

College of Fine Arts

Policy on External Letters of Review for Tenure and Promotion

The University policy on External Letters of Review for Tenure and Promotion should be followed as well as the college policy below.

College Policy on External Letters of Review for Tenure and Promotion Candidates

External reviews are sought to assure that our expectations for tenure and promotion are consistent with the general standards of our peer institutions. In effect, we are creating a system of checks and balances. External reviews should be sought from institutions of higher learning or programs that are comparable in academic ranking and stature. By this we mean institutions that we believe to hold comparable promotion and tenure criteria in the areas of research and/or creative activity and teaching. Do not use solely local universities (UNT, SMU, Baylor). Do not use former dissertation advisors or close personal friends.

We are not seeking a recommendation, but the reviewer's assessment of the candidate's scholarly or creative achievement. To be most useful, the reviewer should answer the question, "Would the candidate be tenured and/or promoted at TCU given the professional record presented and the criteria for tenure and promotion provided?" If this question is not answered, the review becomes simply a reference with no threshold of achievement for judging tenure and promotion. A letter that simply says the candidate does good work is of no help to us because it does not tell us if the record merits tenure and promotion. We do not know what "good" means for the reviewer.

The reviewers should have achieved the rank to which the candidate aspires. The reviewer will have then met the standard for the candidate's desired promotion herself/himself and fully understand the level of achievement required. Professionals in the field outside academe may review a candidate but they should be supplements to those holding academic rank. One who has never been promoted does not know the standard to which the candidate is held. Again, the best they can say is that the candidate does good work.

A list of at least 4-5 names of possible external reviewers should be provided by the candidate to the Chair or Director. The Chair may use some or all names on this list. He or she will also add up to 4-5 reviewers not listed by the candidate. In fact, this is good practice. Reviewers may include a professional within the same discipline who may be acquainted with a candidate and still can be classified as an independent evaluator if his or her knowledge of the candidate comes from awareness and understanding of the candidate's work through publication, presentation, or even personal exchange, so long as that personal exchange is not in the context of a mentor, supervisor, etc.*

This list of potential reviewers, with the appropriate designation (indicating if the name was provided by candidate or Chair/Director), will be provided to the Dean for final review. This list should be provided to the Dean by the first Monday after Spring Commencement.

All letters are to be solicited by the Dean and sent to the Dean. Three to five letters of assessment are to come from reviewers unknown to the candidate (blind) and three to five letters of assessment are to come from reviewers recommended by the candidate. Each candidate's dossier should be supported by a minimum of 6 letters and a maximum of 10 letters. Letters from colleagues at TCU cannot be submitted in fulfillment of the external letters policy.

Copies of the letters of assessment are not to be provided to the candidate as per university policy. When external letters are placed in the dossier, they should be designated as from the candidate's list or the Chair's independent selection; each letter should also be accompanied by a brief biographical statement or one page c.v. describing the evaluator's education and career history. These letters should be treated as confidential materials at all times.

The letters will be requested by the Dean beginning June 1 with the deadline for completed letters of September 15. The Dean will then provide the letters to the Chair or Director for inclusion in the candidate's dossier prior to review by the unit's respective Faculty Advisory Committee.

*If the candidate's research or creative program is highly collaborative in nature, it may be necessary to document the candidate's independent or unique contributions with letters from those colleagues who can describe the candidate's role in group efforts. Letters from research/creative collaborators may be solicited to serve this purpose but should be included as an addendum to a candidate's personal letter.

Approved by the College Advisory Committee April 1, 2016