

CHECKLIST FOR PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE LETTER SOLICITING EXTERNAL REVIEWS

Several issues have come to the attention of the University Peer Review Committee with regard to the letters to external reviewers who will evaluate the scholarship or teaching credentials of candidates for promotion/tenure. The checklist below is to alert the Departmental PRCs, or the College PRCs where there are no departmental PRCs, to these issues. These are issues which the PRC must address in drafting the letter to the outside reviewer.

1. **Selection of External Reviewers.** The candidate may provide the PRC with the names of recommended external reviewers. The PRC will independently develop an additional list from among authorities in the candidate's field of expertise. The PRC may consult the department chair/school director as appropriate. A completed list of external reviewers will be submitted by the PRC to the candidate, who may advise the PRC that some of the names should be deleted if he/she feels the suggested reviewer is not qualified to render an objective assessment. The process of identifying suitable reviewers is expected to be a collegial and collaborative process between the candidate and the PRC. However, according to Article 12.12 C (1) of the collective bargaining agreement it is the responsibility of the **PRC** to obtain external reviews. A minimum of three external reviewers will be identified by the PRC from the candidate's and PRC's lists of names to review the candidate's materials. Normally, one would not expect to see more than one reviewer from the same department within a given institution for any single candidate.
2. **Confidentiality.** Since letters from external referees become part of a candidate's dossier, and since the dossier is considered to be a public record, confidentiality may not be promised to external reviewers.
3. **Scholarly and Pedagogical Contributions.** Letters are to request evaluations of the candidate's scholarly and/or pedagogical contributions to the field. Comments on the candidate's service are appropriate only if the reviewer knows of them from personal experience. It is not appropriate to ask whether the candidate would be promoted at the reviewer's institution or any other university.

The UPRC prefers reviewer comments which are explicit as to the significance and influence of the candidate's work on his/her discipline, and detailed as to the nature of the contribution.

4. **Materials Sent.** It should be clear to all parties what materials are sent to the reviewers. The reviewer should receive enough scholarly or teaching materials to be able to evaluate the candidate's contribution, but not so much that the reviewer has to waste a lot of time wading through the materials. Elements of scholarly productivity or teaching effectiveness, which are essential to the case, should be included, and the selected list should certainly be checked with the candidate for completeness.

SAMPLE LETTER TO EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

[Date]

Appropriate inside address

Dear _____:

In response to his/her request for tenure and/or promotion to the rank of Associate Professor (Professor), the Peer Review Committee of the College/Department of _____ has initiated an external review of Dr. _____'s credentials. Having identified you as a leader in the candidate's field, the Committee is grateful for your willingness to provide a candid evaluation of Dr. _____'s professional accomplishments based on an analysis of his/her curriculum vitae and a representative sampling of his/her work.

More specifically, as Dr. _____ has purposely selected the enclosed materials in an effort to demonstrate *significant scholarship beyond publication of material contained in his/her dissertation (an outstanding record as a scholar)*, we are most interested in your assessment of the quality and impact of his/her scholarly and creative achievements. Put another way, of what importance has

Dr. _____'s work been to the field of _____? Is it original and innovative or relatively commonplace and inconsequential? What is its potential—both realized and unrealized—for advancing theory, research, or practice? Has Dr. _____ attained a position of academic distinction as evidenced by publication in highly regarded, refereed journals and presentation at major conferences?

In sum, we are requesting an appraisal that focuses on the candidate's record of performance as a scholar, rather than his/her teaching or service contributions. Moreover, we would prefer that you *not* comment on Dr. _____'s eligibility for tenure and/or promotion at Cleveland State or any other university.

Your letter will become part of the documentation that those charged with responsibility for making recommendations regarding the candidate's qualifications for promotion and tenure will examine. In keeping with Supreme Court rulings and Ohio law, please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

In order that we may meet University deadlines governing our internal review process, we ask that you forward your comments to us by **Date** _____. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided for your convenience.

Again, many thanks for your assistance; your kindness in agreeing to evaluate Dr. _____'s materials is most appreciated. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (216) _____ - _____.

Sincerely,

Chairperson, Department of _____

Chairperson, Department Peer Review Committee

Enclosures