

**SAMPLE LETTERS TO EXTERNAL
EVALUATORS FOR P&T REVIEW**

Letter for Promotion to Associate Professor

Dear _____,

The Department/School of _____ in the College of ___ at Iowa State University is considering the tenure and promotion of Assistant Professor ___ to the rank of Associate Professor. Iowa State University requires that eminent professionals in the candidate's field outside the university provide written evaluation. Earlier you agreed to serve in this role and we are pleased to have your assistance as an external reviewer for the candidacy of _____.

Iowa State University's standards for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure require that a faculty member "have a solid academic reputation and show promise of further development and productivity" in their career. The enclosed excerpt from the [ISU Faculty Handbook Section 5.2.3.2](#) pertaining to promotion with tenure provides an elaboration on the criteria for promotion. You will note that our promotion and tenure evaluation centers on the faculty responsibilities outlined in the Position Responsibility Statement and on the production of scholarship, as defined in the first section of the excerpt. Note that the guidelines indicate that the candidate must demonstrate excellence in scholarship, be a significant contributor in their field, and exhibit a potential for national distinction. The candidate must be effective in all areas of their position responsibilities and show satisfactory institutional service.

The Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost has issued clear communication and acknowledgment of the impacts of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic which continue to unfold for our faculty and affect their work. The variability in pandemic-related experiences has affected faculty goals and productivity differently based on their respective disciplines, experiences, privileges, and constraints. Faculty have the opportunity to document the impacts of the pandemic on their scholarship through COVID impact statements included in their promotion and tenure materials. You are asked to take into consideration the impact of the ongoing global pandemic on the candidate's work.

Your judgment about rate and quality of scholarly productivity (including teaching, research/creative activities, extension/professional practice), potential for national visibility and national impact of the candidate's work, and the influence of the candidate's work on the work of other scholars are important for our review. I ask that you carefully review the qualification for promotion and assess the candidate's accomplishments and contributions based on the criteria for promotion. There is *no* requirement that you comment on whether or not the candidate would be tenured and/or promoted at your institution.

We ask you to consider all accomplishments and credentials of a faculty member in the decision on promotion and/or tenure. Give primary weight to the faculty member's accomplishments and attainments in their current rank. In the case of _____, the

appointment for their current rank began on _____.

Enclosed is _____ dossier including their vita, faculty portfolio, selected supporting materials, and their Position Responsibility Statement to assist you in your review. Should you have any questions or require other information, do not hesitate to call me at your convenience.

NOTE: Paragraph to be included in cases where there has been an extension of the probationary period:

Iowa State University encourages its faculty members to consider extensions of the probationary period when special circumstances may interfere significantly with the faculty member's opportunity to develop the qualifications necessary for tenure in the time allowed (e.g. arrival of a child, personal illness, care of an ill family member, significant alterations in position responsibilities, COVID-19). Dr. ____ has had their probationary period extended according to policy. Standards regarding what constitutes a record deserving of tenure are not raised to adjust for a tenure-clock extension of any length.

As part of your letter, please describe your relationship with Dr. _____. This should include how long you have known the candidate, whether you have a personal or professional relationship with the candidate, and, in general, whether there is potential for conflict of interest. The university recommends that our external reviewers not include major professors, post-doctoral advisors, and former students. Significant co-authors, co-PIs, and research collaborators should also be excluded except in very unusual circumstances that should be explained.

Your name and those of other external reviewers and the verbatim content of the reviews shall not be made available to Dr. _____. The content of the reviews is regarded by the university as confidential to the extent permitted by law and shall be released only to those individuals who are authorized to review and make recommendations on this case.

As a final request, I ask that you send with your review a copy of your current abbreviated vita so that those reviewing the case are aware of your excellent credentials to place the review in context.

I wish to thank you again for your willingness to serve as an external reviewer for _____. Promotion decisions are critical for any department and university, and I appreciate your assistance on this matter. For your review to be included in the candidate's review process, I ask that your evaluation be returned to me no later than _____.

Sincerely,

Letter for Promotion to Professor

Dear _____,

The Department/School of _____ in the College of _____ at Iowa State University is considering the promotion of Associate Professor _____ to the rank of Professor. Iowa State University requires that eminent professionals in the candidate's field outside the university provide written evaluation. Earlier you agreed to serve in this role and we are pleased to have your assistance as an external reviewer for the candidacy of _____.

Iowa State University's standards for promotion to Professor require that a faculty member "be recognized by their professional peers within the university, as well as nationally and/or internationally, for the quality of the contribution to the discipline" in their career. The enclosed excerpt from the *ISU Faculty Handbook* 5.2.3.3 pertaining to promotion to Professor provides an elaboration on the criteria for promotion. You will note that our promotion and tenure evaluation is centered on the faculty responsibilities outlined in the Position Responsibility Statement and on the production of scholarship, as defined in the first section of the excerpt. Note that the guidelines indicate that the candidate must demonstrate national distinction in scholarship and demonstrate evidence of wide recognition and outstanding contributions to the profession. The candidate must be effective in all areas of their position responsibilities and show significant institutional service.

The Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost has issued clear communication and acknowledgment of the impacts of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic which continue to unfold for our faculty and affect their work. The variability in pandemic-related experiences has affected faculty goals and productivity differently based on their respective disciplines, experiences, privileges, and constraints. Faculty have the opportunity to document the impacts of the pandemic on their scholarship through COVID impact statements included in their promotion and tenure materials. You are asked to take into consideration the impact of the ongoing global pandemic on the candidate's work.

Your judgment about rate and quality of scholarly productivity (including teaching, research/creative activities, extension/professional practice), national/international visibility, national/international impact of the candidate's work, and the influence of the candidate's work on the work of other scholars are important for our review. I ask that you carefully review the qualification for promotion and assess the candidate's accomplishments and contributions based on the criteria for promotion. There is *no* requirement that you comment on whether or not the candidate would be promoted at your institution.

We ask you to consider all accomplishments and credentials of a faculty member in the decision on promotion. Give primary weight to the faculty member's accomplishments and attainments in their current rank. In the case of _____, the

appointment for their current rank began on _____.

Enclosed is _____ dossier including their vita, faculty portfolio, selected supporting materials, and their Position Responsibility Statement to assist you in your review. Should you have any questions or require other information, do not hesitate to call me at your convenience.

As part of your letter, please describe your relationship with Dr. _____. This should include how long you have known the candidate, whether you have a personal or professional relationship with the candidate, and, in general, whether there is potential for conflict of interest. The university recommends that our external reviewers not include major professors, post-doctoral advisors, and former students. Significant co-authors, co-PIs, and research collaborators should also be excluded except in very unusual circumstances that should be explained.

Your name and those of other external reviewers and the verbatim content of the reviews shall not be made available to _____. The content of the reviews is regarded by the university as confidential to the extent permitted by law and shall be released only to those individuals who are authorized to review and make recommendations on this case.

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I wish to thank you again for your willingness to serve as an external reviewer for _____. Promotion decisions are critical for any department and university, and I appreciate your assistance on this matter. In order for your review to be included in the candidate's review process, I ask that your evaluation be returned to me no later than _____.

Sincerely,

Revised June 2024