**LETTERS OF EVALUATION**

Arm’s Length vs. Non-Arm’s Length

This document provides clarification of arm’s length and non-arm’s length letters of evaluation. This document should be used in conjunction with the documents listed in the “Related Documents” section below.

**Non-Arm’s Length Letters of Recommendation:**

Non-arm’s length letters are letters written by a referee who knows the candidate personally (e.g. through mentoring relationships, co-employment relationships in the same school or institute, joint publications, or joint grants).

*Examples of non-arm’s length relationships:*

* Present or past colleague, student, postdoctoral fellow, faculty member, co-practitioner, etc.
* Past mentor
* Collaborator (joint publications, grants, etc.)

**Arm’s Length Letters of Recommendation:**

Arm’s length letters are defined as those from external referees who are NOT the candidate’s dissertation or thesis chair or mentor, the candidate’s coauthor or collaborator, a family member of the candidate, or a personal friend of the candidate. Ordinarily, letters from individuals with whom the candidate has worked closely in the past would not be considered arm’s length. For instance, co-authored papers, collaborative grants and co-advised students are examples of prior candidate referee interactions that disqualify arm’s length referees.

External referees may not have a significant relationship with the candidate and must have the ability to write a non-biased letter that speaks to the candidate’s background, work and standing in the field. However, it is acceptable for an external referee to be a professional acquaintance. A “professional acquaintance” is defined by circumstances where the candidate and the external referee know each other from a professional society or association or from participating together on a panel, chairing meetings or from sharing a similar research interest.  The external referee cannot have a personal friendship or family relationship with the candidate, or have had a mentoring relationship, co-employment, a former professor, co-author or collaborator, joint publications or joint grants.

*Examples of acceptable levels of acquaintance:*

* Served on an association committee together
* Served on NIH study sections
* Met at a conference or chaired a conference or sections of a conference
* Served on a panel together

**Reminders:**

All letters received MUST be included with the package. For example, if an arm’s length letter is solicited and an external referee submits a non-arm’s length letter it must still be included in the package.

*If a non-arm’s length letter is included, the department chair should indicate the reason for soliciting the letter from that individual on Form 3a*.

If a package is being submitted with both arm’s length and non-arm’s length letters, a cover sheet clearly indicating “ARMS LENGTH LETTERS” and “NON-ARMS LENGTH LETTERS” should precede these letters in Perceptive Content.

If you have question about these letters or about a specific evaluator, please contact [rbhsfacultyaffairs@rbhs.rutgers.edu](mailto:rbhsfacultyaffairs@ca.rutgers.edu) or 973-972-7595 for guidance.

**Related Documents:**

* Appendices within the [Promotion Instructions](https://facultyaffairs.rbhs.rutgers.edu/appointments-promotions/academic-reappointment-promotion-instructions/):
  + Non-tenure track, teaching, research or clinical track candidates for promotions to Associate Professor and Professor, Appendices E-I.
  + Non-tenure track, teaching, research or clinical track candidates for promotions to Distinguished Professor, Appendices E-II.
  + Non-tenure track, professional practice track candidates for promotions to Associate Professor and Professor, Appendices E-III.
  + Non-tenure track, professional practice track candidates for promotions to Distinguished Professor, Appendices E-IV.
  + Tenure track and Tenured promotions to Associate Professor and Professor, Appendices G-I.
  + Tenure track and Tenured promotions to Distinguished Professor, Appendices G-II.
* [Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Forms 3 and 3a](https://facultyaffairs.rbhs.rutgers.edu/appointments-promotions/academic-reappointment-promotion-instructions/) and [Non-Tenure Track Faculty Forms 3 and 3a](https://facultyaffairs.rbhs.rutgers.edu/appointments-promotions/academic-reappointment-promotion-instructions/).
* Sections from the [Policies and Guidelines Governing Appointments, Promotions, and Professional Activities of the Faculty](https://facultyaffairs.rbhs.rutgers.edu/appointments-promotions/faculty-appointments-and-promotions-guidelines/)
  + Award of Tenure, pages 6-7
  + Teaching Track promotions, pages 10-13
  + Clinical Track, pages 14-19
  + Professional Practice Track, pages 19-23
  + Research Track, pages 23-26