**GUIDE TO REQUIRED LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

**Required letters of recommendation should be submitted directly to the Office of Faculty Affairs:** [Musm\_Faculty\_Affairs@mercer.edu](mailto:Musm_Faculty_Affairs@mercer.edu)

**These letters are not available for the candidate to review before, during or after the promotion/tenure process.**

1. **OVERVIEW: TYPES OF LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

* Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee letter: The candidate’s Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee (if applicable) provides a letter detailing the candidate’s accomplishments in the pertinent areas as well as an overall assessment of the application. See section B below for additional directions.
* Department Chair letter: The candidate’s Department Chair provides a letter detailing the candidate’s accomplishments in the pertinent areas as well as an overall assessment of the application. **This letter should directly address whether the candidate has met or exceeded the requirements for promotion and/or tenure.** See section C below for additional directions.
* Senior discipline representative or program director letter: A letter from a senior discipline representative or program director addressing the candidate’s teaching contributions may be included.
* Internal referee letters: Three letters from referees within the institution, which may include MUSM clinical affiliates. See section D below for additional directions. It is recommended that some of the letters are from faculty outside of the candidate’s primary MUSM department. The referee’s academic rank should be higher than the current rank of the candidate.
* External referee letters: Three letters from referees external to MUSM and MUSM clinical affiliates. See section E below for additional directions. The referee’s academic rank should be higher than the current rank of the candidate.
* Other letters: In addition to the specified letters above, other support letters which also validate the candidate’s contributions to MUSM may be included. These letters may be from other faculty members in the candidate’s department or the school, from colleagues in professional organizations, or from the community. See section F below for additional directions.

1. **DEPARTMENT PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE LETTER**
   1. Letter printed on letterhead and signed by all voting committee members at or above the candidate’s requested promotion rank. This letter is addressed to the Department chair/head/director
   2. Evaluation of candidate in applicable areas:
      1. Teaching (i.e., instruction, curriculum development, learner assessment, mentoring/advising, and educational administration/leadership)
      2. Research, scholarship, creative endeavors
      3. Clinical practice, as applicable
      4. Administration, as applicable
      5. Institutional and academic service
   3. Vote count on promotion and/or tenure; clearly indicate recusals, abstentions and absences. No proxy votes are allowed.
   4. Minority viewpoint (if there was a split vote)
   5. Indicate any collaboration of committee members with candidate and explain the nature of the collaboration
2. **DEPARTMENT/DIVISION/UNIT CHAIR/HEAD/DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION**
   1. Letter printed on letterhead and signed by the chair/head/director of the candidate’s department/division/unit
   2. Addressed to the dean of the medical school
   3. Provides opinion, views and comments, including analysis of impact of candidate’s professional activities and contributions
   4. **This letter should directly address how the candidate has met or exceeded the requirements for promotion and/or tenure. Carefully evaluate each criteria**:
      1. Teaching (i.e., instruction, curriculum development, learner assessment, mentoring/advising, and educational leadership)
      2. Research, scholarship, creative endeavors
      3. Clinical practice, as applicable
      4. Administration, as applicable
      5. Institutional and academic Service
   5. Recommendation on promotion/tenure
   6. Indicate any collaboration with candidate and explain the nature of the collaboration
3. **INTERNAL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**
   1. The Chair, in consultation with the candidate seeking promotion and/or tenure, should contact three referees within the institution to determine willingness to write letters. Emeritus/emerita faculty from MUSM will be considered internal referees. It is recommended that some of these letters are from faculty outside of the candidate’s primary MUSM department.
   2. The referee’s academic rank should be higher than the current rank of the candidate. The candidate should provide the referees with adequate information to address the standards for promotion/tenure including CV and other relevant application materials well as a copy of the applicable MUSM standards for promotion and/or tenure.
   3. The chair will request each referee review the application and specifically request that the referee forward the review directly to the Office of Faculty Affairs, not to the candidate. These letters are not available to the candidate.
4. **EXTERNAL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**
5. The Department Chair and candidate should develop a list of at least three, but no more than five, referees external to MUSM and MUSM clinical affiliates and determine their willingness to serve as referees.
6. Reference letters from the following list are acceptable and are listed in order of preference:
   * Another academician, not employed by MUSM or one of its clinical affiliates, at or above rank desired,
   * Blind letters from academicians (not known to candidate), at or above the rank desired
   * Someone who works with academicians (AMA, NIH, AAMC, ACGME, specialty associations, etc.) at a state or national level
   * Faculty member who previously worked at MUSM or a MUSM clinical affiliate but who has not been with MUSM or a MUSM clinical affiliate for 36 months since leaving the institution, and is at or above rank desired
7. The Chair should provide the referees with adequate information to address the standards for promotion including CV and relevant application materials as well as a copy of the applicable MUSM standards for promotion and/or tenure.  **A template letter for the chairs can be found at the end of this guide.** **Promotion and/or tenure requirements by track are also available on the MUSM website:** <https://medicine.mercer.edu/faculty-and-staff/resources/>
8. The Chair will contact each referee to request a review of the candidate and specifically request that the referee forward the review directly to the Office of Faculty Affairs, not to the candidate.  These letters are not available for the candidate to view.
9. **OTHER LETTERS**
   1. In addition to the required letters from referees, candidates may submit letters that document other contributions, such as those to the department, school, hospital, community, professional organizations, committees, grant or journal review panels, etc. These letters may also speak to the candidate’s value, significant contributions, and reputation on a local, state, national, or international level. Value to the school, department, University, and/or national organization should be provided by representatives best able to speak to the candidate’s abilities.

**Template for Chairs Requesting Letters of Support for Faculty Promotion/Tenure**

**Please include the appropriate criteria for promotion/tenure with this letter to external referees**

**Name/Title**

**Department**

**Address**

**City, State, Zip**

Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

Dr. (**First and Last Name**) is applying for (**promotion to Rank**) (**Tenure**) in the Department of (**Department Name**) at the Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) in (**Macon/Savannah/Columbus**). Dr. (**Last Name**) is currently an (**Rank**), and has held this position since (**Year**).

I am requesting your candid assessment of the professional accomplishments of Dr. (**Last Name**). Our review process considers the faculty member’s teaching, scholarship, clinical service, administrative accomplishments, and institutional and academic service, as appropriate. Please comment on each of these areas based on the submitted *curriculum vitae*, any other materials regarding the applicant’s work that have been forwarded to you, your familiarity with the candidate’s work, and MUSM’s promotion and tenure criteria. If you are unable to comment on a specific area please indicate this in your review.

Of great importance is the stature of the candidate in their scientific or professional community. A specific and critical evaluation of the impact of the faculty member’s work will be more useful than general statements of praise. Please review our guidelines and criteria for faculty promotion and tenure, which are included with this letter. Once you have assessed the candidate’s progress regarding MUSM’s guidelines, please comment as to whether this individual would meet the promotion or tenure criteria at your institution.

I appreciate the effort that these academic reviews require and gratefully appreciate your time in performing this review. Academic reviews hold a high level of importance in the establishment and sustenance of strong institutional programs. Your letter is confidential and should be addressed to the Dean of the School of Medicine:

Jean R. Sumner, MD, FACP

Dean

Professor of Internal Medicine

Mercer University School of Medicine

1550 College St.  Macon, GA 31207

O:478-301-4022

Sumner\_jr@mercer.edu

**Please send your letter directly to the Office of Faculty Affairs at the address below by September 15th** so that we can comply with our institutional deadlines: [Musm\_Faculty\_Affairs@mercer.edu](mailto:Musm_Faculty_Affairs@mercer.edu)

On behalf of Mercer University School of Medicine, thank you for considering this request.