

Pamplin Standard Text for External Letter Requests

Policy 421

Revised: April 29, 2022

It is important to assemble a strong panel of reviewers for our P&T reviews. In addition to requirements stated in the College's Policy and the Faculty Handbook, the following requirements apply to department practices in assembling external letters for Pamplin cases.

1. A minimum of four external letters is required; however, six external letters are desirable in order to ensure that the University expectations are met.
2. All letters must come from full professors.
3. In selecting external reviewers, strong and relevant credentials of the potential reviewer form the central criterion and must be clearly delineated in the two-paragraph bio provided for the dossier. Faculty are expected to be top researchers in the candidate's field at research universities. As stated in the University guidelines, "Reviewers are expected to be at peer institutions or other major research universities." Such universities for Pamplin might include the SCHEV comparison universities, Pamplin Peer and Aspirant universities or doctoral-granting AAU university business schools.

The University guidelines state that there should be a balance between letters from reviewers suggested by candidates and those suggested by the department P&T committee. While the goal remains a balanced set of reviewers, the Provost's Office is re-interpreting the requirement. First, it is now requiring that at least 50% of the letters be submitted by reviewers selected by the P&T Committee. Second, the committee and the candidate should identify reviewers independently. It is possible for the same reviewer to be nominated by both the candidate and the committee. As a result, more than 50% of the reviews could come from those recommended by the candidate. However, the committee, in selecting from the lists the panel of reviewers to be contacted, should ensure that a majority of the reviewers are not ones selected only by the candidate.

This policy provides standard text for letters requesting external reviews for cases of promotion to associate professor with tenure, award of tenure, and promotion to professor. All such request letters should be drafted using the following text describing the requested review.

For a case of promotion to associate professor with tenure or for granting tenure to an associate professor:

Text of review description:

Consistent with Virginia Tech's mission and commitment as a major research institution, [promotion to associate professor with tenure / the award of tenure] is contingent upon the development of national recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator. In the Pamplin College of Business, this requires the achievement of distinction in research and the prediction of eminence throughout the individual's professional career. Your evaluation of Dr. XXX's scholarship will form an important component in [his / her] final

promotion and tenure dossier. As such, we would appreciate your objective assessment of Dr. XXX's accomplishments as a scholar and would appreciate both your overall impressions of Dr. XXX's research and any comments you could provide on the following:

- The quality of the work and the outlets in which it appears
- Maturity and depth of thought reflected in the work
- Significance of the work and its impact on the field
- Research achievements in comparison with other persons you have known at similar stages in their careers
- Potential for future growth and prospects for future development

If any tenure clock extensions have been provided:

This candidate has received an extension of his or her tenure probationary period under approved university policies. You are asked to evaluate the candidate's accomplishments and appropriateness for tenure and promotion to associate professor as if the record had been accumulated during our normal six-year probationary period. (It is not necessary to reference the provision of modified duties.)

For a case of promotion to professor:

Text of review description:

Consistent with Virginia Tech' mission and commitment as a major research institution, promotion to the rank of professor is contingent upon recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator. In the Pamplin College of Business, this requires that candidates have an established national and international scholarly reputation in their discipline, substantial influence on scholarship in their chosen area of study, sustained scholarly achievement including continued publication in leading scholarly journals, and professional contributions to their discipline. Your evaluation of Dr. XXX's scholarship and professional contributions will form an important component in [his/her] promotion dossier. As such, we would appreciate your objective assessment of Dr. XXX's accomplishments as a scholar—particularly that published since tenure—and would appreciate both your overall impressions of Dr. XXX's research relative to the standards noted and any comments you could provide on the following:

- The quality of the work and the outlets in which it appears
- Maturity and depth of thought reflected in the work
- Significance of the work and its impact on the field

With respect to significance, we would particularly appreciate any comments you have on the extent to which [his / her] research:

- Has successfully addressed fundamental questions in the field
- Has identified important new questions in the field
- Has helped shape the direction of research in the field
- Is known and respected by leading scholars in a field, and has influenced their thinking
- Has significantly altered management practice

For a case of promotion to collegiate associate or collegiate professor:

Text of review description:

Consistent with Virginia Tech's mission and commitment as a major research institution, promotion to [collegiate associate or collegiate professor] (a non-tenure track appointment) is contingent upon the development of recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator. In the Pamplin College of Business, this requires the achievement of distinction and the prediction of continue excellence throughout the individual's professional career. Your evaluation of Dr. XXX's scholarship and professional contributions will form an important component in [his / her] final promotion. As such, we would appreciate your objective assessment of Dr. XXX's accomplishments and would appreciate both your overall impressions and any comments you could provide on the following:

- The quality of scholarly activity as defined below and its impact on research, practice, or pedagogy
- Impact and effectiveness as an educator in the discipline
- Professional contributions and their impact on the field
- Potential for future growth and prospects for future development

[As a part of the letter, include a statement indicating the expectations for scholarly work and teaching defined for the candidate at the time of hire in his or her terms of faculty offer:

Dr. XXX was hired with an expectation to make the following contributions: . . .]

For a case of promotion to professor of practice:

Text of review description:

Consistent with Virginia Tech's mission and commitment as a major research institution, promotion from associate to professor of practice is contingent upon the development of recognition as an outstanding practitioner and educator. In the Pamplin College of Business, this requires the achievement of distinction and the prediction of continue excellence throughout the individual's professional career. Your evaluation of XXX's professional contributions will form an important component in [his / her] final promotion. As such, we would appreciate your objective assessment of XXX's accomplishments and would appreciate both your overall impressions and any comments you could provide on the following:

- Professional and service contributions and their impact on the field
- Impact and effectiveness as an educator in the discipline (beyond their contributions as a member of Virginia Tech's faculty)
- Potential for future growth and prospects for future development

All request letters should include the following paragraph on confidentiality:

The policy of Virginia Tech is to hold in confidence all letters of evaluation from persons outside the institution. Only the various committees and administrative officers directly involved in the promotion process will have access to your letter. It will not be provided

to the candidate, unless we are required specifically to do so by law.

From the Provost's guidelines:

Avoid requesting comments on teaching and university service, since that is evaluated at the departmental, college, and university levels. (Comments by external reviewers regarding the candidate's professional service are welcome.)

Avoid asking about "promotability" at the reviewer's home institution.

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