

External Review Letter Example

With the request for an external review letter, the P&T committee should include, as a minimum, the candidate's CV and a copy of the relevant section of the University P&T document or the whole document or a website address to it. Preferably, other information should be included such as examples of teaching and research activity. If possible, you may want to include the candidate's complete P&T application form.

It is imperative that you have 4 to 8 letters from peer or peer-plus universities. Every letter received must be included in the candidate's package. The external letters will be added to the candidate's package by the department head or the P&T chair before a decision is made at the department level.

Example language that can be used in a letter to an external reviewer is included below.

“Dear XXXXX

The department of XXX in the College of XXX at Mississippi State University is considering the promotion (or promotion and tenure, or tenure) of name of candidate to the rank of Associate Professor (or Full Professor), and we have enclosed a dossier that includes a curriculum vita and other supporting materials. Your candid evaluation of this candidate's work and accomplishments will be of great assistance to us in this important process.

While relevant section of the MSU Promotion and Tenure Document is enclosed (or the whole document, or the Web site), we expect an individual promoted to Associate Professor to have a regional reputation and to be developing a national reputation and showing potential for sustained contributions to the University and to his/her profession or field (alternatively: we expect an individual promoted to Full Professor to have a national and/or international reputation in his/her profession or field). With regard to the candidate's professional reputation, it would be useful for you to evaluate the candidate's standing relative to outstanding people in the field at approximately the same stage of development.

As you begin your letter, would you please describe your relationship with the candidate? We would appreciate knowing whether you know the candidate, for how long, and in what context or capacity. Your evaluation of the quality and quantity of the candidate's achievements and the impact of his/her scholarship in teaching, research/creative activity, service/engagement, and outreach (if applicable) will be of considerable importance to us. We consider all of the candidate's work and accomplishments being considered but give special consideration to work completed while in their current rank.

Insofar as legally possible, your letter will be treated as confidential and access to your original letter will be restricted to those involved in the promotion and tenure review process. Our P&T practice does allow the candidate to be apprised of the content of the letter (with all references to names, locations, and contextual information redacted so that the reviewer's identity is not discernable).

We wish to thank you for your willingness to serve as an external reviewer. Promotion and tenure decisions are among the most important activities that we do within the university and your help is greatly appreciated. To make full use of your comments we ask that your response be returned no later than insert date. Please include a brief biographical sketch for use by the reviewers at the university as an introduction to you.”