

3.4 Preparing a Review File

1. General

An academic review file is first prepared by the academic appointee and the department for departmental review. Once a decision regarding the departmental recommendation is reached, the file, with the department recommendation letter, is submitted for campus review and decision. The department is responsible for preparing the academic review file for department consideration, and for submitting the file for campus review. If the academic review file is not submitted for campus review by the established deadline, the academic review file will be deferred for one (1) year and not be considered until the next academic review cycle.

The required documentation (which varies depending upon the proposed action) is set forth in the chart below:

File Documents	Reappointment	Merit	Accelerated Merit	Promotion/Career Reviews including Advancement to Full Step VI and Advancement to Above Scale
Review Summary Form	X	X	X	X
UC Academic Review History Form	X	X	X	X
Departmental Recommendation Letter	X	X	X	X
Departmental Ad Hoc Report	Please refer to Section 1.4.2 , 2.4.8 , or 3.4.12 for guidance on the inclusion of ad hoc committee reports.			
Academic Appointee's Personal Statement	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
External Referee Solicitation Letter (1 copy)				X ¹
Identification & Qualifications of External Referees				X
Number of External Referee Letters				5 for promotion to Associate 3 for promotion to Full & Advancement to Above Scale; optional for advancement to Step VI
Courseload/Case Load Form	X ¹	X	X	X
Teaching Evaluations	Required for all instructional titles			
Level of Administrative Responsibility (LAR) Form	Required for Academic Administrators and Academic Coordinators			
Job Description	Required for Academic Administrators and Academic Coordinators			
Updated Biography & Bibliography Form	X	X	X	X
Sabbatical Leave Report, if applicable	X ²	X	X	X
Publications/Reviews/Creative Work	X ²	X	X	X
Certification A/Certification B	X	X	X	X
¹ External referee letters are not required if the departmental recommendation is termination.				
² Not required for temporary files				

2. Short Form Evaluation Review

Departments are encouraged to use the [Short Form Evaluation](#) in lieu of a full departmental recommendation letter, and School Dean's final action letter, for normal merit actions delegated as Dean's Authority.

A full review file and accompanying documentation must accompany any files where:

- a. the file requires full campus review as dictated by existing policy of [Academic Senate Bylaw 55](#)
- b. the Dean determines that the file requires full campus review.

About Department Letters and Short Form Evaluations

If the Final Authority returns the Short Form Evaluation to the Department for a full recommendation letter, the Short Form Evaluation needs to be included as part of the expanded file

3. Standard Evaluation Review

The following items should be presented in a standard academic review file in the order listed in sections 3.4.4-3.4.19 below, as applicable to the candidate. All documents received and reviewed by departmental reviewers, including the departmental ad hoc committee reports, and all letters from external referees, must be included in the file. The same documents must be seen by all those with responsibility for evaluating the file.

4. Review Summary Form

Using AP Data and Interfolio, the department will produce a review summary displaying the candidate's current appointment status, the proposed review action, proposed appointment details, associated department vote, and reviewer recommendations.

5. Review History

Using AP Data and Interfolio, the department should generate a Review History showing periods of service and the title, step, percentage of time, and department for each period. Generally, the review history should cover the candidate's entire employment history at the University of California, not just at the UC San Diego campus. Include periods of leave without pay and period of sabbatical leave. (Note that salary information should not be included in the employment history.)

About Appending Additional UC Employment History

System generated review histories only includes UC San Diego specific actions to the extent available in AP Data. Departments/schools are welcome to include addendum histories detailing employment at other UC institutions or periods prior to those available in the system.

6. Department Chair's Independent Letter

Related Manual Sections: [2.4.4](#)

The chair may, in a separate letter, make an independent evaluation and recommendation, which may differ from the departmental recommendation. This letter should be made available to all voting members of the department, and will be accessible to the candidate. As per [APM-160](#), the department chair's independent letter is a confidential document and if requested, will be provided to the candidate in redacted form following issuance of a final outcome.

7. Departmental Recommendation Letter

Related Manual Sections: [2.4.3](#)

The departmental recommendation letter presents the department's justification for the action recommended. It should be based on an evaluation of the appointee by all eligible members of the department, and it should be addressed to the administrator with approval authority for the action proposed, as specified in the [Authority and Review Chart](#).

If the department chair and the appointee are near relatives (see [APM 520](#) for definition) or close collaborators, the chair should recuse themselves and the vice chair (or other senior faculty member, such as a former department chair) should prepare the review file and draft the departmental recommendation letter. To determine if the appointee has collaborated with the department chair or vice chair, check the appointee's bio-bib to see if they have published with the appointee within the past five years. If so, another faculty member will need to author the departmental recommendation letter.

If the appointee holds appointments (salaried or non-salaried) in two or more departments, each department must evaluate the appointee and provide a recommendation letter. The home department, as identified in the payroll system, prepares the file and provides a copy to the other department(s) for evaluation. The chairs of each department may submit separate letters of recommendation or elect to co-author one letter.

Specifically, the departmental recommendation letter should include:

- a. An initial paragraph stating the proposed action and the proposed status of the appointee's off-scale salary component (if any); the appointee's current title, rank, step, and salary, the proposed title, rank, step, and salary, and the effective date.

Example: "On behalf of the Department of Marine Archaeology, I am pleased to recommend a three-year accelerated merit advancement for Professor J. Doe, From Professor, Step VI (OS), at an annual nine-month market off-scale salary of \$XX,XXX, to Professor, Step VIII (OS), at an annual academic year, market off-scale salary of \$XX,XXX, effective July 1, 20XX.

- b. Mention any special element of the review, such as an appraisal, career equity review, off-scale salary proposal, or retention effort. Such elements should be noted near the beginning of the letter, although detailed discussion may be provided farther down.
- c. A description of the nature and extent of consultation with members of the department, including a statement specifying the degree of departmental consultation (e.g., use of a departmental ad hoc committee, discussion at a faculty meeting) and any dissenting opinion. The letter must make clear who was consulted and the manner of consultation.
- d. Verify that a complete file was presented for voting members' consideration, and present the results of the vote taken, including the reason (if known) for any negative votes. (If the reason for the negative votes is unknown because votes were cast by secret ballot, this should be stated as well.)
- e. Departments are required to document the membership of the departmental ad hoc committee, but the departmental recommendation letter should not mention committee members' names since the appointee has the right to see the departmental letter and ad hoc committee members' names are confidential.
- f. A statement regarding any conflicts of interest in the file. If a department chair or any faculty member contributing to a file has a financial interest in a company employing the appointee under review, that information should be included in the letter, and such individuals should recuse themselves from contributing to the file.
- g. A thorough evaluation of the appointee's performance and achievements in each area of responsibility to the University, as specified in the series criteria.
- h. A statement regarding the department standards for reappointment, merit, promotion, and/or accelerated advancement. Additionally, department standards should be appended to the department letter as an accompanying document.
 - i. An evaluation of the academic appointee's performance and achievements in each area of responsibility to the University, as specified by the series criteria. The academic appointee's performance in each area should be evaluated, and in the departmental recommendation letter, clearly described, in terms of the department's established performance norms and expectations, using established

departmental evaluation methods. This may include one or more of the following, depending on the series:

- ii. A clear description and evaluation of the research and other creative activity conducted during the review period and the impact of that research and creative activity on the academic appointee's field. The letter also should explain the academic appointee's specific role in all collaborative and co-authored works, if the academic appointee is not first or senior author. Further, the letter should indicate the standing of journals and conference proceedings in which the academic appointee's publications appear, whether the journals are refereed, and their rates of acceptance/rejection. Indices of the stature of journals (e.g., journal ratings by professional societies, acceptance/rejection rates, etc.) should be provided for key pieces of work, particularly if they are published in journals that are not likely to be familiar to campus reviewers.
- iii. A mere listing of publications is inadequate; the work must be analyzed with regard to its nature, quality, importance, and impact on the academic appointee's field. Departmental recommendation letters for Health Sciences faculty should make clear whether clinical case reports are merely historical or whether they contain new ideas or results.
- iv. The academic appointee's success in obtaining support for research and other creative activity, including support for graduate students, should be addressed. The academic appointee's role on grants should be indicated (e.g., Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator, with the number of other co-investigators specified). While evidence of successful grant funding may be an indicator of research productivity or impact, grants are not required as a measure of productivity or impact unless required by applicable department standards.
- v. The chair should review the academic appointee's previous file to note which publications were considered for that review, as these publications cannot be counted again for subsequent advancement (except that they may be appropriately counted in full career reviews).
- vi. A clear statement describing the department's teaching requirements and how the academic appointee's teaching contributions met those requirements. The letter should note all formal and informal teaching efforts undertaken by the appointee during the review period. A meaningful assessment of the academic appointee's teaching effectiveness at both the undergraduate and graduate levels of instruction, accompanied by a concise statement of the amount and type of undergraduate and graduate teaching done during each year of the review period, and a statement of whether this is a normal pattern of teaching for someone at that rank and step in that department. Any extraordinary effort or extenuating circumstances, such as the newness, difficulty, or popularity of the course or its content, also should be evaluated. The letter should also address any problems in the area of teaching, measures taken during the review period to improve teaching, and specific plans to correct the problems.

- vii. In addition to an evaluation of the regularly scheduled undergraduate and graduate classes, the departmental recommendation letter should include an assessment of the appointee's non-structured activities, which the appointee has documented on the biobib form, including a discussion of: undergraduate research students, master's and doctoral residents, and any other students mentored outside of the structured classroom setting; and the appointee's role (e.g., thesis adviser, research adviser) for each student.
- viii. In Health Sciences, the departmental recommendation letter should indicate the number of students for each elective course offered by the academic appointee.
- ix. A discussion of the academic appointee's service accomplishments. For example, if the academic appointee served on a committee, the committee responsibilities and workload should be described. If the academic appointee chaired the committee, this also should be noted. Exceptional service in a capacity such as department chair is generally cited and proposed for reward only after the completion of such service, not while it is in progress. As department chairs are compensated for their role, the department must provide a justification for any additional reward.
- x. The departmental recommendation letter should also indicate whether the appointee holds appointed or elective office in professional organizations, on professional publications, or within community, state, national, or international organizations in which professional standing is a prime consideration for appointment.
- xi. Justification for the award of bonus or market off-scale salary components.
- xii. A statement regarding external referees' recommendations. External referee letters should be referenced by code as assigned on the Referee ID list. Comments that might identify external referees must not appear in the department letter, the text of which is available to the academic appointee in redacted form or in the departmental ad hoc report, if any. Excessive quotations from external referee letters are redundant and therefore are discouraged.
- xiii. A description of the contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion of the appointee.
- xiv. For Retention Files – the department chair is responsible for ensuring that the departmental recommendation letter includes a discussion of how the competing institution compares to UC San Diego and demonstrate how loss of a candidate would be significant. For offers from foreign institutions, the presumption is that the offer is for a fiscal year basis. The department chair is responsible for ensuring the proper conversion of the foreign offer to an academic year basis.

Departments shall adopt procedures under which the letter setting forth the departmental recommendation shall be available, before being forwarded, for inspection by all those members of the department eligible to vote on the matter or by a designated committee or other group of such members.

About Retentions and Financial Incentives

Retention or other financial incentives and proposed resources (space assignments, non-salaried resources, etc.) are not appropriate in the departmental recommendation letter and are best left out of the review file altogether.

8. Memorandum of Understanding (If Applicable)

Related Manual Sections: [2.3.1](#) [2.4.5](#) [3.3.7](#)

For candidates who are joint appointees (serving in two or more departments), a copy of the signed Memorandum of Understanding is required to be included in the file. The MOU outlines each department's performance expectations for the candidate in regards to the academic series criteria for each title the candidate holds.

9. Principal Investigator Letter for Project Scientist & Specialist Titles (If Applicable)

At the time of academic review, the Project Scientist/Specialist's supervisor (normally the principal investigator) should evaluate the Project Scientist/Specialist and submit their written evaluation and recommendation to the department chair. The department chair must specify in the departmental recommendation letter the role of the appointee in the research project.

10. Dissenting Letters

If departmental faculty members do not agree with the departmental recommendation, they can submit dissenting letters to be included in the file. These letters may not be anonymous and are not considered confidential documents. As such they will be available to the candidate without redaction along with the department letter.

11. Certification Forms

Certifications are obtained in order to ensure that appointees have been made aware of their rights and responsibilities during the review process and that the correct procedures have been followed. For this reason, it is important that certifications be signed only at the appropriate point in the review process, as described below. Departments should schedule review files in a manner to provide all candidates a specified period of time to complete these certifications.

a. Certification 1-A

At the beginning of the review process, the chair must inform the appointee of the nature of and procedures for the impending review and of their rights to provide information for the

review. After the review file is assembled, the appointee is asked to certify that they had the opportunity to update the Biography and Bibliography packet; to inspect teaching evaluations and other non-confidential materials in the review file; to receive, upon request, a redacted copy of the confidential materials in the file; and to submit for inclusion in the file a written statement in response to or commenting on the file. The appointee's signature on Certification A certifies that these procedures have been followed prior to the departmental review of the file and determination of the departmental recommendation.

b. Certification 1-B (If Applicable)

Should be completed after a file has been reviewed by a departmental ad hoc committee and the candidate was provided an opportunity to receive a redacted copy of the report before the file is submitted for department review and recommendation.

c. Certification 2

After the department has determined its recommendation, the appointee must be informed orally or, upon request, in writing, of the results of the departmental recommendation. If the chair provides this information in writing, a copy of the written statement must be included in the file. Upon request, the chair must provide the appointee a copy of the departmental recommendation letter. The appointee's signature on Certification B certifies that these procedures have been followed.

d. Certification 3 (If Applicable)

If new material (for example, an additional external referee letter) is added to the file after the file has been forwarded to the appropriate dean's office or to Academic Personnel Services, the department must inform the appointee of the new material and obtain the appointee's signature on Certification C to certify that this has been done.

12. Departmental Ad Hoc Committee Report (If Applicable)

Related Manual Sections:	1.4.2	2.4.8
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Departmental ad hoc committee membership and recommendations (if any) should be included in a file as outlined below:

- a. If an ad hoc committee is convened and advises the department via a formal report, its recommendation becomes part of the file. A signed copy of the ad hoc committee report, with full membership indicated at the end (with member's signatures), must be included in the file. This is a confidential document, and references to ad hoc members must be avoided in the departmental recommendation letter.

- b. If an ad hoc committee is convened to advise the department but no formal report is produced, the department chair should summarize the ad hoc committee's feedback in a few sentences within the departmental recommendation letter. The department chair should avoid identifying any ad hoc committee members within the departmental recommendation letter. Additionally, ad hoc committee membership should be included as an addendum to the Referee I.D. List.

13. Appointee's Personal Statement (Optional but Strongly Encouraged)

Related Manual Sections: [1.3.3](#) [2.4.9](#)

If the appointee provides a personal statement (which is optional; inclusion of which may be based on departmental practice) regarding their achievements and future plans, this document should be so titled, and it must be signed and dated. Appointees may wish to provide such statements in part to ensure that special efforts, such as development of a new class, or unusual service contributions, are fully recognized and credited.

About COVID-19 Impact Statements

Candidates are encouraged to provide a statement explaining negative impacts on teaching, research, or service resulting from the global COVID-19 Pandemic. Candidates need not provide extensive descriptions of personal or private COVID-19 related hardships, but should detail how COVID-19 impacted specific areas of their academic series criteria. These statements should be included so reviewers can incorporate the consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic into their academic judgment.

Additionally, academic appointees are welcome to draft two separate self-statements, one for distribution to potential external referees when departments solicit feedback and one directed at campus reviewers.