**Department Chair Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Letters**

**Promotion to Professor**

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist department chairs in the writing of tenure and promotion letters that include the appropriate information in a consistent format.

Please note, these guidelines include generalized examples used for illustrative purposes in the interest of providing a starting point only for each of the letter’s sections. A fillable template letter that mirrors these guidelines is available for your use on the Office of Faculty website:

<http://college.emory.edu/faculty/faculty/promotion-tenure-track.html>

**To be eligible for promotion to full professor, faculty members are expected to demonstrate excellent achievement and promise in research and teaching, in addition to appropriate service within their rank.**

**Organization and Content of a Department Chair Letter**

The department chair letter should include the following five sections:

1. Introduction
   1. voting results
   2. candidate overview
   3. external reviewers
2. Research
3. Teaching
4. Service
5. Conclusion

Headings may be used to quickly identify the sections devoted to research, teaching, and service, each of which should include:

* an explanation of how the department defines the required level of accomplishment in each category
* discussion of faculty performance with supporting evidence

**1. Introduction**

The introduction section summarizes several key areas of information: the departmental meeting attendance and voting results; the candidate’s academic history and area(s) of research; and the composition of the group of external reviewers.

1. Attendance and voting:
   1. date of the departmental meeting and a list of attendees and their ranks, making note of who voted in absentia. No abstentions are permitted unless a faculty member cannot attend the meeting for compelling and unusual reasons (i.e. health reasons).
   2. voting results (e.g., 8-2 “meets criteria”) for excellence in research and teaching, satisfactory in service, and overall recommendation for promotion

Note: Please ensure accuracy and consistency in the tabulation of votes throughout the letter. The total number of votes should match the total number of signatories and any discrepancies and/or absence of any appropriately ranked faculty member’s vote should be explained.

1. Candidate overview:
   1. academic history: granting institution and year of the candidate’s PhD; location and duration of post-doctoral fellowship(s), if applicable; previous faculty appointments, if applicable; year of candidate’s start at Emory; and year of promotion to Associate Professor
   2. research area(s): provide a brief summary of the candidate’s area(s) of research (include broad field and subfield) that is accessible to a non-specialist audience
   3. describe the candidate’s contribution(s) to the vision and strategic plan of the department and/or the college and/or the university
2. External reviewers:
   1. provide a proportional overview of the composition of the external reviewer group, highlighting markers of stature (e.g., named chairs, members of prestigious academies/societies, department chairs, etc.), international spectrum, the range of fields represented (speaks to interdisciplinarity), and other characteristics that indicate the suitability of the group for the candidate’s review
   2. include the institutions represented by the group
   3. provide a summary of the reviewers’ recommendations

*Example of Introduction section of departmental letter:*

“The full professors of the Department of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ met on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to consider the promotion of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, PhD to the rank of Professor. The following faculty members were present at the meeting: Professors \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was not present, but cast her/his/their vote by proxy or via email. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was not present and did not vote because of health reasons. The department rated Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “meets criteria” for excellence in research (X-X), “meets criteria” for excellence in teaching (X-X), and “meets criteria” for satisfactory in service (X-X) and recommended promotion to Professor (X-X). [*alter as needed for votes against promotion and/or for any discrepancies in the voting results*]

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ received her/his/their PhD in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She/he/they held a position as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ before being appointed as Assistant Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at Emory University in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s research focus is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s appointment is important to the department’s mission to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The six external reviewers represent a distinguished set of scholars including named chairs from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*name institution(s)*], as well as three international scholars from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*name institution(s)*] who are leaders in the field of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Two reviewers hold named or endowed professorships and two are fellows of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Reviewers were selected from prominent programs in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in recognition of the interdisciplinary reach of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s scholarship.

All six reviewers strongly support Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s promotion and were uniformly positive about her/his/their accomplishments to date and the likelihood of future career growth.

*OR*

The external reviewers/departmental committee raised some concern over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**2. Research**

The research section describes the candidate’s research area(s) in more detail and demonstrates accomplishment in research, usually based on a new and sustained body of work beyond the work (publications, performative and/or creative works, external funding obtained, speaking engagements, etc.) upon which tenure and promotion were based. There should be evidence of an appropriate body of scholarly publication or its equivalent for the performing arts and a clear establishment of a national/international scholarly reputation in the candidate’s field(s) of inquiry. Consider also the candidate’s contribution to the ongoing intellectual agenda of the discipline as well as the future intellectual vigor of her/his/their specific field(s). This section should also contain:

1. an explanation of how the department/program defines excellence in research, including details regarding the discipline-specific research standards/expectations within the relevant field(s)
2. a sentence or two that identifies the nature of the candidate's unique scholarly contribution and its significance within its field (or more broadly)
3. the candidate’s publishing record (indicate how many are first or senior author; number of publications post-tenure)
4. H-index (if applicable)
5. funding history (include current grants and number served as PI or Co-PI, if applicable)
6. at least one paragraph that explicitly draws from the external review letters, including direct quotes
7. any concerns raised by the external reviewers and/or departmental committee regarding the candidate’s progress/productivity to date
8. a concluding evaluative summary statement

*Example of Research section of departmental letter:*

For promotion to Professor, the department defines excellence in research by way of quality and impact [*or other criteria*]. The department judges quality and impact according to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In the field of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at large, the expectation for research is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s primary post-tenure contributions to the field include \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is significant because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Since she/he/they received tenure, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has published \_\_\_ articles in leading peer-reviewed journals, and has been the first/senior author on \_\_\_ of these. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has also published \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*book/monograph, book chapters, essays, etc*.] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s scholarly statistics (h-index = \_\_\_) show that her/his/their work has had a significant impact on the field. Additionally, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has been successful in obtaining external funding; she/he/they has been PI/Co-PI on \_\_\_ grants and is currently funded by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The external review letters support the department’s assessment of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s work. As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ states, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ states, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ states “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” And as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ states, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

The external reviewers/departmental committee suggested that Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ develop \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

[*For positive departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has reached a level of excellence in research worthy of promotion to Professor. Since tenure, she/he/they has built a robust program of research with exciting work to come. The external reviewers’ comments are evidence of a strong international presence in the field.

[*For negative departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has not yet developed a program of research adequate for promotion to Professor. Both her/his/their CV and the external review letters demonstrate limited productivity and growth as a scholar since tenure.

**3. Teaching**

The teaching section evaluates the candidate’s teaching, which includes mentoring, advising, and academic engagement outside the classroom, in terms of effectiveness, quality, and innovation. There should be evidence of growth and/or continuing excellence in teaching since tenure. This section should also contain:

1. an explanation of how the department or program defines excellence in teaching
2. evidence of the candidate’s teaching excellence, which can include: comments from teaching observation letters; teaching awards; evidence of student and mentee achievements such as talks, grants, and publications; number of students mentored; details regarding diverse forms of mentorship; involvement in supervising teaching assistants; activities related to course and/or curriculum development; evidence of efforts to improve teaching; participation in professional development for teaching
3. a description of the range of courses taught, how the candidate’s teaching ranks compared to others in the department/program, how the candidate’s teaching has developed over time, and the candidate’s role in mentoring and advising
4. a summary of the student review letters, providing direct quotes as appropriate
5. a concluding evaluative summary statement

*Example of Teaching section of departmental letter:*

For promotion to Professor, the department defines excellence in teaching as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The department evaluates individuals according to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s teaching responsibilities include \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*provide level, size, type, etc. of courses taught*]. Her/his/their evaluation scores regularly rate above/below the department average of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She/he/they has taken constructive criticism to heart and has made efforts to improve upon \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Review letters solicited from former students of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ agree that she/he/they is a talented lecturer. One student states, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Another states, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” These letters also demonstrate an overwhelmingly positive assessment of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as a mentor. As one graduate student states, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is an active and committed mentor. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*describe mentoring and advising activities such as thesis/dissertation committee service, inclusion of students in research, etc.*].

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has also participated in pedagogical training workshops offered by the CFDE, has organized events related to teaching [*list other teaching-related activities beyond teaching evaluations and mentoring*.]

[*For positive departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has excelled in teaching. She/he/they is a talented lecturer and an innovative contributor to curriculum design.

[*For negative departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has worked diligently, but has been unable to improve her/his/their teaching effectiveness as demonstrated by teaching evaluations and classroom observations by several faculty members. She/he/they has not reached the level of excellence expected by the department.

**4. Service**

The service section evaluates the candidate’s contributions to committee work and administrative duties within Emory as well as activities that contribute to the development of a professional discipline, a professional society, or an outside agency/community. There should be evidence that the candidate has fulfilled the expectation of significant contributions in service at the level understood to merit a rating of satisfactory. This section should also contain:

1. an explanation of how the department or program defines satisfactory service
2. a concluding evaluative summary statement

*Example of Service section of departmental letter:*

For promotion to Professor, the department defines satisfactory service as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The department evaluates individuals according to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has developed a strong record of service within and beyond Emory. Within the department, she/he/they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. At the college level, she/he/they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. At the university level, she/he/they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Outside of Emory, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has conducted a variety of service activities including \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

[*For positive departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has performed admirably in the area of service and has attained a level of engagement that more than exceeds a rating of satisfactory.

[*For negative departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has completed a variety of service activities, but her/his/their performance has not reached the level expected for the promotion to professor in our department.

* + 1. **Conclusion**

The conclusion should close the letter with an evaluative summary statement addressing the candidate’s overall qualifications for promotion to Professor and an assessment of the candidate’s demonstrated record and her/his/their trajectory in the field.

*Example of Conclusion section of departmental letter:*

[*for promotion*] In summary, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a leading researcher whose innovative scholarship has gained visibility in a broad, international research community. She/he/they is a dedicated teacher and mentor with a strong commitment to innovative curriculum design. She/he/they is a leader in the academic profession and an exemplary citizen of the Emory University community. The full professors of the Department of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ recommend the promotion of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Professor.

[*against promotion*] In summary, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has not adequately progressed in the areas of research, teaching, and service. The full professors of the Department of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ do not recommend the promotion of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Professor.