenure and Promotion”.**

The Provost, at the request of the Campus Tenure Committee and the Office of Legal Counsel, **requires** that the following information be included in the requests for external letters of evaluation:

“As part of this review process, we are soliciting assessments of Professor _____’s research and/or creative activity contributions from academic colleagues and distinguished professionals outside of the University of Oklahoma. These letters of evaluation are treated as confidential by the University to the extent we are permitted to do so by law. These assessments will become part of Professor _____’s tenure dossier to be reviewed in accordance with our procedures for the tenure decision which generally includes review by the departmental eligible faculty, a select group of college faculty appointed by the Dean, the Campus Tenure Committee [Note 1], and relevant administrators at the University of Oklahoma. We ask for your letter of evaluation and a copy of your own curriculum vita to include with the candidate’s tenure dossier. In your letter, it is important that you elucidate the extent of your professional or personal relationship with Professor _____; the intent is to identify potential cases of partiality or conflicts of interest that might otherwise not be known by us. We ask that evaluators not provide comments as to whether a candidate should or should not be awarded tenure at the University of Oklahoma but rather comments on how the candidate’s research and/or creative activity record compares with those who have recently been awarded tenure at your institution. For your information, the candidate’s distribution of effort was set at ___%-___%-___% for teaching, research, and service respectively. For this unit, that normally represents teaching -X- number of courses per year [Note 2].”

[Note 1] Replace “tenure” with “promotion” and delete “Campus Tenure Committee” if the candidate is being evaluated for promotion only.

[Note 2] For candidates who have been on probationary period longer than six years add:

“Professor _____ has received an extension of __ (his/her) __ probationary period under approved university policies. You are asked to evaluate __ (his/her) __ accomplishments and appropriateness for tenure and promotion to associate professor as if the record had been accumulated during our normal six-year probationary period.”

- In the tenure/promotion dossier, the academic unit should complete the **“Description of External Evaluators”** form (found at Provost Website) that justifies the particular evaluators chosen and provide a CV for each evaluator.

Completed dossiers must be uploaded to the online tenure and review system as per instructions in the detailed timeline provided in the most recent Provost memo “Call for Tenure and Promotion”. Please contact the Dean’s Office if you have any questions about this or any other aspect of the tenure and promotion review process.