I-46
GUIDELINES FOR LETTERS OF EVALUATION
(Revised 4/26)

I. Solicited letters

When letters of evaluation are solicited, the models on the following pages should be used. These letters may be modified slightly; for example, the confidentiality statement may be listed on a separate sheet as an attachment referenced in the body of the letter: "Please see the attached University of California statement on confidentiality." Although the content may be rearranged, none should be deleted, nor should substantive information be added or modified, without prior approval by the Office of Academic Personnel. Departments may choose to use a two-stage solicitation process whereby individuals are first asked, by memo or e-mail, if they would be willing to provide a letter. Those who agree will then be sent materials for review. Those who decline or do not respond, including those who were not sent materials, should be identified on the coded list with an explanation provided (when offered).

II. Unsolicited letters

When unsolicited letters of evaluation are received from an individual or institution, a response should be sent which explains the University's position on the confidentiality of such records. See sample wording in (Red Binder I-50), "Sample thank you letter for unsolicited comments." Unsolicited letter writers should be listed on the list of extramural letter writers and a copy of the thank you letter must be included with the case.

III. Letters for Assistant Professor/Assistant Teaching Professor Appointments and Restricted letters

Restricted letters may be used in Assistant Professor/Assistant Teaching Professor appointment cases of candidates who have not held prior academic positions post-terminal degree. Appointments requested at the Assistant Professor IV, level, or for candidates who have held prior academic positions post-terminal degree, should preferably contain evaluator letters solicited by the department or submitted as part of the applicant file. Appointment files at the Assistant Professor/Assistant Teaching Professor level will normally contain at least three external letters and may consist of external letters submitted as part of the application materials (e.g., via UC Recruit).

When letters of evaluation are received from individuals or institutions that have restrictions placed on the use of the materials forwarded, the sending individual must be notified that under applicable University policy and legal standards the department cannot accept and use evaluations under such restricted conditions. There are two reasons:

1. When a candidate is appointed, evaluations considered at the time of appointment become part of their permanent academic personnel record.

2. The University is legally required to maintain, for at least two years, documentary materials pertaining to all applicants in a completed search.

In addition, such material may be relevant in litigation in which discrimination in the appointment process is alleged, or in federal or state agency proceedings that inquire into compliance with applicable governmental standards. Therefore, when a department receives a file with such limitations on use, the sending individual should be informed that the Department cannot accept the material under the conditions stated. Sample wording O, "Restricted Material" in RB I-50 may be used in these circumstances. If the sending individual requests that the file not be used, the evaluatory material in the file cannot be considered by the department.

IV. Letters for tenured/SOE appointments and career advancements where letters are accepted

Letters should come from tenured faculty at distinguished institutions, preferably from full professors.

At least half of the minimum required letters (i.e, at least 3 letters) submitted with the case should come from references chosen by the Chair in consultation with the department but independent of feedback from the candidate and without consulting the candidate's list.
The letters solicited, whether selected from the department's recommendations or the candidate's recommendations, should be non-conflicted. Although other relationships may also constitute a conflict, some examples include: advisors/mentors at any level; substantive collaboration in the last 4 years including co-authorship, grant collaboration, co-teaching, or co-editorial work on publications; student/advisee; close personal or family relationship; direct financial relationship; current UCSB employment (except as appropriate in Teaching Professor cases). On the other hand, non-conflicted relationships might include members of the candidate's graduate school, service as department colleagues at a previous institution, serving together on an editorial board or committee. A minimum of six analytic letters is required. Typically, more than six letters will have to be solicited in order to achieve this minimum.

1. **Appointment cases:** When the department is unsure of the exact rank or step to be proposed, the sample solicitation wording for multiple levels may be used. External letters submitted as part of the application materials (e.g., via UC Recruit) may be included, but may not constitute more than half of the letters in appointments with tenure/SOE and must acknowledge the appropriate rank of the recommended appointment. In appointment cases only, letters submitted with the application materials that do not meet the standards of non-conflict may be included.

2. **Advancement cases**: Faculty undergoing a review for promotion or for advancement to Above Scale have the right to suggest names of potential external evaluators (Red Binder I-22, 7). The candidate should be advised of the parameters governing the mix of external evaluators. It will be helpful for the candidate to know that a request not to use certain potential evaluators will be made part of the review file and, while such requests may be disregarded (if proper evaluation requires such action), they are made and honored regularly and that a reasonable request should in no way jeopardize the candidate's case. An effort should also be made not to contact individuals who have contributed letters for prior reviews of the same candidate.

3. **Teaching Professor series:** In the Teaching Professor series, letters of evaluation may come from UCSB Senate faculty, external to the department, who have conducted a peer review of the candidate's teaching. Peer evaluation may include classroom visits or recordings of lectures, commentary on course syllabi, reading assignments, and examinations. In some cases, for Teaching Professor series appointees whose instruction is focused on professional practice (e.g., secondary teacher education, performance), experts in distinguished professional roles or with distinctive practical expertise may be suitable alternatives to full professors at top universities, given appropriate justification on the coded list. In exceptional circumstances and with appropriate justification, these practical expertise referees may include former students with distinguishing qualifications who have had no relationship with the candidate in at least the past 4 years. Non-conflicted evaluators are expected.

Any relationship between the candidate and the external letter writer or deviation from the above requirements (e.g., conflicted letter writers; repeat letter writers) should be fully explained by the department in the coded list of evaluators.

Any reviewing agency may request, through the Office of Academic Personnel, that the file be augmented by additional extramural letters if the letters supplied with the case are viewed as inadequate for proper evaluation of the case. Since such requests delay the review of the case, it is important that the letters supplied by the department meet the above requirements.

V. List of evaluators

The Chair must submit a coded list of all persons from whom an extramural letter was solicited (Red Binder I-48). The list must indicate which names were submitted by the candidate and which were submitted by the department. In the case where a suggested name overlaps, the letter is considered to be department-suggested. In addition, the list must contain the following information for individuals who provide letters: name, position/title, institution, area of expertise, past collaborative relationship with the candidate, and, in rare cases, any past reviews for which the letter writer also contributed a letter (which must be justified in the coded list). Similar information must be provided for any unsolicited letters included in the file. Since it is expected to contain contextual information for reviewing agencies, this list should be prepared by the department review committee, Chair, etc., rather than by departmental staff. Special attention should be given to describing the qualifications and stature of the extramural referees. For individuals who either did not respond to the initial request to write or declined to write, only their name and home institution need be included on the list, with an explanation for the declination if provided. The list should be accompanied by a master copy of the letter requesting evaluation, a list of the materials sent to the letter writers, and a copy of all items that were sent to the referees (e.g., C.V., bio-bibliography, reprints, manuscripts, and so forth) if they are not already included with the case of one-of-a- kind materials. The manner in which referees were selected should be described (e.g., "by departmental ad hoc committee", "by Chair in consultation with three senior colleagues", and so forth). The Chair should ensure that individuals who have provided confidential letters of evaluation are not identified (e.g., name, title, identifying leadership roles, identifying background or expertise, institution, etc.) in the departmental letter, except by means of a coded list uploaded appropriately with the case.

VI. Additional Information

If letters are solicited, but the decision by the department is to not forward a career review advancement case, the letters must be maintained by the department and be included in the next career review advancement case along with any new letters solicited. However, if the letters are not used within three years, they may be destroyed.

If email is used to solicit or receive letters of recommendation the sample letter format must be followed, and a copy must be retained. Redaction of electronic responses should eliminate all headers and footers that would identify the sender. If the response is sent as an email attachment, the email and the attachment must both be included in the case, both properly redacted.

Letters for appointment cases that are received via UC Recruit should be noted as such on the list of evaluators. The solicitation letter and confidentiality statement are generated automatically by UC Recruit and do not have to be included in the case.

When an individual holds appointments in more than one department (joint appointments), the departments may solicit letters jointly, if appropriate.

Contact between the Chair and individuals from whom letters are being solicited is permissible in order to encourage response, but great care must be taken to not bias or influence the judgment of the referee.