Guidelines – Referee Grid, Trainee Grid, Comparison Peers

Professoriate Long Forms

March 19, 2018

Referee and trainee letters are central to the process of evaluating faculty members, providing information and perspective on the clinical, teaching, and scholarly duties and accomplishments of a faculty member who is in line for appointment, reappointment, or promotion.

**Definitions**

**Referee –** a faculty member or similar expert who is asked, via a standard format letter of solicitation, for a letter of evaluation of a candidate for appointment, reappointment, or promotion in a faculty or other teaching title line.  **The referee normally should be at the same or higher rank as the candidate.**  **Note:** not a “reference”, these individuals are being asked to provide an objective evaluation of the candidate, and may or may not be acquainted with the candidate and her work.

**Internal Referee** – a faculty member at Stanford University or an affiliated site to Stanford HealthCare. Letters that count towards the required minimum number of internal letters for a faculty action must come from faculty who are in the MCL, UTL, or NTL line, or emeritus faculty. Letters from faculty in the CE line may be included in a long form, however, they do not count towards the minimum internal letter requirement.

**External Referee** – a faculty member at another comparable institution. (for new appointments, this can include faculty at the candidate’s current institution)

**Referee (independent or expert)** – a faculty member (referee) at another institution who is not a current or former mentor, teacher, collaborator or co-author with the candidate they are evaluating. Sometimes called “expert in the field” but always carries the connotation of independence from the candidate.

**Trainee** - Anyone in a student-type role who received significant training, mentoring, or supervision from the candidate while they were a faculty member at Stanford or elsewhere. This could include undergraduates, graduate students, residents, postdoctoral fellows, junior faculty, visiting scholars or visiting faculty, for example.

It is acceptable to obtain letters from trainees who were trained by the candidate prior to their faculty appointments (say, when the candidate was a graduate student), but it is not required. They do not have to be included in the list of “all” trainees as described above.

**Comparison peer** – certain actions (e.g. promotion to tenure) require providing external referees with a list of peers in the candidate’s field to whom they can be compared. These individuals are always faculty at comparable institutions, generally tenured, and who would certainly be successful in the action that’s being proposed.

**The Process**

1. Obtain the candidate’s up-to-date CV and candidate’s statement.
2. It is permitted to ask the candidate for a list of up to three suggested referees (external or internal), who will be considered by the faculty lead but may or may not be included in the final list to solicit. The candidate should not know the identities of the referees ultimately solicited.
3. If the action will be:
   1. Reappointment to assistant professor (all lines)
   2. Promotion to associate professor (all lines)
   3. Reappointment to associate professor conferring tenure (UTL)

Obtain a list of **all** current and former research trainees and at least 10 current and former clinical trainees from the candidate. Solicit **all** of the research trainees and 3 to 5 clinical trainees.

1. For all other actions, find the required number of trainees to solicit in the [Evidence Tables](http://med.stanford.edu/content/dam/sm/academicaffairs/documents/administrators/newlongform/SoM_Evidence_Tables.pdf) and ask the candidate for a larger number so that the faculty lead can select a random mix. These must include both current and former research and clinical trainees.
2. The department chair, division chief, or faculty lead must:
   1. Assemble a list of the appropriate numbers of external and, if required, internal referees who can judge the candidate’s work.
   2. Select a mix of current and former research and clinical trainees from the list provided by the candidate appropriate to the action—this may mean soliciting all the research trainees.
   3. If necessary, assemble a list of five comparison peers (see the [Evidence Tables](http://med.stanford.edu/content/dam/sm/academicaffairs/documents/administrators/newlongform/SoM_Evidence_Tables.pdf) to determine if the action requires them).
3. Submit the referee and trainee grid (and comparison peer grid if required), and the referee and trainee solicitation letters, to the Office of Academic Affairs.
4. Once the grids have been approved, send the solicitation letters.
5. After the minimum number of letters required for the long form have been received, the long form may be submitted to OAA for review.

**External Referees**

* The referee grid should contain at least the minimum number of external referees for the action (see the [Evidence Tables](http://med.stanford.edu/content/dam/sm/academicaffairs/documents/administrators/newlongform/SoM_Evidence_Tables.pdf) for requirements). It may be advisable to submit a few more than the maximum if the department is concerned about receiving enough letters in a timely fashion.
* For all actions for Associate Professors and Professors, most of the external referees should be independent experts in the field, that is, non-mentors and non-collaborators; e.g. if eight letters are required, at least five should be from independent referees, and no more than three from mentors/collaborators.
* For Assistant Professor appointments, the referee grid does **not need to be approved by OAA.** Letters may be solicited by the candidate and they may all be from mentors or collaborators, although independent assessments are always valuable and welcomed. They may be external, internal, or a mix.
* For Assistant Professor reappointments, the department must have the referee list approved, but it can consist of external referees, internal referees, or a mix at the department’s discretion. Again, they may all be from mentors or collaborators, though independent letters are welcome. OAA must approve these referee grids.
* If possible, the external referee list should represent a good mix of geographic and gender diversity of faculty from institutions comparable to Stanford.
* If you have a referee who does not hold an academic rank (should be rare), provide a brief footnote on the grid. For example, *“As Director of product research for \_\_\_\_\_ corporation, Dr. Jane Smith does not hold an academic position. Her evaluation is requested because she is widely recognized as a world expert in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”* It is **NOT** necessary to provide explanations for candidates who hold appointments at the NIH, the CDC, and similar government institutions. For **MCL files only**, a member of Stanford’s Adjunct Clinical Faculty may occasionally be included as an external referee with a brief footnoted explanation on the grid.
* If you have a referee who is below the rank proposed in the action (should be rare), for example, an Associate Professor referee for a promotion to Professor, provide a brief explanation as a footnote on the grid. For example, *“Dr. April Ryan is an Assistant Professor. She is widely known as an expert in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and her assessment was especially valued by the committee.”*
* Include a short note on why the referee was chosen, e.g. “*Dr. Anderson Cooper is an expert in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and can assess the candidate’s research in this area.”*
* Include a representative few scientific or academic distinctions to show the external referee’s standing in the field and qualifications to judge the candidate’s work.

**Internal Referees**

* The referee grid should contain at least the minimum number of internal referees for the action (see the [Evidence Tables](http://med.stanford.edu/content/dam/sm/academicaffairs/documents/administrators/newlongform/SoM_Evidence_Tables.pdf) for requirements). You may submit a few more than the maximum if the department is concerned about receiving enough letters in a timely fashion.
* All internal referees should be members of Stanford’s faculty (UTL, MCL, NTLR, or NTLT). (as above, for MCL files only, a member of Stanford’s Adjunct Clinical Faculty may occasionally be included as an **external** referee with a brief footnoted explanation on the grid.)
* Please do not include as internal referees:
  + the chair of the candidate’s department
  + any member of a committee that has voted or will vote on the action (search committee, evaluation committee, department or school A&P committee)
  + the author of the narrative report section of the long form.

If, for example, a member of the departmental A&P committee is the candidate’s mentor and is solicited for a letter, s/he must be recused from discussing or voting on the file.

* If you have a referee who is below the rank proposed in the action (should be rare), for example, an Associate Professor referee for a promotion to Professor, provide a brief explanation as a footnote on the grid. For example, *“Dr. Ana Navarro is an Assistant Professor. She is widely known as an expert in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and her assessment was especially valued by the committee.”*

**Trainees**

* For the Following Types of Appointments:
* Reappointment to Assistant Professor (all lines)
* Promotion to Associate Professor (all lines)
* Untenured Associate Professor (UTL) reappointment conferring tenure

For the cases mentioned above, the candidate provides to the department:

* A list of all significant research trainees, current and former
* “All” means “while they have been faculty members at Stanford or elsewhere.”
* “Significant” means “prolonged and intensive research mentoring experience.”
* A selection of up to 10 clinical trainees (a mix of current and former)

The department is asked to provide to OAA all research trainees. If “all” is more than 20, the department can:

* send all and ask to solicit all
* send all and ask for help choosing a sample to solicit
* send a minimum of 20.
* A selection of 3-5 current and former clinical trainees.
* For All Other Appointments:
* Any new appointments
* Reappointment to Associate Professor not conferring tenure
* Promotion to Professor (whether conferring tenure or not)

The candidate provides to the department a list of sufficient numbers of current and former research and clinical trainees so that faculty leaders can make a random selection.

The department is asked to provide to OAA a list of at least the number of trainees specified for the action, including both current and former research and clinical trainees if possible and applicable.

**Comparison Peers**

* See the [Evidence Tables](http://med.stanford.edu/content/dam/sm/academicaffairs/documents/administrators/newlongform/SoM_Evidence_Tables.pdf) to determine whether comparison peers must be provided to referees for the proposed action. If so, five is always the required number.
* The grid should include each peer’s name, current title, current institution, and the year and institution of the most advanced degree (for example, *Jane Smith. M.D.: 1967, Harvard*). Do not contact the peers for this information. The Provost’s office has requested this information to help them generally verify the length of career and quality of training to determine that they represent appropriate comparisons.
* The grid should also include information on the area of study and scientific/academic distinctions for each peer, as you would for the external referees. This information is important, as it will help reviewers assess the breadth of the field defined by the peer group and the distinction of the peers themselves.

**Solicitor**

* Referee and trainee solicitation letters should not be signed by the department chair. The faculty member who signs the referee and trainee solicitation letters (the requestor) must not be the candidate’s mentor or collaborator. If the person who would usually sign the letter (division chief, search committee chair, evaluation committee chair) is a mentor or close collaborator, another senior faculty member should be asked.

CV and Candidate’s Statement

* The candidate’s CV should be submitted with the referee grid. This need not be in “Stanford format”, but should be complete (an abbreviated CV, such as an NIH bio sketch, is not acceptable).
* When soliciting the referee letters, be sure to include the CV and candidate’s statement.
* The CV and statement should be up-to-date. It is of critical importance that all publications published or submitted, as well as all grants received or submitted, are included. This should be verified with the candidate shortly before proceeding with the solicitation.
* Do not include the CV or candidate’s statement when soliciting trainee letters.