

Guidelines for the Selection of Extramural Consultants

Revised 3/2025

The purpose of the Extramural Consultant process is to obtain an unbiased and impartial professional assessment of a candidate's scholarship, reputation and standing in a specific field from outside the University of Pennsylvania. The Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, in the office of the Provost, is responsible for establishing the guidelines for the Extramural Consultant process for all UPENN schools. The evaluation prompts align with current expectations for scholarship at Penn.

This document establishes expectations for the selection of external consultants for the appointment and promotion of Associate Professors and Professors on the Tenure, CE, and Research tracks. A proposed list of Extramural Consultants must be approved by the School Dean (or designee) before solicitation of approved consultants. Solicitation is conducted by PSOM-COAP.

Process

For each case, evaluations must be solicited from at least eight external consultants identified by the department/school and up to three external consultants identified by the candidate.

The final dossier sent to the Provost Staff Conference (PSC) must include all letters received. The dossier must include at least six letters from the Extramural Consultants nominated by the department as well as any letters from consultants nominated by the candidate.

Consultants are expected to be foremost experts in the candidate's field and come from the leading programs at institutions in the United States and other nations. The school is responsible for ensuring that all approved consultants are highly qualified to provide an evaluation and that the list of approved Extramural Consultants meets the expectations specified in this document.

The candidate should not be privy to the selection of the department/School consultants and should not be involved in any discussion about the selection of department/School consultants.

Current faculty or former faculty members who held an appointment at Penn within the last five years may not serve as external consultants. An exception may be granted if the candidate received their degree from Penn and wishes to include their dissertation advisor or other member of the dissertation committee on their list of external consultants.

- Former Penn faculty members whose appointments ended more than five years before the nomination date are eligible. Status as a former Penn faculty member should be disclosed. Up to two retired/emeriti faculty may be nominated, provided they are currently active in the field.
- For new appointments, colleagues from the candidate's current institution should not be included in the list of external consultants.

Expectations for Candidate Selections

The candidate should be strongly encouraged to select three consultants. The candidate should submit these selections to the department before the department commits to their selections. If the candidate selects fewer than three consultants, the department should confirm that the candidate understands that they are entitled to select three. See templated text below.

The candidate may include up to two thesis advisors, colleagues, co-authors or collaborators on their list of

three external consultants. The candidate must disclose any relationship. The candidate may also identify consultants they believe will not give a fair review.

Expectations for Department/School Selections

The department/School must identify *at least* eight primary consultants who meet the guidelines outlined in this document – up to 11 is strongly encouraged and four (4) additional consultants should be proposed for solicitation only in the event that there are challenges getting the minimum number responses required.

To the best of the department and School's knowledge, none of the external consultants identified by the department/School should be a current or former advisor, mentor, or supervisor of the candidate.

The department/School list may include up to two external consultants with a direct association. Direct associations are typically considered as co-authors, Co or M- PIs, former colleagues, co-organizers, etc. Any direct association must be disclosed as accurately as possible.

The following professional relationships, with sufficient explanation and disclosure, may be permissible:

- May have served on committees together.
- May be Co-editors or have editor/chapter contributor relationship of textbook or textbook chapter(s).
- Co-authors on multi-authored consensus and research publications. An explanation for the reason why the co-authorship does not represent direct collaboration must be clear. For example:
 - Candidate and consultant contributed independently to study
Local PIs with no direct interaction.
 - Contribution of study subjects to a study with no direct contact between the candidate and the extramural consultant.

Expectations for External Consultant Selections – Individually and Collectively

External consultants may come from universities in the United States and other nations.

- No more than two consultants from the same university should be nominated unless they are in different schools or departments.
- No more than two consultants from non-academic institutions or in non-academic positions should be selected.

If additional consultants are needed at any stage of the process (to meet the minimum number of six external consultants identified by the department), the same criteria and approvals (for individual consultants and the list as a whole) apply and are required. The candidate is not permitted to submit additional names if any on their original list declines.

Academic Rank Requirements are based on the Candidate's Proposed Rank

For Associate Professor actions only (*promotions and appointments*), up to three consultants may be at the rank of Associate Professor. (*To the best of your knowledge* do not propose someone promoted to Associate Professor within the last 3 years). All others must hold rank of Professor.

For Professor actions (*promotions and appointments*), all consultants must be rank of Professor.

Consultant Qualifications

Consultants are expected to be of high standing in their field. The department and School are responsible for ensuring that each identified external consultant has the required expertise and qualifications. The

following are examples of ways to establish consultants' qualifications. In PSOM, when proposing consultants not on the Pre-qualified List of Institutions, departments must include at least 2 qualification statements:

- Regionally, nationally or internationally recognized *for making advances in ...* (field)
- Member of consortium that provides services (indicate type) in the field of...(identify)
- Pioneered the ... (provide description).
- Discovered the ... (provide description).
- Member of the team that ... (provide description)
- President (Chair) of ... (name of Society, Committee, etc.); include year(s) office(s) held.
- Editor of ... (professional journal, etc.)
- Author of seminal publication on... (related to area of expertise of the candidate)
- Winner of ... (prize or award in related area of expertise)

Contact with External Consultants

The proposal and solicitation processes are confidential. **There should be no contact between the department or the candidate with the proposed consultants**, including any attempt to determine if the consultant is willing to provide a positive evaluation of the candidate's work.

In PSOM, only the Co-Chairs of the School's Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) or their designee may solicit evaluations from the approved consultants. Only the Provost-approved solicitation letters may be used to solicit evaluations from the approved consultants.

If a letter of evaluation is not received by the stated deadline, the Chair of the school's COAP, Dean or designee may reach out to an external consultant for the sole purpose of determining whether the consultant intends to send the requested letter.

External Consultant Assessment Questions

In making their evaluation, External Consultants will be asked to:

- evaluate the impact and trajectory of the candidate's scholarly achievements and their importance within the general discipline;
- comment on the candidate's most distinctive contributions to their discipline;
- evaluate the candidate's likelihood of achieving a similar faculty position and rank at the leading institutions in this discipline with which you are familiar;
- provide any information or insight that you have on the candidate's skill and effectiveness as a teacher, mentor, and communicator;
- provide any additional insights that may be helpful in determining whether or not to recommend promotion/appointment to (Associate Professor/Professor), including intellectual and leadership contributions through professional service.

External Consultant Quick Guide	
<i>Cases submitted to PSC in the Standing, CE, and Research tracks must include a minimum of 6 letters from the department/school list of consultants</i>	
Candidate Proposed List (Up to 3 consultants nominated)	Max of 2 thesis advisors, colleagues, co-authors or collaborators
Department/School Proposed List	No known current or former advisors, mentors, or supervisors
	Max of 2 with co-authorship/direct association
All Nominations (Both Candidate and Department/School proposals)	From the leading programs in the candidate's field at institutions in the United States and other nations
	Rank of Full Professor, with up to 3 Associate Professors permitted for Associate Professor considerations only
	No current Penn faculty
	Former Penn faculty members must have left the university at least 5 years ago
	Max of 2 emeritus professors – must be active
	None from the candidate's current institution
	Max of 2 from the same university unless in different schools/departments
	Max of 2 from non-academic institutions

Templated Message for departments to send to candidates selecting fewer than three external consultants:

Hello _____,

I am ready to submit your External Consultant list for approval. Please confirm that you are choosing to submit the names of only one/two extramural consultants. As a reminder, you are entitled to submit three.

Please respond as soon as possible so that we may proceed with obtaining the Dean's approval for the list.

Thank you,