

**University-Wide Process for
Soliciting External Letters of Review for Promotion and Tenure
Revised December 2019**

1. Academic units and colleges should adhere to the following “evergreen calendar” dates to ensure that external letters of review are solicited in a timely manner to support the promotion and tenure process:

March 1st. Faculty who are choosing to apply for tenure and/or promotion (i.e., candidates applying for tenure or promotion before the required year and candidates for promotion to full professor) shall declare their intention by or around March 1. The chair/director shall discuss the external review process with the candidate. Candidates should be reminded not to communicate with external reviewers while the review process is underway.

April 1st: April Chair/Director should initiate external letter review process with TTF candidates mandated to obtain external review letters for required promotion and tenure recommendations; TTF candidates seeking voluntary promotion should contact their Chair/Director to initiate external letter review process.

May 1st. Academic unit faculty (and candidate, depending on unit policy) nominate external reviewers to the chair/director and reach consensus on final list of external reviewers.

May 15th. Chair/Director or designee initial phone/email contact to obtain agreement of a minimum of five identified reviewers who agree to provide external review (which are immediately confirmed in writing).

May 15th. Chair/Director or designee forwards the names and contact information for external reviewers to the Dean.

June 1st. Candidate provides completed external reviewer portfolio to chair/director.

June 15th. Dean or designee completes and sends cover letters with instructions for the external reviewers to a minimum of five external reviewers.

September 1st. Completed external reviews received.

2. The chair/director requests suggestions of reviewers from all tenured faculty members in the academic unit. Depending on policies of the academic unit, the candidate may also be asked to contribute names of potential reviewers. If candidates contribute names, the chair/director will prepare a composite list. To do so, the chair/director will compare the candidate suggestions with the tenured faculty suggestions, identify the names in common, place those at the top of the composite list, then select alternately from the faculty list and the candidate list to complete the composite list.
3. The academic unit should nominate reviewers who have recognized reputations in the field and who hold appropriate ranks at peer or aspirant institutions. The unit should avoid reviewers from less prestigious institutions, unless warranted by the expertise and reputation of the reviewers in the research area of the candidate.
4. The academic unit should identify active and influential scholars in the field. Emeritus

professors who are no longer active or scholars whose own research and reputation has moved outside the field of the candidate should be avoided. Reviewers must be tenured at their home institutions. Reviewers for full-professor cases must hold the rank of professor. The candidate and the chair/director have a shared responsibility to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts of interest. For example, reviewers should not be from the same graduate program (as peer or instructor), should not be a co-author, should not be more than a casual professional acquaintance, and should not have another relationship with the candidate that might undermine the credibility of the review.

5. The academic unit should compile a large list of suggested reviewers (e.g., 10 or more) to provide a list that is sufficient in number to allow for the removal of names due to identified conflicts and the candidate's vetoes and assure that no fewer than three external reviews are completed in time to include in the promotion and/or tenure credential file.
6. The candidate should identify suggested reviewers with whom he/she has a conflict of interest; these names should be removed from the list. The candidate also should identify suggested reviewers with whom he/she has the appearance of a conflict of interest; at the chair's/director's discretion, these names should be removed from the list. The candidate should be given the option of removing the names of no more than two suggested reviewers from the list with no reasons or explanations required. Candidates should be reminded not to communicate with external reviewers while the review process is underway.
7. The chair/director or designee should contact a minimum of five identified reviewers from the remaining list by phone or e-mail to request participation in the assessment of the candidate's credentials. The email/conversation should follow a standardized script to model neutrality. The chair/director should inform reviewers of when review packets will be sent out.
8. Affirmative responses should be confirmed in writing, clarifying the intent of the assessment and timeline [see attached practices and examples; individual colleges may require a common template]. Phone calls are *not* substitutes for reviews, which must be submitted to the academic unit in writing.
9. The chair/director or designee forwards the names and contact information for external reviewers to the Dean. The Dean or designee will complete and send cover letters with instructions for the external reviewers to a minimum of five external reviewers [see attached university practices and examples].
10. The chair/director should consult with the candidate and the faculty who will be reviewing the candidate's portfolio regarding the materials sent to reviewers. These should include the candidate's vitae and generally a *sample* of preferably peer-reviewed artifacts of scholarly or creative activity from the submitted dossier and a narrative statement discussing the scholarly or creative activity. The submitted review package should be manageable for the external reviewers while adequately representing the quality and impact of the candidate's body of work. Advice from the chair/director and academic unit colleagues should be strongly considered; however, the final decision on what materials are included in the package rests with the candidate.

The Office of the Dean or designee should monitor the return of external reviews, sending reminders of deadlines to reviewers as appropriate to encourage the timely return of written external letters for

the academic unit's assessment of the candidate's credentials and prior to the unit vote. All reviews that are received by the day the candidate's portfolio is due must be uploaded to the candidate's portfolio. The Dean or designee should carefully monitor the return of external reviews to ensure a minimum of three letters are received by the deadline.

University Practices for Communications with External Reviewers

1. Email Confirmation of Service as External Reviewer (initiated by chair/director or designee)
 - a. Statement of process for identifying external reviewers
 - b. Confirm task and responsibilities
 - i. Written evaluation of candidate's scholarship
 - ii. No personal relationship with candidate
 - iii. Deadline for returning review
 - c. Statement of Ohio's Public Records Act
 - d. Request confirmation of acceptance
 - e. Contact person at BGSU

2. Cover Letter and Instructions for External Reviewers (initiated by Office of Dean or designee)
 - a. Description of the purpose of review (P&T, P, T)
 - b. Overview of materials included
 - i. Candidate portfolio (CV, sample of scholarly artifacts, narrative statement on scholarship)
 - ii. Scholarship criteria and standards for P&T
 - c. Expectations for Reviewer's written assessment
 - i. Statement of relationship with candidate
 - ii. Objective, professional assessment of quantity, quality, impact, strengths and weaknesses of research agenda taking into account stage of career development, allocation of effort to scholarship (including teaching load)
 - iii. Considered opinion on non-refereed and "submitted and accepted" materials
 - iv. NO recommendation of tenure/promotion
 - v. Signed written assessment
 - vi. Copy of Reviewer's CV
 - d. Statement of Ohio's Public Records Act
 - e. Deadline for returning review
 - f. Contact person at BGSU

Example 1: Email Confirmation of Service as External reviewer

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a reviewer of Dr. XXX's credentials for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. The candidate, department faculty, and I agreed your professional success and reputation in the field would provide us with an objective professional assessment of Dr. XXX's scholarly record.

On or around June 15, 20XX I will send you a packet of materials and guidelines for completing your review. As we discussed, we would need you to return your review by September 1, 20XX so that it can be included in Dr. XXX's promotion and tenure dossier.

At this time I would ask that you please confirm (1) your willingness to serve as an external reviewer And (2) that you have no personal relationship with the candidate. Finally, I want to let you know that under the Ohio Public Records Act, all external evaluations are public records and may be viewed by anyone, including the candidate.

Thank you again for agreeing to serve as an external reviewer. Please contact XXX (xxx@bgsu.edu or 419.372.####) if you have any questions.

Example 2: Email Confirmation of Service as External reviewer

I am writing to confirm our recent phone conversation where you agreed to serve as an external reviewer for Dr. XXX's application for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Bowling Green State University. You were identified as an active and influential scholar by both the faculty and candidate who could provide an independent assessment of Dr. XXX's scholarly record for our promotion and tenure review process.

Would you please confirm in writing your willingness to serve as an external reviewer, and confirm that you do not have a personal relationship with Dr. XXX to avoid any perceived appearance of conflict of interest? Upon receiving your reply, a set of materials to review will be sent out on June 15, 20XX, along with general instructions for preparing your review letter. This will provide ample opportunity for you to review Dr. XXX's materials and submit your letter no later than September 1, 20XX.

Finally, you should be aware that in accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act, all "Letters of evaluation are not confidential and may be disclosed under the Ohio Public Records Act."

Thanks in advance for your assessment of the candidate's credentials, which is a key component of our tenure and promotions process. I look forward to hearing back from you very soon. If you have any questions, feel reach out to me using the contact information below.

Example 1: Cover Letter and Instructions for External Reviewers

June 15, 20XX

Thank you very much for agreeing to serve as a reviewer for Dr. XXX's case for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. We appreciate the time and effort you are contributing to this evaluation.

We ask that you evaluate Dr. XXX's research/creative publications in terms of quality, quantity, and impact. We are interested in how Dr. XXX's accomplishments compare to those of his peers, whether she is pursuing important questions, the level of scholarship embodied in her work, the skills she brings to her research/creative endeavors, and the significance of her work in the context of the discipline as a whole.

I am providing a set of materials that includes (1) Dr. XXX's curriculum vita, (2) her research/creative work narrative from her promotion and tenure dossier, in which she describes her scholarly trajectory and major accomplishments, (3) copies of Dr. XXX's publications from the review period, and (4) copies of her department's tenure and promotion policy. The research narrative accompanies the dossier at all stages of review, so it is written for a non-specialist audience.

We ask that you focus your review on the publications that Dr. XXX has identified as her major accomplishments:

- (Pub)
- (Pub)
- (Pub)
- (Pub)
- (Pub)

Other included publications may be assessed as you deem appropriate.

Promotion and tenure at Bowling Green State University depend on one's comprehensive record of teaching, scholarship, and service. Teaching and service are evaluated internally, and the balance of duties will vary from one institutional context to another. We are therefore not asking you to make a recommendation whether you would tenure and/or promote Dr. XXX.

In your letter, would you please explain briefly if and how you know Dr. XXX? Also, to inform reviewers on our campus about your academic expertise and background, please include a copy of your curriculum vitae with your evaluation.

Finally, allow me to point out that the Ohio Public Records Act does not permit confidentiality in the review process. By law, evaluations are public records and may be viewed by anyone, including the candidate.

We would greatly appreciate receiving your signed review by September 1, 20XX in order to conform to our university's timeline. Electronic submission of your signed review is welcome (XXX@bgsu.edu). Thank you again for lending your expertise to this most important process. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the email or number below.

Example 2: Cover Letter and Instructions for External Reviewers

June 15, 20XX

On behalf of the School of XXX at Bowling Green State University, I wish to thank you for your willingness to serve as a reviewer of Dr. XXX's credentials for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. The candidate, school faculty, and I have identified you as an individual who could provide a valuable assessment of Dr. XXX's scholarly record. We ask that you limit your comments to matters of scholarly productivity.

Bowling Green State University has defined scholarship in various ways. Individuals many choose to demonstrate expertise in a given area or engage in a broader range of scholarship. Domains used in the evaluation of scholarship include: publications/presentations/performances; sponsored program extramural support; and/or scholarship of engagement. Enclosed is a copy of the School's reappointment, tenure and promotion policy that describes the criteria and standards used for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

I am enclosing a copy of Dr. XXX's curriculum vita, a brief summary of her scholarship prepared by Dr. XXXX, and artifacts of her scholarly work. Based upon your review of these materials, your written assessment should focus on the following:

- an explanation of how you (the reviewer) know the candidate, if applicable, without making personal assessments, either positive or negative;
- the quality and quantity of the scholarly work and relative importance of each in the reviewer's assessment;
- a comparison of accomplishments in relation to those of other scholars in the discipline;
- the impact of the work on the discipline; and
- a candid, objective evaluation of the candidate's scholarly strengths and weaknesses

Although you are asked to compare Dr. XXX's accomplishments to other researchers in this field at the same stage of career development, please do not provide a recommendation regarding tenure and promotion. The final decision about whether to grant tenure and promotion is conducted within the university and is based upon the candidate's total record that includes teaching and service in addition to scholarship. You should also be aware that in accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act, all "Letters of evaluation are not confidential and may be disclosed under the Ohio Public Records Act."

If you have any questions regarding this process, feel free to contact me by email (xxxxx@bgsu.edu) or phone (419-372-#####). Please submit your signed, written review of Dr. XXX's dossier along with a copy of your curriculum vita by September 1, 20XX. Again, I appreciate your assistance with this important process.