

Letters of Assessment

Guidelines for Letters of Assessment

- A. Letters of assessment must be obtained for all candidates applying for promotion. Dossiers shall include a minimum of four (4) letters from evaluators: at least 2 from regional extension peers and at least 2 from state level faculty with extension appointments. For promotion to Extension Educator or Senior Educator, the 2 letters must be external (outside of Penn State University) assessments. Letters should be solicited from individuals who are of higher rank than the candidate and from an appropriate education oriented professional position. See Appendix for sample letters.
- B. The regional director is responsible for obtaining letters of assessment. Names and contact information of six (6) potential evaluators should be supplied by the candidate, and the county extension director to the regional director. The RD will consider the list provided by the candidate and their CED and additional potential evaluators to develop the final list of (4) evaluators to be contacted.
- C. The process of obtaining external letters of assessment should begin far enough in advance of the review process that letters are in the dossier and available to review by committees and administrators at all levels of review. If letters arrive after the review process has begun, individuals involved in those levels of review already completed shall be notified by the regional director of the receipt of the letters, provided with access to the letters, and provided with an opportunity to reconsider their recommendation.
- D. A log shall be inserted in the dossier to document:
 - Date of request to evaluator
 - Date of receipt of letter from evaluator
 - Date of entry of letter in dossier
 - Title of evaluator

The log shall not be made available to the candidate at any time.

- E. A copy of the letter requesting the evaluation shall be inserted in the dossier; the request should be for a critical evaluation of the candidate's achievements and reputation within his or her discipline, with reference to the mission and assignment of the candidate. Requests should be for letters of assessment, not for letters of recommendation.
- If the same letter is sent to all evaluators, one sample copy of the letter shall be inserted in the dossier. If different letters are used, a copy of each letter shall be inserted in the dossier.
- F. Letters should be from diverse sources and should not be requested from the candidate's former teachers, students, clients, or others whose relationship to the candidate might make objective assessments difficult. Evaluators should be asked to describe the nature of their association with the candidate. Evaluators should be in a position to make informed judgments about the candidate's work.
- G. Evaluation letters received but not solicited by the RD will not be included in the dossier.