UMass Chan
Letters of Evaluation Guidelines

In accordance with the Academic Personnel Policy (APP), sections 3.12.b & 3.12.c, letters of evaluation are required for the review of candidates for appointment, promotion and tenure. The letters provide essential information to reviewers on the evaluation of a candidate's contributions, achievements, and their academic reputation outside UMass Chan Medical School.

Letters of Evaluation are divided into **three** categories. The numbers of letters required in each category depend on the proposed academic rank.

Minimum Requirements for . . .	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Appointment/promotion to **Instructor/Assistant Professor**	minimum **3**	not required	any number
Appointment/promotion to **Associate Professor/Professor**	minimum **3**	minimum **3**	any number
Award of Tenure	none	minimum **5**	any number

*Note: additional Category 2 letters, above the minimum of 3, can be counted as Category 1 letters to meet the required minimum total of 6 letters for appointment/promotion to Associate Professor/Professor.

Procedure for soliciting letters of evaluation

The department chair or the GSN Dean is responsible for selecting evaluators and soliciting letters of evaluation.

1. A faculty candidate submits to their department chair or the GSN Dean a **proposed** list of individuals who might be solicited to write letters of evaluation.
   - The list should be divided into the categories described below and include complete contact information (title, affiliation, business address, email, telephone).
   - Faculty may contact individuals to determine their availability and willingness to write letters.
   - Faculty should NOT provide evaluators with templates or drafts of letters
   - All letters received must be added to the file.

Category 1 Letters: Attestations

(APP Section 3.12.c.i)

For appointment or promotion to any rank at least three letters are solicited from individuals who can attest to the candidate's qualifications.

Such individuals may be UMass Chan Medical School faculty members, colleagues at the same or previous institution, or past or present mentors, supervisors, or collaborators.

Instructor and Assistant Professor. Typically, these letters are solicited from individuals who can attest to the candidate's training and experience, competence, and readiness for an entry level faculty position. Evaluators might include current or former training program directors, research supervisors, mentors, and others who can comment on the preparation of the candidate.

Associate Professor and Professor. Typically, these letters are solicited from individuals who can attest to the candidate's performance in an Area of Distinction or in Academic Service. Evaluators might include current or former supervisors, such as a Division Chief, lab head, or course director, who can comment on the candidate's performance as a clinician, investigator or educator, respectively. Current or former collaborators and mentors and referring physicians may also provide valuable information about the candidate.

Category 2 Letters: Unbiased External Evaluations

(APP Section 3.12.c.ii)

Category 2 letters are intended to serve the purpose of establishing the candidate's regional, national or international (based on rank and criteria) reputation.

Letter writers must be from individuals who are at an academic rank equal to or above the rank proposed for the candidate (or in an equivalent position in a non-academic institution)

Letter writers should not have a personal and/or professional relationship with the candidate that suggests *a real or perceived conflict of interest or bias* in evaluating the candidate.

Letter writers cannot be someone who has **collaborated, co-authored, trained, supervised, mentored, trained alongside, worked close clinically with the candidate within the previous three years.**

The **ideal Category 2 letter** is from an authority in the field who knows the candidate well enough to highlight their accomplishments and address unique aspects of their career but not someone who would be perceived as having a positive bias or conflict in evaluating the candidate.

Use the Evaluation Prep Checklist for guidance on putting together your category 2 list of reference writers

Category 3 Letters — Teaching and Mentoring

(APP Section 3.12.c.iii)

Category 3 letters attest to the candidate's effectiveness in teaching or mentoring may be solicited from students, trainees and/or mentees proposed by the candidate.

- Appointment: not required
- Promotion: At least two category 3 letters are required for any applications for promotion if the candidate is not able to collect teaching evaluations. Category 3 teaching letters cannot be substituted for teaching evaluations if teaching evaluations exist.

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