

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.

Name, Degrees Academic Rank* Institution Address Email	Relationship to Candidate	What is the referent's expertise to evaluate?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the referent know the candidate? • Grants together? • Publications together? • If published together, is the publication a guideline or a multi-authored consortium paper in which both authors had minor roles? • Is the evaluator a prior mentor or from the applicant's prior institution? • Can the referent provide an "arm's length" objective LOR (see below)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From peer institution? • Does the person have expertise qualifying his/her evaluation of the candidate's scholarly work?

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.