

2026-2027 Academic Year
Outline of Procedures for [Research Scientist Promotions](#)

GENERAL NOTES:

- All promotion recommendations for Research Scientist (RS) track faculty are reviewed by the Vice President for Research and Innovation.
- Please submit RS casebooks to our office by **Wednesday, February 10, 2027.**
- **The effective date for these promotions will be September 1, 2027.**
- **It is important to minimize the number of out-of-season promotions. Recommendations for promotions outside the normal cycle should be restricted to exceptional cases and/or circumstances, which are to be explained in the cover letter accompanying the file. Please note that, given the challenges of managing out of season promotions, the timeline for disposition of such cases cannot be guaranteed.**
- The attached checklist applies to Research Scientist track faculty promotions, which require approval by the Vice President for Research and Innovation.
- Promotions for Instructional tenure track, Research Professor track and Clinical Instructional track require approval by the Provost and the President, and approval by the appropriate Chancellor for Flint or Dearborn faculty. ([Research Professor Track Promotion Guidelines](#))
- All Medical School promotions must also have the endorsement of the Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs.
- The review and signature of the Dean of the school/college or Director of an institute are required on all recommended promotions.
- Our office expects the primary unit to carefully coordinate casebooks for faculty members holding joint appointments in more than one unit with each of the respective units. **This includes dry appointments without effort and joint appointments on different tracks.** Respective units should have a preliminary discussion confirming internal processes, timelines, and agreed upon external reviewers for all appointments. **The final solicitation letter should include all appointments held by the candidate.** Post hoc reviews and approvals by secondary units after the casebook has been submitted to our office is strongly discouraged.

The cover memo for joint appointment casebooks should be signed by all of the appropriate chancellors/deans/directors. This cover letter should describe the processes used in each school/college/unit, as well as a description of the ways in which the two (or more) schools and colleges coordinated promotion processes in the case including each unit's votes. If the individual is not recommended for promotion in any of the units in which the faculty member holds an appointment, the cover letter should clearly indicate the reason(s) for this decision. The relative weighing, and hence the detail required, for each of the items in the documentation for each candidate will vary across the different faculty tracks. However, all files must include documentation of teaching effectiveness and research or creative work.

Instructions for Research Professor Faculty promotion recommendations are available on the Office of the Provost website: https://www.provost.umich.edu/faculty/promotion_guidelines/

CHECKLIST FOR RESEARCH SCIENTIST PROMOTION CASEBOOKS

Updates listed in red

Please upload an **accessible**, bookmarked PDF file of the following materials for each casebook to the designated **OVPR RESEARCH SCIENTIST PROMOTIONS** Dropbox folder **beginning February 3 and no later than February 10, 2027**.

Prior to uploading, please be sure the PDF document has been enabled for optical character recognition. Updates to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations require **public universities** to deliver digital content and applications—including all documents, in formats that meet recognized accessibility standards. 2027 Promotion Casebooks are expected to meet these requirements. ([See the U-M Digital Accessibility pages for more information](#))

Naming Convention: Last Name, First Name - School/College

Confirm submission with an email to OVPR.Faculty.Affairs@umich.edu

For further information, contact:

The Office of the Vice President for Research Faculty Affairs, OVPR.Faculty.Affairs@umich.edu.

1. [Summary Memorandum from Dean/Director](#)
 2. [Unit Criteria for Evaluation of Teaching, Research/Scholarship, and Service](#)
 3. [Documentation for each Candidate:](#)
 - [Cover Letter from the Dean/Director](#)
 - Chair/Department/Unit Director Cover Letter (if applicable)
 - Curriculum Vitae
 - Documentation of Teaching (**Not Required for Research Scientist track**)
 - Documentation of Research
 - Documentation of Service
 - Sample Letter Sent to External Reviewers
 - Brief Description of Credentials of External Reviewers and Relationship to Candidate
 - Evaluation Letters by all External Reviewers
 - Evaluation Letters by all Internal Reviewers (**Not Required by OVPR.**)
- Appendix: Records of Communications

FORMAT OF RESEARCH SCIENTIST PROMOTION CASEBOOKS

- Length: Any casebook exceeding 20 pages (bulleted list above - not including CV, cover letters, internal or external letters of evaluation, appendix) will be returned.
- Margins: 1" top, bottom, left, right
- Font: Times New Roman or Times, size 11
- Sections: Separate each major section (A, B, C, D...) with a page break.
- Footer: Insert candidate name and the academic year of review in footer.

NOTE TO PREPARERS: Upon completing the casebook, please delete the formatting instructions before creating the final PDF document.

Summary Memorandum prepared by the Dean/Director

- The Dean/Director should include a summary memorandum indicating the names of all individuals being recommended for promotion, employee ID and the promotion action.
- For a Research Scientist track appointment, the summary memorandum from the Dean/Director should be addressed to the Vice President for Research and Innovation.
- For faculty holding joint appointments (including Instructional Tenure track, Research Professor track, and Clinical Instructional track appointments), please include details of the recommendation from each unit in which they hold an appointment.
- Please upload to the OVPR Research Scientist Dropbox folder, the signed final summary memorandum as a separate PDF document. [Naming Convention: School Summary Memo Date]

Unit Criteria

- Unit criteria for promotion for the RS track must be provided by all units and uploaded to the RS Dropbox folder [Naming Convention: School Track Criteria]
- No formal requirement for teaching at the Research Scientist track.
- Address how your school/college and the various promoting departments, programs, or other units define and evaluate teaching, research, and service in their areas. If there are material differences in the criteria used by different areas in your school/college to evaluate candidates for promotion, please describe these (e.g., external funding is an important criterion in some disciplines; in others, it is not).

*Please note that for units reporting directly to OVPR, the process outlined in your unit by-laws should be followed.

Documentation for Each Candidate

- **Cover Letter from the Dean/Director**
 - [Template letter](#) required.
 - Dean's letters should focus on pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses, of the case and account clearly for the tenor of the unit's discussion and voting. The assessment should be written from an evaluative, not an advocacy, perspective and should present a balanced summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the case. Be sure to discuss any negative reports, reviews, and votes included in the casebook.
 - Provide a 2-3 sentence assessment on what substantive impact the candidate's research or scholarly work has had either within the candidate's own field or more broadly.
 - It is important that non-traditional forms of scholarly production are given as much scrutiny as the more traditional/disciplinary work. It is important to ensure that individuals receive full credit for contributions to interdisciplinary and/or collaborative scholarly projects.

- Describe the outcome of the promotion review at each stage of evaluation in the unit(s) in which the candidate holds an appointment. Please summarize the evaluative comments of each unit's promotion review committee and/or executive committee and include the final vote tally without names, such as 4-2-0 (i.e., # of positive votes-# of negative votes-# of abstentions/recusals) of any faculty group (department review, promotion advisory committee, and/or executive committee) that voted on the promotion recommendation. **If a departmental vote is reversed or a recommendation rejected by the school/college, all internal deliberations must be provided in detail.**
- **Because abstentions and recusals are treated differently in different unit policies, we expect deans to summarize any reasons for abstention or recusals (departmental affiliation, conflict of interest, and/or actual concerns about the casebook).**
- Explain your reasons for recommending or not recommending promotion and tenure.
- Highlight and discuss in detail any special circumstances concerning the casebook of this individual (e.g., early promotion request, internal split votes, reviewer concerns, etc.).
- When quoting from an external reviewer, identify as Reviewer A, B, or C, etc. Be sure to exclude identifying information (e.g., the reviewer's institution).
- The cover letter should be signed by the dean(s)/director(s) from all units in which the candidate is being promoted.
- **Chair's Letter** (if applicable) **(No direct quotes from reviewer letters should be included in any of these letters)**
- **Curriculum Vitae**
 - Check the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of the information in the curriculum vitae, (e.g., that publications listed as "in press" are really in press and that the degrees indicated have been awarded).
- **Documentation of Teaching Contributions** (OPTIONAL FOR RESEARCH SCIENTIST TRACK) **Please note:** If the candidate has not been involved in teaching, please mark this section as N/A.
 - Committee's Evaluation of Teaching (if applicable)
 - Two-page maximum
 - Overall assessment of candidate's teaching contributions including:
 - Classroom instruction; supervision of graduate student instructors in undergraduate courses
 - Conduct and supervision of laboratory instruction; mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as postdoctoral researchers and others in research
 - Advising students in the major; supervision of field work; and supervision of clinical and practicum experiences.
 - REMINDER: For faculty members with interdisciplinary appointments, please comment on his or her contributions to interdisciplinary activities with regards to teaching.

- **Documentation of Research**

- Committee's Evaluation of Research and Impact
- Five-page maximum
- Expectations for promotion on Research Scientist track: [Research Faculty Criteria Review Grid](#)
- Specific contributions to technology transfer, non-traditional involvement in public or non-profit sectors, and entrepreneurship should be included in this section, if applicable.
- Below are **Suggested Scholarly Contributions** that should be considered when evaluating Research Track faculty (this is not an exhaustive list and we anticipate additions to this list as this change in the promotion criteria is implemented)*
 - Conference peer review
 - Organizing a panel/workshop – local, regional, national
 - Invited panel presenter
 - Leadership role in a professional society
 - Mentorship of trainees (esp outside the immediate lab setting)
 - Journal peer review
 - Editorial position
 - National committee
 - Community engagement (e.g., research translation)
 - Policy contributions
 - Study section/ grant peer review
 - Guideline committees, advisory boards
 - Leading data training and dissemination

Service activities that do not represent scholarly contributions:

- Serving on a promotion committee
- Serving on a space committee

Activities like these both strengthen the University's research enterprise and our scientific communities, and should be considered as meaningful components of evaluation for Research Scientist faculty, both in annual reviews and in promotion considerations.

- **Documentation of Service**

- Committee's Evaluation of Service
- One page maximum
- Overall assessment of candidate's contributions to service.

- **External Reviewers**

- **Sample Letter Sent to External Reviewers to Solicit Recommendations**
 - Include a copy of the letter sent to all the external reviewers.
 - **The letter of request must be the same for all external reviewers and include the required text shown in the Sample Letter for External Recommendations. ([Attachment 2](#))**
 - **Schools/colleges/units may add text to the language of the template, however, for legal reasons, cannot delete or change any language included in the template.**

- **It is the responsibility of the dean/director to ensure that department chairs, or the appropriate equivalent, use the template provided. Include a copy of the solicitation letter in the casebook.**
- **Brief Description of Credentials of External Reviewers and their Relationship to the Candidate**

Reviewers are not to be contacted for any other reason other than to: 1. make the initial solicitation/request for the letter or a reminder that the letter is due; and 2. to request the reviewers' biographical data.

- **External reviewers (listed alphabetically by last name) who provided review letters**
 - Designate each reviewer as either “arm’s length” or “not arm’s length” and note whether the reviewer was suggested by the candidate or by the department.
 - Please use the template found as [Attachment 1](#) as an example of format.
 - Arm’s length letters can be from persons who have been co-authors, major research collaborators, and former faculty colleagues with the candidate if the most recent association occurred over 10 years prior to the promotion. **Arm’s length letters are NOT required for Research Scientist track, but may strengthen the case.**
 - Teachers, advisors, mentors, and current faculty colleagues (see exception above) are not “arm’s length.” We do not consider letters from persons who have served on a candidate’s thesis or dissertation committee to be “arm’s length.”
 - When both an outside reviewer and the candidate for promotion are members of the same large cooperative/research group that publishes abstracts and manuscripts with an expanded number of co-authors, the outside reviewer can be considered an arm’s length reviewer if he/she and the candidate have not personally interacted in the research effort. In these cases, provide a statement with the bio noting the absence of a direct collaboration.
 - The external reviewers must hold a rank at or above the rank for which the candidate is being considered for promotion. If the circumstances necessitate letters from out-of-rank reviewers, those should be explained.
 - In addition to the above rank requirement, the following track requirements apply:
 - External reviewers who are tenured faculty can review all promotion casebooks for the Instructional Tenure Track and Research Professor Track.
 - External reviewers who are Research Professor Track faculty can review promotion casebooks for the Research Professor and/or the Research Scientist Track.
 - There should be no more than two external reviewers from the same institution.

- **Research Scientist track only** - A minimum of five letters must be included, with at least two of those being from external reviewers. None of these letters need to be arm's-length. While arm's-length reviewers are not required, their inclusion would strengthen the case.
- If a non-academic external reviewer is identified as being "arm's length", provide justification that the title held by the reviewer equates to or is at a level above the academic rank to which the candidate is being considered for promotion.
 - Name and title(s)
 - Institution or corporation
 - Brief description of his or her credentials, including well understood measures of stature such as: fellows of societies, members of the NAE/NAS; editorships; endowed chairs; and leadership in professional society offices
 - His or her relationship to the candidate; e.g. classmate, personal friend, graduate instructor, dissertation committee member, co-author, or co-investigator. Dissertation/thesis advisors, major collaborators, if included, are not considered part of the minimum count for external letters
- **External Reviewers who did not provide review letters**
 - A listing of external reviewers, alphabetically by last name, who were asked to write a letter but declined to do so and the reason for declining.
- **Evaluation Letters by all External Reviewers**
 - Include letters from evaluators outside U-M (minimum of five (5) letters, two (2) must be external but they are **NOT** required to be "arm's length").
 - Dissertation/thesis advisors, major collaborators, if included, are not considered part of the minimum count for external letters
 - While letters from persons who have served as the candidate's dissertation or thesis adviser or major collaborator can be especially helpful (because they can be presumed to have a good sense of both the person and the work), it is also true that their own reputations are involved in the work being evaluated. If such letters are included, they must be in addition to the minimum requirement of five.

- **Evaluation Letters by all Internal (University of Michigan) Reviewers - NOT REQUIRED BY OVPR**
 - Internal review letters are not required; but if letters were solicited, they must be included. Internal review letters may be helpful if they are from faculty in other units who can attest to the value of a faculty member's work.
 - For faculty on the research track whose promotion package is based on contributions to team science, internal non-arm's length letters from research colleagues are strongly encouraged to provide greater clarity regarding the candidate's unique contributions to the collective research.

Retention of Promotion and Tenure Files

SPG 201.46 – Personnel Records - Collection, Retention and Release – requires that promotion and tenure files be retained for a period of six years plus the current fiscal year in each candidate's departmental or unit personnel file.

Non-Discrimination Review of Promotion and Tenure Decisions

SPG 201.35 - The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.

Appendix – Records of Communications