

Sample Request for an External Letter of Recommendation for a Tenure Track Position

Dear _____:

The School of/Department of _____ at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is reviewing the qualifications of _____, for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with tenure (or Associate to full Professor with tenure, or Associate without tenure to Associate with tenure). The School/Department will base its recommendation concerning _____ on the value of his/her research, teaching, and service. I write to seek your opinion about _____ worthiness for this promotion. To aid in your review of his/her qualifications and contributions, his/her curriculum vitae and most recent and (according to him/her) most important publications are enclosed.

We are particularly interested in placing _____ scholarly work in a national context. We would value, therefore, your evaluation of the importance of his/her area of study and of the significance of his/her contributions to it. We are also interested in your opinion of his/her stature relative to his/her peers nationally.

Please refer to the following criteria of the School/Department Tenure and Promotion policy in giving your assessment of _____. [List criteria here]

Appointments or promotion to the rank of Associate Professor must demonstrate outstanding ability. The candidate must demonstrate outstanding scholarly contributions, show independence and leadership in research or practice, and have a growing national reputation in his/her area of expertise. Please understand that, here at UNC-CH, promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor is tightly linked to a decision regarding the granting of tenure. Thus, either _____ will be promoted and granted permanent tenure or he/she will have no choice but to leave the university. In this letter, we are asking for your opinion as to _____ suitability for promotion and/or tenure according to the APT criteria described above that are in place here at UNC-CH. It would not be helpful, nor would it be relevant to state that: "*Dr. _____ would qualify for promotion at our institution, but would not yet be appropriate for tenure.*"

For promotion to the rank of Full Professor the candidate must continue to demonstrate high quality teaching, make outstanding scholarly contributions, and have a national reputation in his/her area of expertise. There must be strong evidence that his/her scholarly work has stimulated the work of other researchers or practitioners, has provided "breakthroughs" in the field, and that, in general, other scholars are paying close attention to the candidate's work.

In addition to the above, we appreciate any assessment you are able to make about the quality of _____ teaching and professional service contributions. While we do recognize that these areas are often more difficult to assess than is scholarship, any evaluative comments that you can

provide to us will be valued. In addition, we will benefit from having your thoughts regarding _____ interpersonal skills, his/her organizational citizenship, as well as any other intangibles you might be able to share with us.

In preparing your response, we do ask that you provide us with the following information:

- a. Your opinion as to whether or not you would recommend _____ for this promotion
- b. A brief summary of your reasons for this opinion
- c. A description of your relationship (if any) with _____

Under current policies of this institution, peer evaluations, such as that being requested from you, are regarded as confidential within limitations imposed by law. They are for limited use within the University. However, North Carolina state law provides that such written evaluations become part of the personnel file of the individual. As such, they become open by petition to the faculty member about whom they are written.

Thank you very much for your willingness to assist us with this important process. We do recognize the substantial amount of time and effort required to provide us with this assessment of _____. Please understand that time is of the essence in this process. Therefore, we ask that you notify Dr. Chair's Name as soon as possible if you will not be able to provide us with your review by date. His/her e-mail address is: name@unc.edu. You can send either an electronic copy on official letterhead or a hard copy in the mail.

Sincerely,