

Preparing Tenure Letters

Spring 2026

Contacts:

- **Appointments & Tenure Committee (ATC)**

Larry Jorgensen, Chair 2025-2026

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- **Natalie Taylor**, Interim Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs
- **Oscar Perez Hernandez**, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Infrastructure and Faculty Affairs
- **Aaron Kendall**, Learning Experience Designer (LEDS)
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Outline

- Overview of tenure letters
 - External Letters
 - Internal Letters
 - Department/Program Letters
 - Chair/Director Letters
- Additional Guidelines
- Possible Letter Outline
- Questions/Discussion

External Letters

- We suggest that Chairs and Program Directors (CPDs) identify potential external reviewers in consultation with candidates, contact the potential reviewers to see if they are willing, and then send the official letter of request.
- We do ***not*** suggest making the candidate responsible for reaching out to potential reviewers.
- Context on the purpose of the letters is in the “Guidelines on Assembling Materials for Tenure,” posted under “Forms” on the DOF/VPAA site, and included as an appendix in the CPD Handbook.

External Letters

- A template for the message to request letters can be found on the DOF/VPAA homepage under “[Forms](#),” in Appendix K of the *CPD Handbook*, and on the ATC homepage.
 - It should be modified to include the appropriate deadline for your departmental procedures.
 - It can also be useful to provide department/program context that may not be clear from the standard template, such as specific issues related to teaching load and research infrastructure.

External Letters

- CPDs send requests to reviewers **by May 31st.**
- A list of reviewers with contact information should be sent to Debbie Peterson **by May 31st.**
- CPD"s forward external letters to Debbie Peterson **by September 11th**
- *Departmental procedures may require earlier deadlines*

Internal Letters

Typically, the candidate suggests the names of 3-5 members internal to the campus community but outside the department. Most often, these individuals address the service component of the file.

A template for the message to request letters can be found on both the [ATC](#) and [DOF/VPAA](#) homepages. It should be modified to include the appropriate deadline for your departmental procedures.

- CPDs send requests to reviewers by **September 5th** (although May 31st is preferable), and a list of those reviewers should be sent to Debbie Peterson by **September 5th**.
- CPDs forward internal letters to Debbie Peterson by **October 2nd**.

Department/program procedures may involve earlier deadlines than these.

Department/Program Letters

Letters should be solicited from

- A. Full-time faculty and those holding shared appointments in the department concerned who are in at least their third year of full-time service at Skidmore (in the ranks defined in Part One [Faculty Rights and Responsibilities], Article VI [Appointments to the Faculty], Sections A [Tenure-Track Appointments]); and**
- B. At the option of the department or program, which shall be communicated to ATC by the Chair or Program Director in their letter, all full-time NTT faculty on a renewable appointment at the Associate or Full ranks (CBA, Article XXIV, Section XIX, Section 2B). (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 121)**

Please note in the Chair/Director letter (described on the next slide) if there are any exceptions to this Faculty Handbook requirement.

Department/Program Letters

- A template for the message to request letters is on the [ATC](#) and [DOF/VPAA](#) homepages. It should be modified to include the appropriate deadline for your departmental procedures.
 - CPDs send requests to department/program members **by September 5th**.
 - CPDs forward department/program letters to Debbie Peterson **by October 2nd**.
- *Department procedures may involve earlier deadlines than these.*

Chair/Director Letters

From the 2025-2026 *Faculty Handbook*:

The Chair, in the letter of evaluation for the candidate, shall clearly state the procedures employed in reaching a departmental recommendation. The Chair shall clearly state whether the department does or does not recommend for tenure, and why, according to the criteria for continued service. Furthermore, the Chair shall clearly state the extent to which a candidate's particular abilities will continue to be needed, as far as the department's future can be projected. (p. 122)

- CPD's forward their letters to Debbie Peterson by **October 2nd**
- *Department procedures may involve earlier deadlines than these.*

Additional Guidelines, Part 1

- Department/program members should carefully address the tenure file in their letters, and also include any relevant information that is not already in the file.
- Since most members of ATC and the Office of the DOF/VPAA have specialties far outside that of the candidate, it is useful to discuss disciplinary norms that might be relevant to the evaluation of the materials. In particular, if your department has adopted a statement on scholarship/creative work expectations for tenure, please include this in your letter.

Additional Guidelines, Part 2

- Since service for junior faculty members is often done outside of the faculty governance system, it is helpful to include some discussion of the value and impact of service to the college (acknowledging that it constitutes only 10% of the expected workload).
- In cases where a candidate has spent significant time at another institution, some may wish to include an external letter that discusses teaching and/or service at that other institution. These should supplement rather than substitute for any of the external letters relating to scholarship or creative work.

Possible Outline for CPD Letters

- Short statement on whether the department supports the candidate for tenure
- Brief summary of the candidate's appointment and timeline, including any idiosyncrasies related to interdisciplinary or joint appointments, previous experience, stopping the tenure clock, etc.
- Brief summary of departmental procedures regarding tenure. Who meets to discuss the candidates and when? How are external reviewers chosen? If there were changes in leadership during the candidate's pre-tenure years, it would be good to note who else mentored the candidate.
- Discussion of teaching
- Discussion of scholarship
- Discussion of service
- Brief discussion of importance to the department
- Brief summary of why the department concluded as it did
- See [Writing the Chairs Letter](#) on the DOF website

Questions/Discussion