



Process for Assessments from Clinical Sites

Provost's Guidelines: Appendix 8

The MSP Contract specifies that, along with other evidence in support of excellence in teaching, Clinical Faculty are “expected to provide letters of assessment sought by department chairs from supervisors at clinical sites.” The following is meant to provide a basic framework for the process of procuring those letters and presenting them in the portfolio.

Clinical Assessment Letter Process Timeline

The MSP contract does not provide process deadlines; the timeline below is suggested; deadlines are not contractually required.

Spring 2020	Clinical faculty candidate provides Chair with names and contact information for potential letters of assessment from clinical sites.
5/15/20	Chair solicits(via email) letters of assessment from clinical sites on behalf of Clinical Faculty, and informs candidate how many letters have been solicited on their behalf.
Summer 2020	Chairs may turn letters over to Clinical Faculty as they arrive.
8/12/20	Requested deadline for assessors to provide letters.
9/21/20, 5 p.m.	Deadline for candidates to upload all promotion materials to the P&T fileshare; Clinical Faculty include all received letters from clinical sites in the electronic supplemental materials file.

Guidelines for the Clinical Assessment Letters

- Department chairs, in consultation with their dean, should set a range for the number of letters to be solicited for clinical candidates. This number may vary widely between departments or programs within departments, but should be consistent, to the extent possible, for candidates across the program/department. This number should be shared with the candidate.
- If the chair writes to a potential assessor who declines to write, the chair should notify the candidate, and decide with the Dean if it is desirable to seek a replacement letter.
- The contract does not indicate that these letters will be held confidential. Chairs should explicitly mention this policy to potential assessors.
- The letters should take into account, as possible, the relevant period of assessment; either from appointment as Assistant Clinical Professor to Associate Clinical Professor, or from appointment as or promotion to Associate Clinical Professor to Clinical Professor.
- Clinical letters should not be sought from assessors with a vested interest in the outcome of the decision.
- The candidate should not request clinical assessment letters directly, nor raise the topic of the

clinical evaluation with a potential or confirmed assessor prior to the submission of the promotion materials.

- The candidate should present **all** clinical assessment letters solicited and received by the chair in their portfolio; no letters received should be dismissed, edited, excluded or discarded.

Scope of Clinical Assessment Letters

Clinical assessors are asked to address, for the relevant period of assessment:

- the nature and length of the external reviewer's past or present association to the candidate
- the significance, quality, and quantity of the candidate's contributions to the clinical site
- the quality and effectiveness of the candidate's instruction/practice in the clinical site
- where possible, examples of the candidate's contributions to the clinical site
- an assessment of the candidate's skill compared with others in the field who are at a similar stage of their career
- any relevant information about common clinical practices within the discipline or other factors that may help the university evaluate the candidate relative to disciplinary expectations

Departments may edit these requested areas of evaluation to include more specific language pertaining to the nature of the faculty's clinical work.)

Sample Letter Requesting Clinical Assessment

This draft may be adapted by chairs as needed to suit. The letter (email) should include all the basic information and disclosures noted.

Subject: Promotion of <candidate title & name> to <clinical rank> in the Department of <department name> at UMass Lowell.

Dear <title and last name of reviewer>,

The Department of <department name> at the University of Massachusetts Lowell is considering <candidate title & name> for promotion from their present rank of Associate Professor, with tenure to Professor. Our contract requires that we consider objective assessments from clinical sites at which our clinical faculty are engaged.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell is a nationally ranked research university with a significant educational mission. Our clinical faculty must present a case for excellence in their instructional activity, including that undertaken at clinical sites, during the period under review (from <indicate the start date of the period under review for the candidate> to the present, or your most recent contact).

Since we seek an objective opinion of the qualifications of each candidate, please address the following:

- the nature and length of the external reviewer's past or present association to the candidate, and to the clinical site
- the significance, quality, and quantity of the candidate's contributions to the clinical site
- the quality and effectiveness of the candidate's instruction/practice in the clinical site
- where possible, examples of the candidate's contributions to the clinical site
- an assessment of the candidate's skill compared with others in the field who are at a similar stage of their career
- any relevant information about common clinical practices within the discipline or other factors that may help the university evaluate the candidate relative to disciplinary expectations

A 2-3 page assessment should suffice, and you may include both qualitative and quantitative information, as needed, to provide a clear picture of the candidate's performance.

Your letter can be submitted in hard copy or electronically in PDF format with your digital signature included. Your letter will be made available to University personnel participating in the review process, and **will not be held confidential from the candidate**, who will include it in the promotion portfolio.

Promotion decisions are an important responsibility in the academic community. Therefore, my colleagues and I hope that we can rely upon you for assistance as we consider <candidate title & name's> candidacy for promotion. To meet the University's schedule, we appreciate receiving your letter by **Wednesday, August 12, 2020**.

If you have a personal relationship with <candidate title & name>, or you are unable to provide the evaluation, please let me know within two weeks upon receipt of this letter. Thank you for your help in this most important task to our Department and the University. If you require additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

<Department Chairperson>

<Department Chairperson's email address>

<Department Chairperson's telephone>

<Department Chairperson's complete mailing address>