Guidelines for External Reviewers for Promotion and Tenure Applications
University Libraries, University of Memphis

These guidelines aim to clarify the process and timeline for identifying, selecting, and contacting colleagues external to the University Libraries and qualified to review the dossiers of tenure-track librarians applying for promotion and/or tenure at the University Libraries.

1. Identifying potential external reviewers: It is understood that the applicant cannot become a ranked or known specialist in the profession without close contact with others qualified to evaluate his/her dossier. The applicant will identify and send to the Tenure and Promotion Committee (hereafter known as the Committee) no later than 15 August of the year of application the names of six potential external reviewers. The relationship of the reviewer to the applicant may be as a past or current collaborator, complete stranger or, most commonly, somewhere in between. The applicant should disclose any past or present relationship with those s/he recommends. The existence of a relationship does not disqualify anyone suggested. The applicant may identify potential reviewers not to be considered by the Committee, with explanation.

The Committee will also identify six potential external reviewers.

From these two pools, the Committee will select six external reviewers relevant to the applicant’s position and representing the balance of effort distribution. By our criteria (approved by the Libraries Faculty Group at their 21 November 2013 meeting),

- librarianship accounts for 75% of the faculty member’s time and effort,
- scholarship/creative activities account for 15%, and
- service accounts for the remaining 10%.

The six external reviewers will be approved by the Dean of University Libraries.

Characteristics of appropriate external reviewers: While the selection process reflects some flexibility, external reviewers will generally possess the following characteristics:

- tenured, permanent, full-time library faculty appointment
- employed at a university or college library,
- faculty member at or above the rank to which the candidate is aspiring (commonly Associate Professor),
- incumbent in a librarian position similar to that of the applicant (e.g. acquisitions, archives, cataloguing, instruction, systems, etc.),
- currently employed or within two years of retirement, and
- at an institution with one or more of the peer designations used by the University.

The review process period for the external reviewers will be from early-September to early- to mid-October; this is the interval during which they must be available. They will have approximately one month to complete their review.
2. **Contacting the external reviewers:** The Committee will contact the six selected external reviewers and confirm in writing (via email) their continuing availability and willingness to serve in this time-consuming and professionally demanding capacity (for which they receive no compensation). The reviewers must provide a current CV. The external reviewers will be charged to provide their professional evaluations of the applicant’s qualifications for promotion and/or eligibility for tenure.

3. **Timetable:** While the day/date may vary from year to year, the timetable for the Tenure and Promotion review process is set annually by the Provost’s office and aligns with the Fall academic semester.
   - **Spring** The applicant contacts potential external reviewers. Before submitting the name of a potential reviewer, the applicant must verify in writing (via email) that the individual is available and willing to serve in this role.
   - **August** The applicant’s dossier should be in e-format and ready to upload by the applicant by the end of August, at which time the site will be made available. PDF is recommended, but other formats may be used. *No part of a dossier may be in hard copy.*
   - **Late August** The Committee selects and Dean approves the list of external reviewers; the committee confirms continued reviewer availability.
   - **September** The Committee will aim to distribute to external reviewers in the first week of September the elements of the dossier mentioned in #4 below.
   - **October** Reviewer responses will be due in written form during the first half of October. E-mailed PDF document is the preferred format.

4. **Materials provided to the external reviewers:**
   - **Applicable portions of the dossier** Once the applicant uploads his/her dossier, the Committee makes available to the external reviewers the applicable portions. Typically these will include, but are not limited to
     - the candidate’s CV,
     - position description and letter of appointment/contract,
     - tenure application documentation,
     - reports, proposals and other evidence as available,
     - examples of scholarly communication (suggested by the applicant; selected by the Committee),
     - evidence of professional service, and
     - the table of contents for the entire dossier.
   Reviewers will be provided with any additional portion of the dossier upon request.
   - **The “Guidelines and Criteria for Tenure and/or Promotion, University Libraries, The University of Memphis” document.** The reviewer’s attention will be drawn to the six criteria identified on page 4.
     - Effectiveness of the candidate’s performance as a librarian
     - Quality of the candidate’s professional, University, and public service
     - Quality of the candidate’s scholarly/creative publications/activities
     - Willingness and ability to work constructively with colleagues and students
- Significance of the candidate’s contribution to the growth and development of the University Libraries
- Projections concerning the University Libraries present and future priorities and needs

And, on page 5 “Each candidate for tenure and/or promotion is evaluated in terms of librarianship, scholarship/creative activities, and service, which are interrelated and considered collectively. . . . The University Libraries guidelines and criteria may be more specific than University policies and may indicate policies unique to the department.”

Page 6 of the Guidelines reads, “These written guidelines are discipline specific, although in harmony with the general University guidelines. They contain the specific criteria and procedures for faculty assessment . . . .”

- The “Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations for Faculty Members in the University Libraries” document.

On the basis of these materials and their professional judgement, reviewers will be asked to evaluate the applicant on the satisfactory fulfillment of the expressed criteria, requirements, and expectations in the areas of librarianship, scholarship/creative activities, and professional service, balanced against the stated distribution of effort.

Faculty Meeting (minutes) Faculty Group, University Libraries, University of Memphis. November 21, 2013, [S. Knowlton, Chair, R. Scott, Secretary]

Guidelines and Criteria for Tenure and/or Promotion, University Libraries, University of Memphis. (2003, 2005)

Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations for Faculty Members in the University Libraries. (2016, rev. 2017)

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