

## **External Referee Letter Guidelines**

Candidates for promotion need to have at least 3 external (no connection to CU) referees (reviewers) who are “arm’s length.” They must be given the opportunity to provide their departments with the names of recommended individuals and those whom they do not want contacted due to the presence of bias. Most departments will require at least 6 names; the department ultimately chooses who to contact. Candidates need to inform the department how they know the potential letter writer. Candidates CANNOT solicit referee letters directly; the department must do so using the SOM-approved template. All referee letters (internal and external) must remain confidential.

External referees should hold an academic rank at or above that being sought by the candidate, however exceptions can be made when they have specialized expertise, which should be explained in the Chair’s letter. The primary purpose of an external referee letter is to answer the following questions:

“Does this faculty member meet the CUSOM criteria for promotion?”

“Would this faculty member qualify for promotion at your institution?”

“Arm’s length” referees are people who can evaluate someone objectively, without close personal, supervisory, or financial ties. The referee must disclose any relationship with the candidate (e.g., former training director or mentor, research co-investigator, or other). For tenure requests, the external referee must also be tenured and submit a biosketch or CV.

The arm’s length restriction does not apply to internal letter-writers, although the candidate still may not solicit internal letters. It must be done by the department.

If there is someone whose contribution would add strong support to the dossier but they do not qualify as a letter writer (for example, a health care practitioner in the community who routinely refers patients and speaks to achievement of clinical excellence or regional reputation), candidates can include a letter of support from them as part of their supplemental materials.

<b>Do these reviewers meet the criteria?</b>	<b>Counts as external</b>	<b>Counts as arm’s length</b>
A professor where I did my doctoral work who taught 2 of my classes but did not directly supervise me.	Yes	Yes
The PI of a grant that I was Co-Investigator on, that ended last year.	Yes	No, financial ties
A professor at DU who practices at DHHA, but does not hold a CU faculty appointment. He was the outside advisor on my dissertation committee, but I haven’t worked with him (or talked to him) since.	Yes	Not ideal, but acceptable

A Co-I on a multi-site grant whom I don't know well.	Yes	Yes
A colleague from another institution who I served with on a panel/board/committee.	Yes	Yes
A co-author at another institution on a paper with 10 authors. I've never spoken with them outside of a few Zoom calls to review results.	Yes	Yes
A provider from a different department at CU who I've never met but frequently refers patients.	No	Yes
A co-resident who is in academic medicine, but not at CU.	Yes	No, personal connection
My former research mentor from another institution.	Yes	No, former mentor
Someone I mentored 10 years ago, now in the CU School of Public Health.	No	No, former mentee
Someone I went to lunch with when they traveled to CU to give Grand Rounds.	Yes	Yes
Someone who invited me to give a presentation at an outside institution 5 years ago.	Yes	Yes
Someone who is in my field outside of CU who I have never met.	Yes	Yes
A faculty member at CU Boulder who I have obtained cell cultures from but not otherwise collaborated with.	No	Yes
Someone who is a colleague at my mentor or Chair's former institution, but I don't know well.	Yes	Yes
The person who had my position at CU before I got here. We didn't overlap, and they're now at another institution.	Yes	Yes
An Assistant Professor at another institution who I have met at a few national meetings.	Yes	Yes, but not appropriate rank
I'm in an <i>extremely</i> specialized field of research. There are 4 of us in my field. One is only Assistant Professor. Another one is a co-author on several papers.	Yes	No, but your Chair can explain, so this may be acceptable
A community provider I've never met who refers patients to me.	Yes	Yes, but no academic rank