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

**Pre-Tenure Assistant Professor Review**

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>

**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 information about the 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. result of the vote (e.g., 8-2 “meets criteria”) for renewal of appointment

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 advanced degrees; location and duration of post-doctoral fellowship(s), if applicable; previous faculty appointments, if applicable; and year of candidate’s start at Emory
   2. research area(s): provide a brief and accessible summary of the candidate’s area(s) of research (include broad field and subfield)
   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 an overview of who the external reviewers are, 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 individuals for the candidate’s review
   2. include the institutions represented by the reviewers
   3. provide a summary of the reviewers’ recommendations

*Example of Introduction section of departmental letter:*

“The tenured members of the Department of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ met on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to consider the renewal of the appointment of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as Assistant Professor. The following faculty members were present at the meeting: Professors \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; and Associate Professors \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Associate Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were not present, but cast their votes by proxy or via email. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was not present and did not vote due to health reasons. The department voted (X-X) that Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “meets criteria” for renewal of appointment (X-X). [*alter as needed for votes against reappointment and/or for any discrepancies in the voting results*]

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ received her/his/their M.A. in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and her/his/their Ph.D. in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She/he/they continued as a post-doctoral fellow for \_\_\_\_\_\_ years at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ before being appointed as Assistant Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at Emory University in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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

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

The two external reviewers are leaders in the field of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. One holds a prestigious endowed professorship at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (*name institution*) and the other is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (*name institution*). The reviewers were selected from prominent programs in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in recognition of the interdisciplinary reach of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s scholarship.

Both reviewers strongly support the renewal of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s appointment and were positive about her/his/their accomplishments to date and the likelihood of a successful tenure outcome in two years’ time.

*OR*

The external reviewers raised some concern over Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**2. Research**

The research section describes the candidate’s research area(s) in more detail and evaluates the candidate’s progress relative to the time that has passed since degree completion and start date at Emory. Discuss the candidate’s professional development in relation to the appropriate criteria (publications, performative and/or creative works, external funding obtained, speaking engagements, etc.). What is the scholarly work through which she/he/they is gaining recognition in the field? What is the visibility of the work in terms of publication placement (e.g. top peer-reviewed journals) or other formats as appropriate? If applicable, has she/he/they secured an adequate amount of funding? 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)
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 departmental committee and/or external reviewers regarding the candidate’s progress toward tenure
8. a concluding evaluative summary statement

*Example of Research section of departmental letter:*

At the pre-tenure level, the department defines excellence in research by way of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*criteria*]. The department judges \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*criteria*] according to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In the field of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at large, the expectation for research is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s primary contributions to the field include \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is significant because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has published \_\_\_\_ articles in significant peer-reviewed journals, and has been the first/senior author on \_\_\_ of these. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ currently has a monograph, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*title*], under contract with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ due to be published in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. 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, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

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

[*For positive departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has developed a promising program for research and is on track to present a strong case for tenure.

[*For negative departmental evaluation of candidate*] Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has struggled to establish herself/himself/themself as a researcher and has not yet achieved the level of development expected at the time of pre-tenure review.

**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. 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. remarks concerning any teaching-related difficulties/challenges the candidate may have encountered thus far and the steps taken to address the issue(s)
6. a concluding evaluative summary statement

*Example of Teaching section of departmental letter:*

At the pre-tenure level, 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, [*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 curriculum designer.

[*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.

**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. This section should also contain:

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

*Example of Service section of departmental letter:*

At the pre-tenure level, the department defines satisfactory service as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has developed a strong record of service. 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 is more than 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 in our department at the time of a pre-tenure review.

**5. Conclusion**

The conclusion should close the letter with an evaluative summary statement addressing the candidate’s qualifications for renewal and future tenure approval and an assessment of the candidate’s trajectory in the field.

*Example of Conclusion section of departmental letter:*

[*for renewal*] In summary, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has built a strong record of accomplishment in research, teaching, and service. Her/his/their progress thus far suggests a reasonable likelihood for a successful tenure decision in two years. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a talented member of the faculty who has made significant advances in her/his/their research program and is well placed to make important contributions to the field. The tenured faculty members of the Department of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ support the renewal of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s appointment as Assistant Professor.

[*against renewal*] In summary, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has not adequately progressed in the areas of research, teaching, and service. The tenured faculty members of the Department of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ do not recommend the renewal of Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s appointment as Assistant Professor.