

Guide to Writing Your Cover Letter: *Investigators and Research-Intensive Faculty*

While the cover letter replaces the former requirement for an Investigator's Portfolio, the Research or Other Scholarly Activity section of your cover letter may closely resemble the narrative you would have prepared for that and will likely comprise the majority of your cover letter.

1) Research Focus

Explain the focus of your research, and highlight your most noteworthy discoveries, insights or advances. Explain how your work has supported the research programs and missions and enhanced the reputation of your department, the SOM or the University. You may include metrics (such as the *h*-index or total citation counts) to help faculty review committees assess the impact of your publications, but these are not a substitute for a clear description of the impact of your work. This cover letter seeks to provide information about the importance, impact and reach of your creative and scholarly work, in a manner that your C.V. cannot.

2) Summary of Funded Research

A table listing your funded grants at rank will also be included in your cover letter, so this part of your letter should focus on your most important funded projects. For each, briefly describe the purpose of the project and highlight your role, especially if you are not the Principal Investigator. Provide a brief summary of the nature and importance of the problem (the "context") and the expected results or implications of the work. You may want to provide separate descriptions of your efforts in writing and executing the grants. For multiple-P.I. grants and program project and center grants, be specific about how you contributed to the success of these grants.

3) Evidence of Originality, Creativity and Independence.

This section is particularly important for faculty candidates whose research is multi-disciplinary and whose publications and other accomplishments reflect the work of multi-disciplinary teams.

The Rules of the SOM define "independence" in the following manner: *The School of Medicine recognizes the importance of inter-disciplinary team science and the need for collaboration among investigators. Therefore, as recommended by the National Academy of Science, the SOM defines an "independent investigator" as one who demonstrates "independence of thought" - that is, one who has defined a research question of interest, who has chosen or developed the best strategies and approaches to address that question and who has contributed distinct intellectual expertise to successful research programs.*

Use this part of your cover letter to clarify the contributions that you have made to multi-author publications and co-PI and co-investigator grants. Be specific about your intellectual contributions and the manner in which you defined the research objectives, led the research efforts, interpreted the results, or shaped the overall

research program. Additional evidence can be provided in your Supplemental Materials, such as letters from Principal Investigators or research group heads with whom you have collaborated, outlining in detail your specific contributions and the unique skills that you brought to the team. The objective is to convey clearly and concisely to the SOM Faculty Promotions Committee the importance, significance and broad impact of your cumulative research contributions.

You should highlight the impact that your publications or scholarly work have had on your field. Metrics such as the number of article citations or others can be useful in making the case that the publications or scholarly works were significant. The FPC discourages the use of journal-based metrics (such as journal impact factors), since it is the quality and importance of the research contribution itself that is the key. Research importance can be measured by its impact on policy, practice or the scientific discipline. Other outputs from scientific research, such as intellectual property, databases, patents, software or others, should also be highlighted.

4) National Recognition

Provide additional details about the degree to which your publications and discoveries have been recognized by leaders in your field. For example, highlight invited lectures, visiting professorships and plenary research presentations. Also highlight work cited in editorials, scientific blogs or the lay press. Note invitations to serve on NIH study sections or scientific advisory boards, editorship of scientific journals (or membership on editorial boards), and accomplishments recognized by national prizes or scientific awards. A national reputation is required for appointment or promotion to full Professor, while an international reputation is required for the award of tenure.

5) Research-Related Institutional Service

Depending on the nature of your contributions, this information may be included in the Research or Other Scholarly Activity section of the cover letter (particularly if it involves leadership of committee or programs), or it may instead be included in the Leadership and Service section of the cover letter. Wherever you decide to place it, you should include brief descriptions of significant committee work and institutional service, and how your efforts have been vital in supporting the research missions of your department, the SOM or the University. Examples might include serving as chair or member of a study section or other research or grant review committee, active participation and contributions to an institutional review board or animal care committee or serving as a journal editor or member of a journal editorial board. Highlight the manner in which these activities support the scholarship programs of your department or the institution, or the manner in which they have helped further your own scholarship or research.

6) Publication and Funded Grant tables *(include information at current rank only)*

PUBLICATIONS (at current rank only) <i>Publications included here should match those listed on your C.V.</i>				
	Total Number	First-author	Senior-author	
<i>Original articles in peer-reviewed journals</i>				
<i>Other publications in peer-reviewed journals (e.g., reviews, commentaries, editorials, etc.)</i>				
		Total Number	Refereed Abstracts	
<i>Published or presented scientific abstracts</i>				
			Total Number	
<i>Other scholarly works, such as patient education materials, digital presentations, curricula, clinical guidelines, or case studies</i>				
<i>Publications not included above (e.g., letters-to-the-editor, etc.)</i>				

FUNDED GRANTS (RESEARCH, TRAINING, OTHER): 5 YEARS or SINCE LAST PROMOTION <i>Grant information should be consistent with information for this time period on your C.V.</i>				
Reporting Since ____ (Year)	Principal Investigator/Program Director (primary or sub-award)		Co-Investigator/Key Personnel (not consultant)	
	Number of Grants	Total Direct Costs	Number of Grants	Total Direct Costs
<i>Federal (NIH, NSF, VA, etc.)</i>				
<i>Foundation/Professional Assoc. (RWJ, AHA, etc.)</i>				
<i>Industry</i>				
<i>Internal/Other grants</i>				

Annotated Bibliography

This information should be included as part of your Supplemental Materials and should be limited to your “best” publications or scholarly works - those that have been the most significant or that have received the most attention. Greatest weight is given to recent publications (since your most recent promotion or tenure award). For each publication or scholarly work, provide a brief summary of the nature and importance of the problem (the “context”) and the most important results. PubMed or other links should be provided to enable promotions committee members to review your most significant research publications. In general, no more than 10 publications will be included in an annotated bibliography.