

External Reviewer Selection Guidelines Faculty Tenure and Promotion

The Office of the Provost expects external reviewers to assess the quantity, quality, significance, and impact of the research, scholarship, and/or creative works produced by faculty applying for tenure and promotion. The external reviewers should be fair, honest, and professional in their assessment. The selection process shall result in the identification of field experts to serve as external reviewers because their reviews advise those responsible for recommending tenure and promotion at this university.¹

With this document, the Office of the Provost seeks to ensure fairness in the selection process and compliance with relevant HOP and Regents' Rules across all university departments and units.

External Reviewer Procedures

1. A minimum of four (4) external reviews of a candidate's research, scholarship, and/or creative activity should be obtained.²
2. Qualifications for External Reviewers
 - a. Reviewers must have tenure status and be at a higher rank than the candidate or hold an equivalent position of status.
 - b. Reviewers must be experts in the research/creative area of the candidate as demonstrated through scholarly accomplishments.
 - c. Reviewers must not have conflicts of interest with or personal ties to the candidate, i.e., work on a joint grant project, graduate advisor, co-authors, collaborators, etc.³
 - d. Reviewers must work at peer institutions, aspirational institutions with Carnegie R1 status, or are from prominent departments/institutions in the candidate's area of expertise. If the reviewer is not affiliated with a university, then the reviewer must be affiliated with a research organization of the highest caliber.⁴
3. Process for Selecting External Reviewers

Participants in this process must complete the selection of external reviewers and obtain the external reviews as scheduled in the Pathways document provided by the Office of the Provost for consideration of tenure and promotion during the following academic year.⁵

 - a. Candidates must provide a list of at least 8 to 10 potential reviewers to their department chair for consideration.
 - i. Candidates must provide the following information about the potential reviewers to their department chair: full name, job title, institution of employment, a narrative

¹ See Kay Lehman Schlozman, "External Reviews in Tenure and Promotions Decisions: How Does the Process Work? How Should It?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31, no. 3 (1998): 623.

² See Donna C. Stanton, et al., *Report of the MLA Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion* (New York: Modern Language Association, 2007), 12, 53; Lance Hannon and Meredith Bergey, "Policy Variation in the External Evaluation of Research for Tenure at U.S. Universities," *Research Evaluation* 00, no. 0 (preprint, 2024), 5.

³ For this standard practice, please see Hannon and Bergey, "Policy Variation," 8.

⁴ See Stanton, et al., *MLA Task Force*, 54.

⁵ For various timeframes and burdens imposed on all parties by requests for external review, see Schlozman, "External Reviews," 626-628.

justifying the selection of the reviewer, and a statement about potential conflicts of interest.

- ii. Candidates may rank their list to indicate their preferred reviewers.
- b. The department chair provides the candidate's list of potential reviewers to the department tenure and promotion (or promotion to full) committee, and the committee, together with the chair, must come up with a list of 5 to 10 potential reviewers.
 - i. The committee's list may include names from the candidate's list.
 - ii. The committee may rank its list of potential reviewers.
- c. The department chair will provide the candidate with the committee's list of potential reviewers. The candidate may submit brief rebuttals to the department chair if they object to any of the potential reviewers. The rebuttals must explain why the chair should not contact the potential reviewer and are advisory only.
- d. The resulting list should contain at least twelve (12) potential reviewers.
- e. Prior to the end of the spring semester, the department chair will use this list to request external reviews using the UTRGV External Reviewer Letter Template.
 - i. At least half of the external reviews requested and subsequently submitted should be from the candidate's list.
- f. Department chairs must maintain a log of how many times they contact potential reviewers and the nature of their response using the UTRGV Candidate External Reviewer Summary. Department chairs must continue to update this log until they obtain the requisite number of external reviews, and the candidate submits their dossier.⁶
- g. Department chairs may request more potential reviewers from the candidate and committee, as outlined in the procedures above, if the chair's efforts using the initial list yield less than the requisite number of external reviews.

4. External Review Materials

- a. Before extending the invitations, department chairs must obtain the following materials from the candidates applying for tenure and promotion:
 - i. Updated CV (abbreviated to focus on research, scholarship, and/or creative works)
 - ii. Self-assessment of the quantity, quality, significance, and impact of the research, scholarship, and/or creative works being evaluated for tenure and promotion. This self-assessment should also include an analysis of how candidates perceive their recognition and reception in the field, the reputation, prominence, and/or appropriateness of the outlets publishing or hosting their work, and an assessment of the anticipated trajectory of their research, scholarship, and/or creative works.
 - iii. A representative sample of the candidate's research, scholarship, and/or creative works.
- b. After the potential reviewer accepts the invitation extended by the department chair, the department chair provides the following information to the external reviewer:

⁶ The UTRGV Candidate External Reviewer Summary is an accountability mechanism that helps ensure that department chairs put forth the needed effort to obtain external reviewers. As of 2024, this practice occurs at 30% of Carnegie R1 institutions (Hannon and Bergey, "Policy Variation," 8-9.)

- i. A letter describing the candidate's workload at UTRGV during the probationary period or during the period since earning tenure and promotion for those applying for promotion to full professor.
 - ii. The candidate's materials as listed above.
 - iii. A request for the reviewer's assessment of the candidate.
 - c. Department chairs must request the following information from external reviewers:
 - i. The external reviewer's updated CV.
 - ii. A statement describing the nature of the external reviewer's relationship with the candidate, if any type of relationship exists.
 - iii. An assessment of the quantity, quality, significance, and impact of the candidate's research, scholarship, and/or creative works.
 - iv. An assessment of the recognition and reception of the candidate's work in the field or discipline.
 - v. An assessment of the reputation, prominence, and/or appropriateness of the outlets publishing or hosting the candidate's work.
 - vi. An assessment of the anticipated trajectory of the candidate's work, which should include a judgement about the candidate's ability to sustain productive and obtain prominence in the field (or has obtained this prominence if applying for full professor).
 - vii. An assessment of whether the candidate compares favorably to others in the field at a comparable stage of their career.
 - d. Department chairs shall not request an assessment of the candidate's teaching or service from the external reviewers.⁷
5. Upon Receipt of the External Reviews
- a. Department chairs determine if the external reviewer confirms that no conflict of interest exists. If the external reviewer declares a conflict of interest, then the review shall not count towards the requisite number of external reviews.
 - b. Department chairs send all unredacted external reviews directly to the appropriate college coordinator by September 1 and upload all unredacted materials to the appropriate SharePoint provided by the Office of the Provost.
 - i. Department chairs shall not send or let candidates view their external reviews, redacted or otherwise.
 - c. Department chairs send the completed UTRGV Candidate External Reviewer Summary log to the college's FPT coordinator no later than September 15.
 - i. The information contained in the UTRGV Candidate External Reviewer Summary shall not be used in the review, assessment, or decision-making about the candidate's application for tenure and promotion.⁷
 - d. The appropriate college coordinator is responsible for removing identifying information and adding the redacted external reviews to the candidate's dossier after the candidate submits their dossier.
 - i. Once added, the candidate shall be able to obtain, view, and keep the redacted external reviews.
 - ii. Candidates may not request removal or dismissal of any external review letters.

⁷ See Hannon and Bergey, "Policy Variation," 9.