

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.

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

Solicitation of Arm's Length Letters

The Chair solicits written evaluations from external referees outside the University in the candidate's field to assist in evaluating the candidate's scholarly achievements and professional standing in comparison with colleagues in his/her field.

While it is preferred that full professors serve as external referees, at a minimum external referees must be at or above the rank for which the candidate is being considered. For example, an Assistant Professor may NOT evaluate a candidate for promotion to Associate Professor. Investigators with credentials in the candidate's field

in research institutes, pharmaceutical research or the Federal Government at comparable ranks for which the candidate is being considered are acceptable.

Sample Letters

Refer to [Appendix G-I and G-II](#) (pages 35-36) in the Tenured and Tenure Track Instructions for samples that are sent to external referees. The body of these letter explains the aspects of the candidate's career which should be detailed in the letter. These samples are for promotions within the tenured ranks and promotion with tenure to Associate Professor and Professor (G-I) and Distinguished Professor (G-II).

Refer [Appendix E-I and E-II](#) (pages 32-35) in the Non-Tenure Track Instructions for sample letters that are sent to external referees. The body of these letters explains the aspects of the candidate's career which should be detailed in the letter. These samples are for non-tenured Teaching, Research or Clinical Track candidates for promotion to Associate Professor and Professor (E-I) and Distinguished Professor (E-II).

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 ImageNow.

If you have question about these letters or about a specific evaluator, please contact rbhsfacultyaffairs@ca.rutgers.edu or 973-972-7595 for guidance.

Related Documents:

- Appendices within the [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](#) and [Non-Tenure Track Faculty Forms 3 and 3a](#).
- Sections from the [Policies and Guidelines Governing Appointments, Promotions, and Professional Activities of the Faculty](#)
 - Award of Tenure, pages 6-7
 - Teaching Track promotions, pages 11-13
 - Clinical Track, pages 15-17
 - Professional Practice Track, pages 18-20
 - Research Track, pages 20-22