

Tips on Preparation of ORU Appointment Files (for Research Scientists, Project Scientists, and Specialists)

Organized Research Units or centers and deans' offices are responsible for ensuring that appointment 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 appointment files.

<p>Planning for appointment file preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A candidate must hold an appropriate visa before beginning employment. The unit should contact the International Center for guidance as soon as it is aware that a candidate has visa issues. • Retroactive appointments will not be approved. Therefore, please ensure that appointment files are submitted well in advance of the start date, especially if review by a campus committee (e.g., CAP, PSSRP) is required. • The number of the approved Recruitment Selection Report (or waiver) must be recorded on the Summary sheet of the appointment file. Files will be held if the approved number is not provided. Note that this information is not provided to campus reviewers.
<p>Who may participate in file prep and review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the unit director is a candidate's mentor, co-author, or collaborator, he or she should be recused from preparing the file, including preparing the solicitation letters to external referees. • Candidates' mentors, co-authors, or collaborators should not chair unit ad hoc committees. However, they may serve as committee members if their expertise is needed. • Conflicts of interest should be noted in the file. Any faculty member or director who has a financial or management interest in a company providing support for either a candidate's research or a candidate's salary should avoid contributing to the file. If such a faculty member or director does contribute to the file, his or her relationship to the company and the candidate should be detailed in the unit 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 unit recommendation letter should state that the academic appointee did not participate in the review.
<p>Selection of external referees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External referees should be at a more senior rank and step than that proposed for the candidate. • For appointment in the Research Scientist series, letters should be from external referees who are independent of the candidate (i.e., not former colleagues, co-authors, or collaborators). • For appointment in the Project Scientist and Specialist series, evaluation letters may be solicited from individuals who are not professionally independent of the candidate; however, additional letters from more independent sources should be obtained if possible. • If external referees are not senior scholars, or are not independent of the candidate, the unit should explain why they were selected as the best-qualified referees. <i>This information should appear only on the Referee I.D. form, not in the unit recommendation letter.</i> • It is important to solicit a sufficient number of external referees. Three external letters are required for appointment at the Assistant rank, and five external letters are required for appointment at the Associate rank and above.

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<p>Solicitation letters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicitation letters to external referees should include wording that specifies the level of appointment being proposed. Sample appointment solicitation letters containing appropriate wording are available on Forms and Examples page on the Academic Personnel Services Web site.
<p>Referee I.D. Form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of search committee members must be included in the Recruitment Plan, so it is not necessary to list committee members on the Referee ID form. <i>Committee members should not be named in the unit recommendation letter.</i> If there is a unit ad hoc or review committee, members' names should be included in the file; if a written report containing member names is not provided, committee membership should be included as an addendum to the Referee I.D. form. <i>Members should not be named in the unit recommendation letter.</i>
<p>Unit recommendation letter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unit recommendation letter should state either that an open recruitment was conducted or that it was waived, and it should briefly explain why the candidate proposed was the best qualified for the job. The names of other candidates and details regarding their gender, race, and ethnicity should be omitted. External referees must not be identified in the unit letter. Only the Referee I.D. form identifies and describes the qualifications of external referees. Excessive quoting of external referee comments in the unit letter is discouraged. The unit recommendation letter should explain the standards and expectations for productivity in the discipline. Specifically, the letter should explain what is expected at the recommended level of appointment in terms of research productivity. This is particularly important in fields in which productivity is assessed by means other than publication of peer-reviewed research articles. The letter should also address the quality of venues in which the candidate's creative work has appeared. Thorough justification for any proposed off-scale salary should be included in the unit letter. If an off-scale salary is proposed to counter an offer from another institution, a copy of the competing offer letter(s) should be included in the file.