

Guidelines on External Evaluations

Promotion and Tenure Review 2017–2018

These guidelines present recommended standards and procedures for requesting external evaluation letters across Schools, the Libraries, the College, and Research units for files submitted to the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure. Schools, the College, the Libraries, and the Office of Research may have additional guidelines or requirements for external evaluations. Accordingly chairs of initial review committees should consult the guidelines of the appropriate administrative unit in addition to these.

The purpose of external peer evaluations is to provide an independent, unbiased evaluation of the candidate's scholarly attainment in the discipline or achievement in professional performance. For tenure-track and tenured faculty, external evaluators are to focus on scholarly attainment in the discipline. For unclassified academic staff, external evaluators may be asked to focus on research, professional performance, or teaching, depending upon the nature of the appointment (e.g., scientist, clinical faculty, joint appointment as a tenured/tenure-track faculty member, etc.) and criteria for promotion within the unit.

Comments and reviews by outside scholars and professionals in the same discipline or performance area shall be provided as part of the material forwarded to the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure (UCPT). All files are expected to contain 6 external evaluations. In exceptional cases, the number may be less than six (6), but four (4) is considered the minimum acceptable number for adequate external review. *The department/unit/school must provide a justification for files with fewer than six evaluations.*

NOTE: The solicitation process for external evaluations should begin in sufficient time to confirm and receive six evaluations providing thorough appraisals of the candidate's work. All evaluations solicited and received must be included in the file, even if that number exceeds six.

Identification of Reviewers: The school, department, or unit conducting initial reviews is responsible for making every effort to obtain qualified evaluators who can provide fair and objective assessments of the candidate's work. **In the case of joint appointments**, the two units should consult on the selection of the external evaluators.

Qualifications of Evaluators: Evaluators should possess credentials that will document their expertise in evaluating the candidate's work within the context of the discipline or profession. Therefore, outside evaluators should hold a rank at least equal to the rank to which the candidate is seeking promotion or have comparable professional standing in a non-academic setting. Ideally, evaluators from other universities will be at institutions comparable to KU.

Objectivity: Committees should recruit external evaluators who are able to provide an independent, objective assessment of the candidate's work. Accordingly, committees should not select evaluators who have a close academic or personal connection with the candidate (for example, dissertation advisors, former professors, graduate school colleagues, co-authors, KU faculty, personal friends, one's own former students, etc.).

In rare cases, the candidate's specialized research or very narrow, specialized field of expertise requires drawing from individuals with close professional connections. In these instances, the unit is responsible for explaining and justifying an exception to this standard to review committees, including UCPT.

While the University does not have a standardized university-wide selection procedure, the following practices are recommended for inclusion in department/unit/school/college processes:

- The criteria and process for selection of external evaluators is communicated to the candidate.
- Candidates are asked to provide up to 6 names of potential external evaluators to the chair/director/dean, and may identify up to 2 individuals that they would not wish included as external evaluators.
- Candidates should not themselves solicit external evaluators, nor should they be involved in the final selection of external evaluators.
- The department/unit/school/college is responsible for using its judgment in the final selection of external evaluators.
- In the case of joint appointments, the two units should consult on the selection of the external evaluators.
- The final list of external evaluators should include no more than 3 evaluators suggested by the candidate.
- The final list of external evaluators should not be shared with the candidate.

Confidentiality of External Reviews: Policies governing the confidentiality of external evaluations are established by the schools and the College. The decision concerning confidentiality will not be delegated below the College or School administrative level. UCPT should be informed of the School and College policy at the annual meeting with the Academic Deans. All letters to external evaluators must disclose the College or School policy.

Materials Sent to External Evaluators: Evaluators should be sent the candidate's current CV in the standard format for the discipline(s) (i.e., not the internal P&T CV that will be submitted with the candidate's materials) an appropriately representative body of the candidate's work to review, and a letter outlining the review expectations (See next section). The same set of materials should be sent to all reviewers. The candidate should have input into the selection of work to be sent.

Required Statements in Letters to External Evaluators:

A. Confidentiality of the external evaluations:

Confidential

“As a part of the promotion and/or tenure review process, we are soliciting assessments of Professor _____’s research contributions from academic colleagues and distinguished professionals. These letters will become part of the candidate’s promotion and tenure dossier and are treated as confidential by the University to the extent we are permitted to do so by law.”

Not confidential

“As a part of the promotion and/or tenure review process, we are soliciting assessments of Professor _____’s research contributions from academic colleagues and distinguished professionals. These letters will become part of the candidate’s promotion and tenure dossier. Following the regulations within the _____ School, the candidate may have access to these letters.”

B. Request for the evaluator's CV in either a short format.

C. Areas that should be addressed by the evaluator in the evaluation letter:

1. Length and nature of his/her association with the candidate;
2. The quality and quantity of the candidate's work as reflected in the candidate's CV and works sent for the evaluator's review;
3. The significance of the candidate's work to the discipline/profession;
4. The extent to which the candidate's record reflects an active and productive scholarly agenda compared to discipline characteristics;
5. The extent to which the candidate's record reflects a sustainable program of scholarly activity;
6. The level of state, regional, national and/or international stature of the candidate as a result of this work;
7. Any special distinction achieved by the candidate.

Accompanying Documentation in the Promotion and Tenure Dossier: The following materials must be collected for inclusion in the promotion and tenure dossier:

1. One file in pdf format (with the name Lastname, FirstInitial External Info.pdf) that contains the [External Evaluations Form](#) (Items A-F).
2. A second file in pdf format (with the name Lastname, FirstInitial External Letters) that includes:
All letters solicited and received from external reviewers. Evaluators may submit their letters as email attachments (e.g., Word or PDF format), as long as the attachment is a letter on their letterhead and includes a signature. Only evaluations requested by the unit for the purpose of the current promotion and/or tenure evaluation may be included as external evaluation letters.

Contact for Questions

Coordinator for Faculty Development, email: facultydev@ku.edu, telephone: 864-4912
Vice Provost for Faculty Development, email: [TBD](#), telephone: 864-4904