

# Promotion and Tenure External Evaluator College Approval Process

July 30, 2025

This document provides guidance and outlines the process for college approval of external evaluators for promotion and tenure cases. All external evaluators must meet college standards and approval as articulated in the [college APT](#) document.

## Guidelines:

1. In The majority of letters in the final dossier should be from full professors from institutions that are in the [Association of American Universities \(AAU\)](#) or [Big 10 Academic Alliance \(BTAA\)](#). Individuals in this category, and who are in the same field as the candidate are pre-approved but should be reported on the list provided to the college. No written justification is required for individuals in this category.
2. The use of multiple evaluators from the same institution is strongly discouraged; provide justification for any requested exceptions, and list how you will prioritize invitations (i.e., plan to invite a second evaluator only if the first evaluator from that institution has declined).
3. If the potential evaluator is from an academic institution that is not clearly a peer or aspirational peer for Ohio State (defined as AAU or BTAA), or if the potential evaluator is from a nonacademic institution (e.g., a public policy think tank, a private art academy or music conservatory, a museum, a biomedical company, or a governmental agency), provide a brief justification, e.g., based on the prestige of the institution, the credentials and experience of the evaluator, or specific relevance to the candidate's activities. The research credentials of the evaluators should generally mirror those of a professor at the full professor rank at Ohio State (e.g., in a single marker department where a second book is the gold standard, a full professor should have published two books).
4. For reviews of assistant professors, a limited number of evaluators who are associate professors is permitted by the college, but justification should be provided (e.g., a small or new field for which more senior people are not available, evaluator has gained prominence as a national or international expert in the field, etc.). These individuals must be from AAU or BTAA institutions. For reviews of associate professors, all evaluators must be full professors (or equivalent). Emeritus full professors at other institutions are acceptable as long as they are still active researchers.
5. International evaluators from strong institutions are allowed. These should be a minority of the final set of letters.
6. No more than half of the letters in the final dossier can be from individuals named by the

candidate. If an evaluator is INDEPENDENTLY named by both the candidate and someone else (e.g., the P&T committee), the evaluator counts as having been named by the P&T committee as the committee suggested that name without candidate input.

7. If external evaluations were solicited for the fourth-year review of an assistant professor, effort should be made to minimize overlap between the sets of evaluators for the fourth- and sixth-year reviews. Exceptions should be requested at the time of approval (see details below). Evaluators who reviewed candidates' promotion and tenure cases may be evaluators for their promotion to full professor, but this fact should be noted on the approval request.
8. Evaluators should be chosen for whom there is no conflict of interest. Previous advisors are not allowed as evaluators, per OAA and college policies; former faculty at Ohio State can be included if no conflict of interest is apparent, but emeritus faculty at Ohio State are not appropriate. Conflict of interest is based on whether the success of the candidate has a potential impact on the success of the evaluator. Letters from collaborators may be solicited by the TIU head to provide information on the role of the candidate in the collaborative work. These letters are placed in the "Other Letters" section and are informative not evaluative. No approval from the college is required for letters of this type.

### Process:

External evaluator lists should be submitted by either the TIU head or the P&T chair to Kristi Williams, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, no later than May 22, 2026. If an extension is needed, please let Kristi Williams know the reason in advance of the deadline. These lists should be submitted and approved before contacting the potential evaluators. Lists should be checked with the candidate to ensure that there is no conflict of interest, and any working relationship should be disclosed.

Please submit lists as a Word document to [williams.2339@osu.edu](mailto:williams.2339@osu.edu) and provide separate documents for each candidate for promotion. For each faculty candidate, list the following:

1. Faculty candidate's name, rank, TIU, joint TIU (if any), , and main areas of research or creative activity
2. For each potential evaluator, include the following information:
  - a. Evaluator's name, rank, institution, department, and any significant distinction (e.g., named professorship, academy membership, service as journal editor, etc.)
  - b. Evaluator's areas of expertise; if not in same area(s) as candidate, indicate how the fields of specialization overlap
  - c. For faculty at non-AAU or Big Ten Alliance schools only: a brief justification of why they are an appropriate evaluator (i.e., awards or honors, or circumstances for why their qualifications are equivalent to a full professor from a peer institution)
  - d. For evaluators who are associate professors, provide justification for why this evaluator is important for reviewing this candidate

If the evaluator has reviewed an earlier fourth-year or promotion case, note that fact and include a brief explanation of why it is appropriate to solicit another review from this person. Please provide longer lists if you expect issues in identifying evaluators, and if additional names are provided later, please provide



the list of evaluators who have accepted at that time (for context).

Kristi Williams will screen the lists, consult with the divisional deans as needed, and inform the TIU head (or P&T chair, if that person provided the list) when approval is granted or if any adjustments need to be made.



## Appendix: Section on External Evaluators in ASC APT document

Source: [Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure Criteria and Procedures for The Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences](#)

### 4. External Evaluations

External evaluations of research/creative work are obtained for all promotion reviews in which scholarship must be assessed. These include all tenure-track promotion and tenure or promotion reviews, all research faculty reappointment and promotion reviews, all adjunct faculty promotion reviews, all clinical/teaching/professional practice faculty promotion reviews to the level of Clinical/Teaching Professor or Professional Practice Professor and, where required by the TIU governance documents, reviews for promotion to the level of Associate Clinical/Teaching Professor or Professional Practice Associate Professor.

TIUs within this college will seek external evaluations predominantly from evaluators in peer and aspirational peer programs that are clearly identified in the Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure document of each unit. The College of Arts and Sciences defines peer and aspirational peer institutions to include members of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). Departments may define additional peer and aspirational peer institutions in their APT documents. Justification will be provided whenever a suggested evaluator is from a program not so specified.

A conflict of interest for external reviewers exists if the reviewer is or has been to the candidate: a) a thesis, dissertation, or postdoctoral advisee/advisor; b) a research collaborator, which includes someone who has been a coauthor on a publication within the past 3 years, including pending publications and submissions; c) a collaborator on a project within the past 3 years, including current and planned collaborations; d) in a consulting/financial arrangement with the candidate within the past 3 years, including receiving compensation of any type (e.g., money, goods, or services); e) a relative or close personal friend; or f) in any relationship, personal or professional, that could reduce the reviewer's objectivity. Also excluded are reviewers from the same institution, or those who had previous employment in the same institution within the past 12 months, or those who are being considered for employment at that institution.

A minimum of five credible and useful evaluations must be obtained. A credible and useful evaluation is written by a person highly qualified to judge the candidate's research/creative work who is not a close personal friend, research collaborator, or former academic advisor or post-doctoral mentor of the candidate (see description of conflict of interest for external reviewers just above). Qualifications are generally judged on the basis of the evaluator's expertise, record of accomplishments, and institutional affiliation. TIUs will solicit evaluations only from professors with institutional affiliations predominantly in the programs specified in their Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure document.

All potential evaluators must be approved by the college through the associate dean for academic affairs. TIUs are encouraged to solicit evaluations from professors at institutions comparable to Ohio State. If the potential evaluator is from an academic institution that is not clearly a peer or aspirational peer for Ohio State (defined as AAU, BTAA, or included in the supplementary list in the TIU APT



document), or if the potential evaluator is from a nonacademic institution (e.g., a public policy think tank, a private art academy or music conservatory, a museum, a biomedical company, or a governmental agency), a brief written justification is required. The TIU's justification should be based on the prestige of the institution, the credentials and experience of the evaluator, and/or the specific relevance of the evaluator's expertise to the candidate's activities. International evaluators from strong institutions are allowed. The research credentials of the evaluators should generally mirror those of a professor at the professor rank at Ohio State. In the case of an assistant professor seeking promotion to associate professor with tenure, a minority of the evaluations may come from associate professors. The TIU should provide justification if more than a minority of the evaluations are from associate professors (e.g., candidate's work is in a small or new field for which more senior people are not available, evaluators have gained prominence as national or international experts in the field). For reviews of associate professors, all evaluators must be professors (or equivalent). Emeritus professors are acceptable as long as they are active researchers.

A credible and useful evaluation also provides sufficient analysis of the candidate's performance to add information to the review. A letter's "usefulness" is defined as the extent to which the letter is analytical as opposed to descriptive or perfunctory. Under no circumstances will "usefulness" be defined by the perspective taken by an evaluator on the merits of the case.

Since a TIU cannot control who agrees to write or the usefulness of the letters received, more letters should be sought than are required, and the initial set of letters should be solicited no later than the end of the spring semester prior to the review year. This timing allows additional letters to be requested should fewer than five useful letters result from the first round of requests.

As described above, a list of potential evaluators is assembled by the Promotion and Tenure Committee or eligible faculty, the TIU head, and the candidate. If the evaluators suggested by the candidate meet the criteria for credibility, a letter must be requested from at least one of those persons. [Faculty Rule 3335-6-04](#) requires that no more than half the external evaluation letters in the dossier be written by persons suggested by the candidate. It is possible that no evaluator suggested by the candidate agrees to write. Neither the Office of Academic Affairs nor any TIU in this college requires that the dossier contain a letter from an evaluator suggested by the candidate.

The Office of Academic Affairs provides a suggested format for letters requesting external evaluations. A sample letter for tenure-track faculty can be found [here](#). A sample letter for clinical/teaching/professional practice faculty can be found [here](#).