**Evaluation Letter Sample Language**

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## Sample Inquiry Regarding Availability to Serve as External Reviewer

Subject Line: Request for promotion review

DATE

NAME

Department of X

University of Y

Address

Dear NAME:

The Department of X at the University of Oregon is evaluating NAME, TITLE, for promotion to NEW TITLE. The faculty have identified you as a scholar who could provide particularly valuable insights regarding NAME’s candidacy for promotion. I sincerely hope that you will be able to accept my invitation to participate in this important evaluation. I have attached a copy of NAME’s vita for your reference.

**[Select one of the two following sentences in order to reflect the candidate’s waiver status, which must be expressed in writing before external letters are solicited.]**

Because NAME has waived access to the evaluative file, this will be a closed, confidential process.

or

Because Oregon law permits an employee full access to his or her personnel file unless such access is voluntarily waived, your letter will be seen by NAME should [he/she] request access to [his/her] file.

Please let me know by DATE, whether or not you will be able to serve as a reviewer. If you agree to provide a review, I will forward a package containing NAME’s personal statement and CV and representative examples of NAME’s [scholarship and/or other appropriate evidence of professional activity], as well as the department’s statement of criteria for promotion. Should you accept, I would need your evaluation by DATE.

I sincerely hope you will be able to assist in this important decision and look forward to your response.

With my best wishes,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Title

Address

Telephone

e-mail address

## Sample Paragraph if Candidate Waives Access to the External Letters

Your letter will become part of the official personnel review file. NAME has voluntarily waived in advance access to the evaluative file, with the expectation that this waiver will enable reviewers to provide thorough and candid evaluations. This waiver has been reviewed for its legality, and I can assure you that the University will not disclose your letter to the candidate, although we cannot predict whether a court challenge might result in disclosure. With the waiver, NAME retains the right to request a substantive summary of all evaluative remarks, carefully edited to avoid disclosure of the identity of the referee.

## Sample Paragraph if Candidate Retains Access to the External Letters

Your letter will become part of the official personnel review file. Oregon law permits full access of a faculty member to his or her personnel files unless such access is voluntarily waived. I must tell you that your letter will be seen by NAME should [he/she] request access to [his/her] file.

## Sample Paragraph for Candidates who Have Taken Leave(s) of Absence

It is University of Oregon policy not to count leave-of-absence periods toward the promotion “clock.” However, all professional activity reported during or arising from a leave period should be included in the promotion evaluation. NAME \_\_\_ was credited with a one-year leave of absence, and thus the primary focus for your review should be from [year]-present.

## Sample Paragraph for Candidates who are using Credit for Prior Service

NAME was hired with credit for prior experience. The primary focus for your review should be from [year]-present. While you are of course welcome to comment on earlier activities, these activities will receive secondary consideration in our internal processes.

[If the candidate is using all the initially allotted years of credit for prior service, identify the year at which the employment leading to this assignment of credit began. If the candidate is using only some of the allotted credit years, identify the year that, when combined with the candidate’s years of service at UO, provides a six-year “window” as the period of primary consideration.]

## Sample Thank You Letter upon Receipt of Letter of Evaluation

DATE

NAME

Department of X

University of Y

Address

Dear NAME:

On behalf of the Department of X, I am writing to express our sincere appreciation for your review of NAME’s qualifications for promotion.

I recognize that reading an extensive file like this, and preparing a thorough and thoughtful evaluation, takes time and adds to the burden of many tasks that you face each day. I can assure you that your input is extremely valuable and will play an important role in our decision-making processes both within the Department and at the College and University levels.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Title

Address

Telephone

e-mail address

## Sample Letter upon Agreement to Provide the Requested Evaluation

DATE

Full name with no title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Department of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[city, state zip]

Dear Professor\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for agreeing to evaluate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who is being considered for promotion to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at the University of Oregon. As part of our promotion process, we seek outside evaluations from highly regarded faculty members in the candidate’s field to help us assess the candidate’s scholarly contributions to the field. When you submit your evaluation–by DATE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, as previously agreed–please also provide a copy of your current curriculum vita and a brief biographical sketch, which we will provide to the University’s personnel committees.

We are providing you with access to Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s current CV, personal statement, and representative examples of scholarship and/or creative activity, as well as the Department’s statement of expectations for tenure and promotion. It will be very helpful to us if your written evaluation addresses the following questions.

* What is the nature of your relationship, if any, to Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

* What are the most significant scholarly results/creative work produced by Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and what impact have those results/works had on the discipline?

* Please comment on the appropriateness of the venues/outlets used by the candidate to disseminate scholarly products/creative works.

* Please consider contextualizing your remarks in terms of common practices within the discipline or sub-field of the candidate with respect to collaboration, co-authorship, grant funding, or other characteristics.

* How does Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s record of scholarship compare–both qualitatively and quantitatively–with other scholars in the field at comparable stages in their academic careers?

* How do you assess Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s potential for producing high-quality scholarship going forward?
* Optionally, you may comment on the impact of any professional (disciplinary) service rendered by Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We do not ask you to evaluate the significance of Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s teaching or local service activities, unless you have had the opportunity to personally observe those activities.

**[Insert paragraph regarding waiver status here, choosing from one of the three options below.]**

Sample Paragraph for **Retaining Partial Access** to the External Letters

Your letter will become part of the official personnel review file. Oregon law permits full access of a faculty member to his or her personnel files unless such access is voluntarily waived. Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has waived access to all external evaluations, so your letter will remain confidential. Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has, however, retained access to all evaluations internal to the University of Oregon and may request to see those documents.

**[If appropriate, insert a paragraph here that clarifies the time period for which review is requested. See examples below.]**

Sample Paragraph for **Candidates who Have Taken Leave(s) of Absence**

It is University of Oregon policy not to count leave-of-absence periods toward the promotion and tenure “clock.” However, all professional activity reported during or arising from a leave period should be included in the promotion and tenure evaluation. Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_was credited with a one-year leave of absence, and thus the primary focus for your review should be from [year]-present.

**Or**

**Sample Paragraph for Candidates who are using Credit for Prior Service**

Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was hired with credit for prior experience. The primary focus for your review should be from [year]-present. While you are of course welcome to comment on earlier activities, these activities will receive secondary consideration in our internal processes.

[If the candidate is using all the initially allotted years of credit for prior service, identify the year at which the employment leading to this assignment of credit began. If the candidate is using only some of the allotted credit years, identify the year that, when combined with the candidate’s years of service at UO, provides a six-year “window” as the period of primary consideration.]

**And (FOR ALL LETTERS)**

Finally, a few words about the impact of COVID. The UO recognizes that faculty research may have been interrupted, interfered with, and/or impeded during the ongoing COVID pandemic. The results of the “[Survey on Faculty Research and Creative Practice](https://provost.uoregon.edu/addressing-faculty-concerns-about-research-and-creative-practice)” (August 2020) are available for your review. Productivity may have been negatively impacted by illness, stress, or unanticipated caregiving responsibilities. Research suggests that faculty of color and female faculty may have been disproportionately affected.

The impact may have been compounded and exacerbated by unforeseen professional challenges. Research plans have been upended; labs, libraries, field sites have been closed; conferences and professional association meetings have been cancelled or postponed; and the review processes of journals and university presses have been delayed significantly. Furthermore, the transition to remote teaching has disrupted already developed research schedules and plans while the mentorship of students affected by converging public health, economic, and social crises has been emotionally demanding.

**[The next paragraph is only for an assistant professor being considered for promotion to associate professor with tenure and who was granted a COVID-related tenure-clock extension]** Recognizing these facts, the Office of the Provost has permitted faculty to request a one-year tenure clock extension. The evaluation of research productivity of a faculty member who received a COVID-related extension assumes the faculty member has been in probationary status for the normal pre-tenure period of five years. Therefore, an extension should not be treated as “extra time” in that it should not raise promotion-and-tenure expectations. Rather, an extension should be understood as a way to account for potential delays resulting from COVID-related obstacles to research productivity.

Furthermore, the Office of the Provost has encouraged faculty members undergoing tenure-and-promotion review to describe the impact of COVID-19 in their research, teaching, service, and equity statements. The Office of the Provost requests that external reviewers evaluating dossiers remain cognizant of, and sensitive to, COVID-related disruptions.

I sincerely appreciate your time and effort and thank you in advance for your evaluation.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Title

Address

Telephone

e-mail address

documents attached  
 CV  
 personal statement  
 representative examples of scholarship and/or creative activity  
 the Department’s statement of expectations for tenure and promotion