

For Promotion to Professor, Solicitation of External Reviews, Template – enclosures include CV; selected publications follow upon confirmation of reviewer participation. Do not use this template for cases of promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. A separate template is available for that purpose.

This template is a guide. You may customize it, but (1) you must cover the main points expressed in this template, (2) you may not deviate from the standards specified in the contract, and (3) you must include the section on confidentiality.

Prof. [name]
[Title]
[Department name]
[University]
[City, State, Zip]

Subject: Request for Service as an External Reviewer

Dear Professor [name]:

I am writing on behalf of the Department of [name] in the [College/School] of [name] to ask whether you could assist us in the evaluation of [name of faculty candidate], who is being considered for promotion to the rank of professor. My colleagues and I recognize that this request adds to what is no doubt a considerable workload and appreciate your willingness to consider it. We are eager to continue building a campus that is widely recognized for the highest quality research, teaching and service, and we depend on knowledgeable experts to help us understand the contributions of our candidates.

If you are able to accept this invitation, we would appreciate receiving a candid evaluation of Professor [last name]'s [scholarly or creative] contributions. We would like your assessment of the originality and impact of this work. Has it been influential in the field? In what ways do you believe it has contributed to new lines of research or deepened our understanding of existing debates? Has Professor [name] developed a meaningful and independent [research or creative] program? Is [he/she] recognized as an intellectual leader on par with, if not exceeding, the influence and noteworthy accomplishments of peers who are at the same stage of professional development? If there are comparisons with other members of [his/her] cohort that will help us understand the place of Professor [last name], feel free to provide them as this can be a valuable benchmark.

As you know, the title of (full) Professor is the highest rank among tenured faculty and we regard it as a high honor to bear this designation. As such, we expect full professors to have achieved a very high level of visibility and professional accomplishment as leading thinkers in their field, outstanding teachers and active participants in their profession. While we recognize that scholarly work builds over the life of a career, we are particularly interested in your assessment of the candidate's contributions since promotion to the rank of associate professor with tenure. We expect that full Professors will continue to perform at a high level for many years to come.

Our institution values service to the profession and to the campus, as well as high quality teaching. If you are familiar with Professor [last name's] record in either domain, we would be grateful for your evaluation in these domains. In all of these respects – research, teaching and service – it would be

helpful for us to understand the basis for your conclusions; what do you see in the work or record that leads you to the assessment you have provided?

In keeping with standard practice, the faculty and administrators involved in this promotion process will have read the file carefully and will be well acquainted with the substance of the work involved. Accordingly, we do not need to trouble you with a summary description of the [research/creative work]. Our primary interest is in your professional opinion of the value of [his/her] work and hence the task is primarily evaluative.

Beginning in the Spring 2020 semester, faculty across the University experienced a significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring 2020, as a result of the health crisis, all faculty moved their courses online, research facilities including labs and libraries were closed and all student evaluation of teaching was suspended. In conjunction with the disruptions experienced on-campus, many faculty were working out of their homes while simultaneously providing childcare due to closures of daycare facilities and K-12 schooling. Research disruptions, significant shifts in teaching modalities, limited childcare, and remote work persisted into the summer of 2020. We ask that you take this unprecedented event into consideration when evaluating work performed during the Spring and Summer periods of 2020.

When we present the files of our candidates for promotion to professor, we are obliged to attach a curriculum vitae for each reviewer, mainly because scholars who are outside the field will be interested in the work for which you are known and hence the starting point of your evaluation.

Candidates for promotion have the options of waiving or retaining the right of access to external review letters. In this case, Professor [last name] [has or has not] waived [his/her] access to all external review letters. However, under our contract with the faculty union, we must identify all reviewers. Therefore, while internal faculty and administrative evaluators of the file will have access to your letter, it will otherwise remain confidential (to the extent allowed by law). The candidate will know that you have provided an evaluation [but will not have / and will have] access to your letter.

If you are able to accept this invitation, we would be grateful if you would complete and then return the attached disclosure form indicating the extent of your relationship with Professor [last name], if any. We would appreciate knowing whether you have collaborated with or had previous professional or personal interactions with the candidate. Should you believe that there is any room for misunderstanding or a potential conflict of interest in reviewing this case, please feel free to call me before you proceed.

I have attached a copy of Professor [last name]'s CV for your information. If you are able to accept this invitation, we will send you a few selected publications. As our evaluations proceed along an established time line, we would be most appreciative if you would, first, let me know by email [department chair's email] if you can accept this assignment within the next week and, second, provide your letter and CV by [four weeks after the date of the request]. I will forward the publications to you as soon as I receive your email confirmation.

Again, I respect the fact that this request imposes on your time. It is an essential part of the review process, as you know of course, and we do depend on our colleagues to help us make wise decisions.

Sincerely,

[Name of Department Chair]
[Title]