UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Guidelines for Selection of External Consultants
Appointment as or Promotion to Associate/Full Professor with Tenure,
Clinician-Educator or Research Tracks

The Provost is the Chief Academic Officer of the University, and is responsible for promulgating policy relating to the tenure and promotion process. In the Office of the Provost, the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs is responsible for establishing the guidelines and overseeing the process of selecting extramural consultants.

General Recommendations

- The list should include at least six consultants in Section A.
- The list should not include more than two consultants from the same institution.
- Lists for Associate Professors should not include more than two consultants at the Associate Professor rank
- An electronic version of the candidate’s CV should be emailed to the Provost Office of Faculty Affairs

Purpose of using consultants

- To obtain an unbiased and impartial assessment of a candidate’s scholarship, reputation and standing in a specific field
- To obtain a professional assessment, not a personal reference

Relationship of the consultant to the candidate

- Must be accurately reported
- Close personal relationships should be avoided
- Close professional relationships, such as collaborations on publications, Principal Investigator or Co-PI, should not exceed the stated limit (below). [The names of proposed consultants should be checked against the list of co-authors and other collaborators in the CV]
- External consultants having an association with the candidate or department should not constitute more than one third of the consultants named in Section A. If additional external consultants are requested after the solicitation process begins, no more than one third of all consultants named in Section A of the combined lists may have an association with the candidate or department.
- Former University of Pennsylvania faculty should have retired or resigned at least five years prior to the date on the request for approval form. All previous Penn appointments must be disclosed
- If the consultant holds an associated faculty appointment at Penn and holds a primary academic appointment elsewhere, he or she is considered an external reviewer. His or her primary appointment rank must be equal to or higher than the rank which is being recommended for appointment or promotion
- If the consultant holds an associated faculty appointment (visiting faculty, adjunct faculty) at Penn and does not hold or is not active in his or her primary academic appointment elsewhere, he or she is considered an internal reviewer. His or her rank must be equal to or higher than the rank which is being recommended for appointment or promotion in the associated faculty
- If possible at least one member of the department’s most recent external review committee who is qualified to review the candidate should be included
- The candidate’s thesis advisor cannot serve as an external consultant (Note: The thesis advisor can serve as a consultant if nominated by the candidate)
- If the candidate does not nominate his/her thesis advisor and the school wishes to solicit a letter, the letter is considered as additional material and should be placed after the internal letters of recommendation in the final dossier. A letter from the candidate’s thesis advisor is not required.
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

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- No more than one member of the candidate’s dissertation committee may be nominated in Section A.

- Approval process
  - Following initial review at the department/school level, the list of consultants will be reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Personnel Committee (if applicable), the Dean, and finally the Deputy Provost (if applicable)
  - After obtaining the appropriate signature(s), an electronic copy of the candidate’s CV must be forwarded to the Provost Office of Faculty Affairs. If the e-version is not available, attach a copy of the candidate’s CV along with a note indicating that the e-version is not available.

- Contact with External Consultants
  - The Department Chair, Personnel Committee Chair, or Dean may contact the external consultants to ascertain his or her willingness to review a candidate’s scholarly achievements prior to sending out the review packets. This pre-contact may not occur until the list has been approved by the Deputy Provost.
  - There should be no attempt to determine if the consultant is willing to provide a positive evaluation of the candidate’s work
  - To avoid establishing a biased and potentially inaccurate dossier, it is NOT acceptable to discuss the case with a proposed consultant
  - If a letter of evaluation has not been received by the stated deadline, the Department Chair, Personnel Committee Chair, or Dean may contact an external consultant for the sole purpose of determining whether the consultant intends to send the requested letter
  - The Department Chair, Personnel Committee Chair, or Dean may delegate the task of contacting external consultants to a staff member

- Consultants should be
  - Experts or specialists in the candidate’s field (if interdisciplinary)
    - However, only stating that the consultant is an “expert,” “specialist,” or level of recognition (regionally, nationally, internationally) in their given field is not sufficient. Information describing the expertise of the nominee must be provided.
    - Only stating that a consultant is a member of a graduate group or clinical trial is not sufficient. Information describing the expertise of the nominee must be provided.

The following are examples of satisfactory descriptions of consultants’ qualifications:

- (Regionally, Nationally or Internationally recognized for making advances in (state field of study) (Note: This is not the same as stating that a nominee is internationally recognized as a leader in the field. The key factor is “making advances”)
- Member of consortium that provides expression profiling services to thousands of neuroscience/mental health researchers throughout the nation.
- Pioneered (state here)
- Discovered the (state here) President, (name of Society, Committee, etc).
  (year office held).
- Chair (name of Department, Society, Committee, etc), (year office held).
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- Editor of (state name of professional journal, etc.)
- Published numerous articles/publications related to (state name of specialty, should relate to candidate's field)
- Etc.
  - From peer institutions and/or institutions known for work in the specific field.
  - If the consultant is not from a peer institution, include supporting documentation attesting to the rationale for choosing that consultant from that institution (Can note on extramural form)
  - At a faculty rank equal to or higher than the rank which is being recommended for appointment or promotion of the candidate
  - Different from those named in the educational database (SOM only) or teaching chronicle

- Additional letters of recommendation from faculty colleagues, thesis advisors, students, or trainees which are not included in the educational database or teaching chronicle
  - May be solicited by the candidate or by the department and included in the final dossier following the section with the internal recommendation letters
  - May be unsolicited and sent to the department to be included in the dossier as noted above

- Depending on the track, the consultant will be asked to provide:
  - An assessment of the scope, importance and significance of the candidate’s scholarly accomplishments (tenure and research)
  - Quality of academic contributions. Focused comments on the nature and substance of the scholarly and clinical contributions of the candidate (C-E)
  - A list of several outstanding peers within the candidate’s discipline and an evaluation of the candidate’s standing with respect to these individuals (tenure)
  - An estimate of the likelihood of the candidate achieving a similar rank and tenure, if applicable, at other institutions comparable to Penn (all tracks)
  - An assessment of the candidate’s strengths in professional ability, quality and nature of teaching (C-E)
  - Other evidence of stature of the individual as indicated by a direction of a division or program, leadership at regional or national level on committees, participation in CME programs or invited lectures (C-E)
  - Any additional insights

- Scholarship in the C-E track
  - "Today’s AMC faculty must also include a cadre of clinician-educators of sufficient size to support the educational mission of the medical school. These individuals must be excellent practitioners, but they should also produce scholarship in the form of clinically relevant papers and case reviews, chapters, reviews and texts, alternative new media, and educational materials about their practices. Their scholarly work often will be heavily collaborative and may not rise to the level of independence expected of individuals in the tenure track."
    Barchi, R. and Lowery, B. “Scholarship in the Medical Faculty from the University Perspective," Academic Medicine, Vol. 75, No. 9/September 2000