

Tips on Preparation of Health Sciences Review Files

Departments and deans' offices are responsible for ensuring that files are ready for campus review—i.e., that files are complete, accurate, and comply with policy. The tips below are based on comments by the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) and others on common problems seen in review files.

Who may participate in file prep and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the department chair and/or division chief is an appointee's mentor, co-author, or collaborator, he or she should be recused from preparing or contributing to the file, including preparing the solicitation letters to external referees. • Appointees' mentors, co-authors, or collaborators should not chair departmental ad hoc committees. However, they may serve as committee members if their expertise is needed. The departmental recommendation letter should explain why they were asked to serve. • Conflicts of interest should be noted in the file. Any faculty member, department chair, or division chief who has a financial or management interest in a company providing support for either an appointee's research or an appointee's salary should avoid contributing to the file. If such a faculty member, chair, or division chief does contribute to the file, his or her relationship to the company and the appointee should be detailed in the departmental recommendation letter. • No academic appointee may participate in any academic review affecting a near relative. (For the definition of "near relative," refer to APM 520, Appointment of Near Relatives.) If an academic appointee would have participated in the review if the reviewee were not a near relative, the departmental recommendation letter should state that the academic appointee did not participate in the review.
Retention files	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Executive Vice Chancellor should be apprised of potential retention cases immediately so they may partner with the department to retain outstanding faculty. • A copy of the outside offer letter(s) must be included in the retention file. • A discussion of how the competing institution compares to UCSD must be included in the departmental recommendation letter.
Selection of external referees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except as noted below, external referees should be individuals who are independent of the appointee. Letters from external referees whom campus reviewers may not regard as objective or independent evaluators, either because they are too close to the appointee professionally (e.g., collaborators, co-authors, thesis supervisors, from the home institution, etc.) or because they have a personal relationship with the appointee, may be included if they shed light on collaborations. However, except for Project Scientists and Specialists (see below), non-independent letters <u>do not count</u> toward the minimum number of external letters required. • For advancement in the Project Scientist and Specialist series, evaluation letters may be solicited from individuals who are not professionally independent of the appointee; however, additional letters from more independent sources should be obtained if possible. • External letters should be solicited from senior scholars (Associate level and above) who are at the same rank as that proposed for the appointee, or higher. If external referees are not senior scholars, the department should explain why they were selected as the best-qualified referees and identify their particular expertise within the field or specialty. <i>This information should appear only on the Referee I.D. form, not in the departmental recommendation letter.</i> • While appointees may suggest external referees, the majority of external letters should be received from referees selected by the department.

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Solicitation letters to external referees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicitation letters to external referees should include wording that explains the significance of the proposed action. Sample review solicitation letters containing appropriate wording are available on the Forms and Examples page of Academic Personnel Services Web site. The solicitation letter should request external referees to address the appointee's national reputation if advancement to Step VI is proposed, or the appointee's national and international reputation if Above Scale is proposed. The same documents (especially the same list of publications) should be sent with the solicitation letter to each external referee. Appointees' personal statements are implicitly biased. It is up to the department to decide whether to send personal statements along with the CV and publications to external referees. If the personal statement is included, the solicitation letter should state this explicitly. Appointees should be informed that the personal statement is being sent to referees.
Use of external referee letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All external referee letters solicited and received by the department must be included in the file, whether or not the final departmental recommendation requires external letters. For example, if the department solicits external letters for a promotion and, after reviewing those letters, determines that an action other than a promotion (e.g., a crossover merit) is appropriate, the external letters received and reviewed by the departmental faculty must be included in the file so that campus reviewers consider the identical file documents.
Departmental ad hoc or review committee reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The departmental ad hoc or review committee report should be included in the file, and the committee membership should be indicated at the end of the report (with members' signatures). If no written report is provided, the committee membership should be an addendum to the Referee I.D. form. If the departmental ad hoc report fails to describe the content and importance of research or creative activity, this should be included in the departmental recommendation letter. Excessive quoting of external referees should be avoided.
Teaching effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A detailed evaluation of appointees' teaching is required. It is difficult to evaluate appointees who teach courses with small enrollments; in these cases, reports on classroom visits by colleagues and letters from students are especially valuable.
Crossover merits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order for an appointee to be awarded a crossover merit, ongoing research must be listed in Section C of the bibliography and discussed in the departmental recommendation letter, and evidence (documentation) of this work must be provided. The departmental letter should explain how promotion will be justified when this work is complete. The academic bibliography form should be complete and in compliance with the packet instructions.

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Accelerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For accelerations, information on the department's standards for a normal merit advancement to the recommended rank and step must be included in the departmental recommendation letter. This information is essential in order for reviewers to determine the appropriateness of the proposed action. • Files proposing acceleration should be strong in all areas (research and creative activity, teaching, and service). • Off-cycle acceleration files are discouraged unless there are extraordinary reasons for submitting them. • "Rare and compelling" reasons are required for accelerated advancement to or as Professor, Above Scale. Departments must provide these reasons in the departmental recommendation letter in order to justify such advancement.
Off-scale salary components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough justification for awarding or requesting policy exceptions for bonus or market off-scale salary components should be included in the departmental recommendation letter. It is particularly important to provide justification for continuation of market off-scale components beyond the six-year limit. • Requests for bonus off-scale awards in the absence of scholarly activity are discouraged.
Departmental vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a faculty vote is required for a proposed action, the action must be supported by at least 50% of faculty eligible to vote and in residence at UCSD at the time of the vote. The faculty vote reported in the departmental letter should agree with the vote recorded on the Academic Recommendation Summary form. <i>(Note: The summary form reflects the <u>departmental</u> recommendation as voted on by faculty or a departmental ad hoc committee. A chair's personal recommendation may differ from that of the faculty or ad hoc committee.)</i> • Reasons for any negative faculty votes, if known, and for abstentions, absences, or lack of compliance with campus voting policy should be explained in the departmental recommendation letter.
Additional tips for departmental recommendation letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive quoting of external referees should be avoided. • The letter should list the top publications in the appointee's discipline and should explain the importance of the appointee's publication venues in relation to these. • The letter should contain a discussion of teaching effectiveness, rather than merely a listing of courses taught. Any problems in the area of teaching should be discussed, and specific plans to correct the problems should be delineated (or the appointee may do so in his or her personal statement). • The quality of service contributions should be indicated. • The quality of diversity contributions should be indicated.