

**Improving A&P Processes**  
**Best Practices**

**Roles and Primary Responsibilities in Appointment, Reappointment and Promotion Reviews**

This attached document (note: document is at the end of this communication) outlines the responsibilities of the candidate, department chair, division chief, faculty lead, and divisional/departmental staff in A&P reviews. Please note that the department chair has ultimate responsibility for several tasks including, most importantly, the confidentiality of the process, timeliness of the action and overall quality of evidence submitted in the long form.

**Red Flags: Issues that may lead to concerns at the School and/or University levels**

From observing and staffing the School's Appointments and Promotions Committee and Assistant Professors Review Committee, and from receiving feedback from the Provost and/or Advisory Board, the Office of Academic Affairs has identified a series of issues that may lead to concerns at the School and/or University levels. By paying special attention to these "red flags," which are outlined in the attached document (note: document is at the end of this communication), departments may avoid or minimize concerns that could lead to tabling (or, in the most severe cases, rejection) of long forms.

**Internal Candidates**

In the last year, about one-third of faculty hired in our School had a previous Stanford affiliation. Some were hired via a waiver of search, but most emerged from national searches. To varying degrees, most schools of medicine across the country look to their own M.D. and M.D/Ph.D. fellows and trainees for clinically active faculty candidates. Reasons include small pool sizes nationwide, the use of training grants to identify and nurture the next generation of academic researchers, and the obvious benefit of being able to assess a candidate's strengths first hand. Challenges surrounding internal hiring, however, include the danger of becoming inbred and the importance of having the junior person achieve independence from his or her research mentor.

It is important to ensure that when a national search is conducted, it is comprehensive and rigorous and that the playing field is level for *all* candidates. Among other things, this means that advertisements should not be tailored to fit a specific candidate. Additionally, mentors or collaborators of any known candidate (internal or external) who is likely to be an applicant should recuse themselves from the search and selection process and should not be on the search committee or involved in ranking or voting. Careful attention to these areas makes the review process smoother and more straightforward, particularly at the University level.

Another area for improvement is in bolstering the case for faculty candidates who have received their residency or fellowship training at Stanford. Going forward, we ask that you include information in the appointment file about the pool from which the candidate of choice was drawn when selected for training at the *earliest* stage of his or her career at Stanford. We believe that the combination of the national search narrative and information about the competitiveness of the earlier pool will add value to our appointment recommendations, especially when reviewed at the University level.

## **Waivers of Search**

Under normal circumstances waivers of search will only be considered for eminent senior scholars who are clearly one of the very top leaders in their field (especially women and underrepresented minority scholars); candidates at the assistant and associate ranks who would bring diversity to the faculty; candidates whose spouses or partners have been or will be appointed to the faculty; and in some cases, candidates who are changing faculty lines.

While other cases may be proposed for consideration, it is anticipated that exceptions will be granted infrequently.

## **School-level Streamlining**

We understand that there is continuing frustration with the bureaucratic aspects of A&P processes. The Advisory Board has had and will continue to have discussions that may lead to streamlining in the near future. However, in the meantime and as outlined below, we believe that there are a few things that the School can do to lighten the burden of assembling long forms without sacrificing the quality of evidence or integrity of the review process.

### **Review by the Office of Academic Affairs**

As mentioned above, based on the broad perspective gained from reviewing long forms across the School, the Office of Academic Affairs provides important assistance to departments in strengthening the quality of the case being made for a given action. However, there has sometimes been a lack of clarity regarding whether such critiques are recommendations or mandated revisions. Some have also questioned the utility and efficiency of multiple requests for revisions. To provide clarity, and to streamline the process going forward, our process is as follows:

#### 1. Administrative Issues: feedback to the faculty affairs administrator

The department will be expected to provide missing information, correct inconsistencies and fix significant typographical errors. In most cases, once these issues have been brought to the department's attention, there will be no further review of revisions by the Office of Academic Affairs.

#### 2. Substantive Issues: feedback to the department chair

The Office of Academic Affairs will identify significant issues that in our assessment could result in tabling or rejection of the file at the School or University level unless addressed by the department. For example, this might include significant negative evaluations or comments by referees or trainees that have not been addressed in the departmental commentary. On behalf of the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, OAA staff will provide recommendations for addressing such issues and will be available for further consultation with the department chair or his/her designate. Once the revised long form has been submitted, further address of significant issues will be at the discretion of the Vice Dean.

### 3. Optional Issues: feedback to the department chair, division chief and/or faculty lead

The Office of Academic Affairs will make recommendations for strengthening the quality of the case; these may be presented in the context of any substantive issues. The responsibility for accepting such recommendations is at the discretion of the department chair or his/her designate. Under normal circumstances, once OAA has communicated such recommendations, there will be no further follow up on these issues.

While authorship and ownership of the long form rests appropriately with the department, the Office of Academic Affairs will always be available to provide counsel and guidance.

### **Shorter, More Focused Transmittal Memoranda**

The Advisory Board has noted that redundancies might be minimized by shortening transmittal memoranda. Toward this end, we are recommending that such memoranda be brief (generally one to two pages) and avoid repeating information contained in other parts of the long form (e.g., Candidate's Statement, Role of the Candidate, Evaluation of Candidate, or quotes from referees). Instead, the memoranda should be a focused argument in favor of the action by the department chair that includes a succinct description of the candidate's background and areas of focus as well as an explanation about why his or her work is important to the field and to the department.

There should be a discussion of any *significant* negative evidence uncovered in the review process and, if applicable, how it is being addressed (e.g., through counseling or mentoring). Voting results at all levels should be reported.

Guidelines for the transmittal memorandum are available on the [OAA website](#) and can also be found [here](#).

### **Independent Letter for UTL/NTLR Assistant Professor Long Forms**

Originally intended to provide external validation of a candidate's trajectory, letters from independent referees for UTL and NTLR assistant professor appointments have either proven difficult to get or, in some cases, have not provided substantive and value-added evaluation. As a result, this is no longer a requirement for new assistant professor appointments but an option that a department chair may choose to exercise on a case-by-case basis. In the case of an appointment of an internal candidate to Assistant Professor, the University has asked that two external letters be included in the long form to provide an unbiased assessment of the candidate and to strengthen the case.

We hope that the attached documents and the streamlining outlined above will be helpful to departments. We would welcome any suggestions about how to further improve our A&P processes.

**BEST PRACTICES:  
ROLES AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES IN  
APPOINTMENT, REAPPOINTMENT, AND PROMOTION REVIEWS**

**Role of the Candidate**

Provides up-to-date curriculum vitae (with annotation of middle-author publications)  
Provides Candidate's Statement (maximum 3 pages)  
Suggests potential referees (up to three names; candidates do not have input on comparative peers)  
Provides list of trainees

**Role of the Department Chair, Division Chief or Faculty Lead**

Determines action in compliance with appropriate criteria (e.g., reappointment or promotion).\*

Appoints search or evaluation committee members.\*

Assumes overall responsibility for integrity of the search or evaluation process.\*

Selects external and internal referees (input from candidate limited to 3, as noted above) and trainees for letter solicitation.\*

Selects comparative peer set (if applicable).\*

Authors (or delegates authorship to an appropriate senior faculty member) the "Narrative Report on the Candidate" section of the long form.

With assistance from divisional/departmental staff, oversees the collection and summarizing of teaching (and, if applicable, clinical) performance evaluations.

Authors draft counseling memorandum (if applicable).

Considers recommendations from the Office of Academic Affairs to strengthen the quality of the proposed action.

Applies appropriate criteria to reach a recommendation on the appointment, reappointment or promotion based on the evidence gathered.

Authors transmittal memorandum, which should address any negative issues in the long form and explain the rationale for the department chair's positive (or negative) recommendation.\*

Assumes overall responsibility for confidentiality of the process, timeliness of action and quality of evidence submitted in the long form.\*

**Role of the Divisional/Departmental Staff**

Manages completion of divisional/departmental document assembly and review processes in compliance with established OAA and University time lines.

Documents the search or evaluation process and provides that information to the faculty lead.

Gathers background information on proposed external referees and submits referee grid to OAA. Ensures that referee "relationship to candidate" information is accurate.

Proofreads entire long form, but particularly the curriculum vitae and candidate's statement, and ensures currency and compliance with School and University guidelines.

Ensures that all sections of the long form are complete and in satisfaction of minimum evidentiary requirements.

Provides draft of long form to OAA and works with faculty lead to incorporate recommended revisions.

### **Role of the Departmental Appointments and Promotions Committee**

Understands the criteria and expectations for application of criteria for appointment, reappointment and promotion as outlined in Chapter 2 of the School of Medicine Faculty Handbook.

Determines the relative weight to be given to information and opinions gathered and exercises its independent judgment within the context of School and University guidelines. When appropriate, requests additional information to inform recommendation.

Votes on the action and provides a recommendation to the department chair.

\*While some duties may be delegated to the division chief or faculty lead, the department chair has ultimate responsibility for these tasks.

## **APPOINTMENT, REAPPOINTMENT, AND PROMOTION REVIEWS: RED FLAGS AT SCHOOL AND/OR UNIVERSITY LEVELS**

### **Search issues in all lines and at all ranks:**

Internal candidate, small candidate pool, mentors or collaborators on the search committee, lack of clarity around process, insufficient description of affirmative action efforts, overly specific requirements for position in advertisement/solicitation letter.

### **For appointment to Assistant Professor in the UTL, NTLR and MCL:**

- Insufficient protected time for research. In the MCL, at least 20% FTE must be allocated to scholarship. In the UTL and NTLR, it may be a cause for concern if the candidate has a large clinical or administrative component, for example, more than about 30% FTE.
- Lack of recent publication record.
- Mentor not identified in transmittal memo.
- Referee letters which simply recap CV or candidate's statement without substantive evaluation of relevant performance areas.

### **For reappointment to Assistant Professor in the UTL, NTLR and MCL – see list for appointment, and add:**

- Unclear scholarly trajectory toward satisfaction of line-specific criteria for promotion to Associate Professor
- Mediocre or poor clinical or teaching performance
- Insufficient evidence (usually evaluations) of clinical and teaching excellence
- Draft counseling memo which lacks guidance looking to possible future consideration for promotion
- Interpersonal/respectful workplace issues
- Not addressing any negative commentary (from referees, trainees, or evaluations) in transmittal memo or evaluation section, as well as draft counseling memo.

### **For appointment or promotion to Associate Professor with tenure in the UTL:**

- Lack of clarity regarding specific major advances contributed by the candidate since completing training (after reading the file, and ideally after reading only the external referee letters, it should be easy to answer the question, "what has s/he done, since completing training, to move the field forward as an independent scientist?")
- Lukewarm or negative assessments by external evaluators
- Apparent lack of investigative independence (e.g., still publishing with mentor, lack of "senior author" publications, does not have own extramural funding as PI, referees do not affirm impact of contributions since completing training)
- References in the file to a small, fledgling, or struggling field (it helps to realize that Stanford is essentially making a decision about whether to tenure the field, broadly defined, as well as the candidate)
- Eclectic or unfocused pattern of publication suggesting unclear trajectory
- Lack of, or poor, teaching and/or clinical contributions
- Interpersonal/respectful workplace issues

**For appointment or promotion to Associate Professor in the NTLR:**

- Lack of clarity regarding specific major advances contributed by the candidate since completing training (after reading the file, it should be easy to answer the question, “what has s/he done, since completing training, to move the field forward as an independent scientist?”)
- Lack of independent extramural grant funding (NTLR explicitly requires grant funding)
- Lukewarm or negative assessments by external evaluators
- Apparent lack of investigative independence (e.g., still publishing with mentor, lack of “senior author” publications, does not have own extramural funding as PI)
- Eclectic or unfocused pattern of publication suggesting unclear trajectory
- Lack of, or poor, mentorship contributions (formal teaching not required in this line)
- Interpersonal/respectful workplace issues

**For appointment or promotion to Associate Professor in the MCL:**

- Lack of a regional reputation
- Less than excellent clinical performance (problematic regardless of clinical FTE)
- Poor teaching performance
- Scholarly productivity below the expectations associated with field and scholarly FTE
- Eclectic or unfocused pattern of publication suggesting unclear scholarly trajectory toward future promotion to Professor
- Interpersonal/respectful workplace issues

**For appointment or promotion to Professor in the UTL – see list for promotion to Associate Professor, and add:**

- For promotions, ambiguous evidence that the candidate has compiled a significant record of accomplishment since the time of the tenure review.
- Lack of clarity regarding the candidate’s status as one of the very best in a broadly defined field.
- Lack of, or poor, assessments of classroom teaching or investigative mentorship

**For appointment or promotion to Professor in the NTLR – see list for promotion to Associate Professor, and add:**

- Lack of clarity regarding the candidate’s status as one of the very best investigators in the field.
- Lack of senior-authored publications (or other similarly substantive contributions in written scholarship).
- Lack of evidence regarding the candidate’s ability to obtain sustained external funding.
- Poor, or ambiguous, evidence of outstanding performance as a supervisor of graduate students.

**For appointment or promotion to Professor in the MCL – see list for promotion to Associate Professor, and add:**

- Unclear national recognition
- Lack of clearly identifiable investigative program, with investigative peer-reviewed publications as primary author and/or collaborator with clearly central intellectual contributions