Tips for Selecting Promotion Reference Letter Writers

- You need 6 outside letters of recommendation (LOR) at Associate & Full Professor levels
- For Associate and Full Professor, submit to your chair 7-10 names in case experts are disallowed or the individuals do not return the letter or recommendation.
- Letter writers should include faculty at or above the academic rank the candidate is proposed for
- Try to include some leading experts in field, and individuals at peer institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name, Degrees</th>
<th>Academic Rank*</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Relationship to Candidate</th>
<th>What is the referent’s expertise to evaluate?</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>How does the referent know the candidate?</td>
<td>From peer institution?</td>
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<td>Grants together?</td>
<td>Does the person have expertise qualifying his/her evaluation of the candidate’s scholarly work?</td>
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<td>Publications together?</td>
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<td>If published together, is the publication a guideline or a multi-authored consortium paper in which both authors had minor roles?</td>
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<td>Is the evaluator a prior mentor or from the applicant’s prior institution?</td>
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<td>Can the referent provide an “arm’s length” objective LOR (see below)?</td>
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What constitutes an “arm’s length relationship?”
- Did not train in same institution during an overlapping time period, particularly if the person was a colleague or supervisor.
- Not mentored by the person
- Not had funded grants together. An exception might be if the grants were >5 years ago, or were part of large consortia
- Not published together. Exceptions include guidelines or large consortium papers, or perhaps if the publications were >5 years ago
- Not a personal friend

What qualifies as arm’s length? Who are potential useful people to target?
- Try to select peers [research, educational, or clinical] working in your same field who should be familiar with your presentations, work, and publications.
- Editors or section editors of journals for which you review
- Chairs of committees at the national level on which you serve
- Colleagues on committees at the national level
- Leaders who have invited you to speak at national meetings
- Chairs who have invited you to do a visiting professorship or give an invited lecture
- Chairs of grant review boards on which you serve
- National officers of your specialty society, particularly if you serve on any committees or regularly speak at the annual meeting
- Leaders at the national level with whom you have interacted in any professional setting
- It may not be a good idea to ask someone who has never met you to write a letter, because they may decline – some minimal professional contact is ideal
- Your Section Chief or Department Chair and the Appointments & Promotions Committee may have suggestions of letter writers for you as well.