

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY
POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SOLICITATION OF LETTERS
OF EVALUATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND TENURE PROCESS

A. Both the chair and candidate will propose a list of evaluators within the candidate's field. The chair, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs will develop the final listing of external evaluators. Evaluators contacted by the **chair** will be representative of **both** lists and must be labeled in the external letter reviewer's biosketch paragraph within the P&T packet as to whether they come from the **candidate's** list or the **chair's** list. The chair will draft the solicitation letter using the "Sample Letter to External Evaluators" as a guide. The chair will provide the letter to the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs for review prior to sending the solicitation.

B. Outside letters should be written by faculty of higher rank than the candidate. Letters from faculty who are at the top of the candidate's field and at the very best institutions are particularly valued. The focus of the letters of evaluation should be to present evidence of recognized contributions, not simply to support or recommend. The chair and candidate should focus on selecting quality external evaluators rather than soliciting a large quantity of letters. It is recommended that seven to ten letters be solicited. No fewer than **six letters** must be obtained from individuals **outside the University of Florida**. Letters from evaluators at the VA will not be considered as outside reference letters. Faculty in non-tenure-accruing tracks whose assignments have been primarily in teaching and service and thus whose promotion will be decided based primarily on their performance in teaching and service may solicit internal letters of evaluation from within the University rather than external letters of evaluations. All evaluations received must be included in the candidate's nomination packet.

C. Evaluations must be obtained from individuals who do not have a personal, professional or mentoring relationship with the candidate. The guiding principle is whether the individual being asked to evaluate the candidate stands to benefit from the success of the candidate, either professionally or personally. In general, this includes dissertation advisors, residency directors or post-doctoral mentors as well as those who have shared a common grant or co-authored a publication within the previous 5 years. While external research collaborators should usually be excluded, exceptions can be made in the case of very large national clinical trials where multiple authors have a very distant relationship or in the case of serving on national research or service panels. In rare circumstances, such individuals may be justified because of the limited scope of the candidate's field or other compelling reasons that must be stated in the chair's letter.

D. External letters of evaluation will be considered as part of the evaluation of teaching, research, publications, creative activity and a candidate's contribution to the profession. These letters are primarily a check on the quality of internal review procedures. Thus, it is recommend that the following information be included with the solicitation for letters of evaluation: 1) The candidate's P&T packet **without** annual letters of evaluation. Note: this need not be the final packet, but should contain available information about research, teaching and clinical service when relevant to allow for a holistic evaluation by the reviewer. 2) a limited number of publication reprints or preprints, and 3) a copy of the relevant COD Tenure and Promotion Guidelines. This information will allow letter writers to evaluate the candidate's record holistically to determine if it supports the claim that the candidate's work has made a substantial impact in the field, as well as being nationally and/or internationally recognized. In order to give the reviewer an opportunity to develop a quality response, the request for review should be sent according to the "Timeline for Promotion and Tenure Application Process".

E. If a faculty member has waived his/her right to see the letters, the letters will be considered confidential. The reviewers will be advised of the waiver status in the letter of solicitation. If rights are waived, the candidate will not be able to see the list of evaluators and external letters.

F. The chair will be responsible for providing a description of the reviewer's credentials in biographical sketch format to be included with the solicited letter. To aid in the preparation of the biographical sketch the chair should ask for the evaluator's biosketch or CV when soliciting the external evaluation.

G. Unsolicited letters (letters which are not solicited by the chair) can be included in the packet under section 33, "further information." Please type "Unsolicited Letter" at the top of the page.