

I-46
GUIDELINES FOR LETTERS OF EVALUATION
(Revised 2/21)

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, 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 that agree will then be sent materials for review.

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 H, “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/Lecturer PSOE Appointments and Restricted letters

Restricted letters or placement files may be used in Assistant Professor/Lecturer PSOE appointment cases of candidates who have not held prior academic positions post-terminal degree. Appointments requested at the Assistant Professor IV or V 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/Lecturer PSOE level will normally contain at least three external letters.

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 his/her 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 affirmative action standards. Therefore, when a department receives a file with such limitations on use, the sending individual should be informed that the Department can not accept the material under the conditions stated. Sample wording I, “Restricted Material” may be used in these circumstances. If the sending individual requests that the file not be used, the evaluatory material in the file can not be considered by the department. Placement files from other UC campuses may be used in an appointment case without being considered restricted. However, placement files from any other University must be treated as restricted if the cover sheet includes a statement indicating that the letters will not be used for any personnel case purpose.

IV. Letters for tenured appointments and career advancements

Letters should come from tenured faculty at distinguished institutions, preferably from full professors. Letters from UC familiar reviewers, are necessary for all tenured and SOE appointments, promotions and advancements to Above Scale. Letters from UC familiar writers are essential for appointment to step VI and Above Scale and advancement to Above Scale, preferably from faculty already at these senior ranks.

Departments should strive to include at least two UC familiar letters for cases in which such letters are required. At least half of the letters submitted with the case should come from references chosen by the Chair in consultation with the department but independent of the candidate. The letters solicited by the department should come from scholars who have not been closely associated with the candidate as collaborators in research, or as teachers,

colleagues, or personal friends. 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 both levels may be used. For example, the language for appointment as Professor I-V and appointment as Professor VI-IX may both be used if the step is not yet clear.
2. **Advancement cases:** Faculty undergoing a promotion review or 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. **Lecturer SOE series:** In the Lecturer SOE 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 videotaping, commentary on course syllabi, reading assignments, and examinations. Such letters may not be substituted for the UC familiar letters, which are expected to be external to UCSB and are subject to the same redaction and confidentiality policies as extramural letters.

Any deviation from the above requirements (i.e. less than two UC familiar evaluators, fewer than six letters, an uneven mix between department and candidate nominated) 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 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 addition the list must contain the following information for individuals who provide letters: name, position/title, institution, field of expertise, past collaborative relationship with the candidate, and any past reviews for which the letter writer also contributed a letter. Similar information must be provided for any unsolicited letters included in the file. 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. 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., 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 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 an advancement case, the letters must be maintained by the department and be included in the next advancement case along with any new letters solicited. However, if the letters are not used within three years, they may be destroyed.

If electronic mail is used to solicit or receive letters of recommendation the sample letter format must be followed, and a printed 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 e-mail attachment, the e-mail and the attachment must both be included in the case, both properly redacted.

Letters for appointment cases that are received via UCRecruit should be noted as such on the list of evaluators. The solicitation letter and confidentiality statement are generated automatically by UCRecruit 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.