Appendix C: The Dossier

Dossier Inventory

An internal candidate for reappointment, promotion or tenure is entitled to receive from his or her department a written itemized inventory of all items included in the relevant dossier that is sent to TPAC. A copy of this inventory is itself to be included in the TPAC dossier. Please note that the dossier contents as detailed below is a complete listing for tenure cases; certain other faculty actions do not require all of this material (for example, reappointments do not required letters from external referees). The exact contents for specific faculty actions is listed on checklists which may be found on the Dean of the Faculty’s Tenure and Promotion webpage.

Dossier Contents

The TPAC dossier should include all of the elements listed below unless one or more of these items is expressly excluded in particular cases by the following discussion. The contents of the dossier are as follows:

1. Cover letter to TPAC from the department (covering memorandum). The cover letter should state in precise language the specific recommendation that is being made, including (except in the case of a negative recommendation) the date of the proposed action and, in the case of a reappointment, the length of the proposed new term.

Any recommendation to TPAC must contain information on the following:

- the names of the faculty who attended the meeting at which the final recommendation to TPAC was agreed;
- the names of faculty who, though eligible to participate in this decision, did not attend the above meeting;
- the (numerical) vote upon which the final departmental recommendation is based;
- the department quorum at such meetings;
- a general explanation of the reasons for abstentions (if any);
- an explanation of the views of those voting in the minority;
- the academic unit’s view of the importance of the candidate’s academic specialty within the larger field or discipline; and
- in addition to the foregoing, a full and candid discussion of the issues raised in the department meeting relative to this candidacy.

The Chair is required to show in draft form his/her cover letter to TPAC reporting the above decision to all faculty members who participated in the vote upon which the unit’s recommendation rests, for their comments and
suggestions. At this time, the Chair should also inform all such faculty that if any of them has a serious objection to
the text of the proposed letter - an objection which the Chair is unable to resolve after reasonable efforts have been
made to do so, such individuals may, if they wish, communicate their objections in writing to TPAC within ten (10)
working days, individually or collectively. Any such minority communications will be available to all members of
the department who participated in the vote.

2. In the case of a negative recommendation, the written explanation provided to the candidate that outlines the
reasons for that recommendation. (Not required for external candidates)

3. The candidate’s written waiver of his/her right to a personal appearance before the department before the vote is
taken should be included. If the candidate chose to appear, the cover letter should include a summary of the
appearance. (Not required for external candidates)

4. Department review of scholarship, teaching effectiveness, and service. Candidates should be evaluated primarily if
not exclusively on the basis of published and/or completed work that has elicited scholarly reaction and appraisal
outside of Brown. Where appropriate and possible the department review of scholarship must include a summary of
the impact of a candidate’s work on the disciplinary area. The candidate’s published record should show evidence of
having developed projects beyond the dissertation or its equivalent.

While evaluation of teaching effectiveness is an important element of all recommendations, the following guidance is
of particular relevance for internal cases. Multiple modes of assessment should be used in the evaluation of teaching,
including thorough discussion of students’ qualitative evaluations (use of student quotations is encouraged),
comparative data, and peer evaluation if this information is systematically collected by a department. If the candidate
supervised independent study and/or engaged in mentoring, an assessment of these activities should also be
included.

Service expectations vary depending on department and candidate rank, but a candidate should be evaluated
following departmental standards and criteria for service to the department, the University, and the profession.

The departmental review must contain an honest appraisal of any aspects of the candidate’s performance in any of
these areas which might appear to argue against the department’s overall recommendation on the candidate.

Departments should be particularly careful in documenting cases in which candidates are being proposed for
promotion or tenure earlier than might be expected from the candidate’s service in her or his current rank. Although
TPAC aspires to apply a consistent standard of achievement to all cases of promotion and tenure of similar type, an
important part of that standard is a judgment of the extent to which the candidate’s dossier gives evidence of
sustained and sustainable accomplishment in all areas of the candidate’s professional life. Candidates who present relatively few years of such evidence may find it difficult to meet that standard.

5. In the case of internal candidates, quantitative information on teaching should include:

- Courses taught since the last appointment;
- Enrollment figures in these courses;
- A tabular summary of departmental teaching (i.e., course) evaluations, if these data lend themselves to such a summary.
- Class observations by peers, if available

6. All recommendations require submission of an updated curriculum vitae for the candidate. All publications listed therein should be completely cited following standard bibliographic practice, including for each entry the year of publication and, for articles from journals, page numbers. Where there are multiple authors of published research, the department should explain any professional significance that is understood in the field to attach to the placement (or ordering) of the names of such authors.

7. The candidate’s own statement. All internal candidates are expected to prepare a brief written statement for inclusion in their dossier in which they reflect upon their professional accomplishments to date in research and teaching and their plans for the future. (Not required for external candidates)

8. Annual reviews. This applies to all regular, untenured Brown faculty under consideration for reappointment or promotion. In all these cases, the dossier should include copies of all departmental annual reviews of the candidate that have been prepared since the last appointment, and the candidate’s written response(s), if any. If, as is sometimes the case, a department has substituted in a particular academic year another sort of review (e.g. for reappointment) for the usual annual review, a copy of the former report should also be included. (Not required for external candidates)

9. Relevant department correspondence, including a sample of the letter sent to referees and all substantive correspondence from the referees. For example, any messages that discuss the candidate’s qualifications or work should be included, as should all declines to submit a letter. It is also helpful to provide a single-page table in this section that lists the names, institutions, and responses (accept/decline) of all persons solicited for external letters of recommendation, and also indicates if they were recommended by the candidate or the department. (Not required for reappointment or contract renewal).
10. External letters of recommendation (*not required for reappointment or contract renewal*). For internal promotions from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor, with tenure, a minimum of EIGHT letters from external referees are required. TPAC requires that the eight letters of recommendation should be from individuals who are not: (i) current or former dissertation or post-doctoral supervisors of the candidate, (ii) frequent or recent research collaborators of the candidate, or (iii) persons who previously provided written evaluations of the candidate at the time of an earlier personnel action at Brown (initial appointment, reappointment, tenure or promotion). Letters from such individuals may be included in the dossier for the information they convey, but only as additions to the minimum of eight letters required from external referees. Departments that find the foregoing restrictions impractical in a particular case may appeal in writing to TPAC through the appropriate divisional Dean requesting an exemption. This may be granted, given sufficient convincing argumentation of the case. Such an appeal should be made as early as possible so that if it is denied by TPAC, the department can respond without unduly delaying the process overall.

For internal promotions from Associate Professor to Professor (tenure previously granted) and external appointments to tenure (whether at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor), EIGHT letters are required. However, it may be possible to solicit letters from advisers, collaborators, or scholars who have previously written, whether for initial appointment or promotion to Associate Professor, as long as the majority of letters are from new evaluators. It is recommended that no fewer than FIVE of these letters be from referees who are not close collaborators. Please consult the Dean’s office with questions about repeating the use of referees.

Promotions or appointments to Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor without tenure, Associate Professor (Professor of the Practice, MBL, or Research) or Professor (Professor of the Practice, MBL, or Research) require a minimum of FIVE letters of recommendation from distinguished scholars in one or more areas of the candidate’s research who can evaluate the significance and impact of that research (see 10.5 for further information on appropriate reviewers for these promotions and appointments).

Note that for any of these actions, the list of referees should be reviewed by the appropriate divisional Dean before any letters are solicited.

All individuals invited to be external reviewers should be of a stature in their respective fields commensurate with that expected for the academic rank for which the candidate is being considered. For example, associate professors or their equivalent should not be asked to serve as external evaluators of candidates for promotion to full professor at Brown.

For promotions to associate professor with tenure and promotions to full professor, the final list of external referees to be contacted should include at least three names suggested in the first instance by the candidate as well as names suggested independently by the department. For promotions requiring five letters in total (see above), the number of
names suggested by the candidate may be proportionally smaller (two names). The candidate also has the right to identify any referees who s/he prefers not be asked to write, and to provide a written statement describing the nature of the objection(s), and this statement must become part of the dossier. A candidate’s right to object to one or more external referees is not however a veto right; the department retains the prerogative to solicit the views of one or more external referees to which a candidate has registered an objection, although in this event it may be asked in its meeting with TPAC to explain its decision. In the end, TPAC desires to know which of the external reviewers actually solicited were initially suggested by the candidate, and which by the department.

Letters of recommendation from external referees should comment in some detail upon the professional attainments of the candidate, and in particular compare the candidate, if possible, with others (by name) of similar career stage and/or experience in the same sub-field. In addition, the department should ask external referees whether they would be prepared to recommend the candidate for a position such as the one contemplated at Brown at their own institution, or at other major research universities, based on the candidate’s scholarly ability and achievement. TPAC should receive as part of the dossier a copy of the letter sent by the Brown department to prospective external referees soliciting their assistance. See the letter template in Appendix B.

The suggested text may be reworded in consultation with the Dean’s office, but all information specifically requested in the sample letter must be included.

In the event that a department later finds it necessary to “follow-up” its initial letter of solicitation with one or more additional communications with a prospective external referee, TPAC desires that these “follow-up” contacts be noted and briefly described.

The above paragraphs should not be read to preclude a department soliciting additional commentary on a candidate from professionals other than the external referees agreed to as above. But these additional individuals should be professionals - e.g., former students, journal editors, teaching collaborators, chairs of committees on which the candidate has served, etc. - who by virtue of their previous or on-going professional relationship with the candidate can be expected to have a well-informed, if limited, special perspective on the candidate’s work that the department might wish to have reported to it. In such cases, however, the department's standards and criteria must explicitly allow for special solicitations of such individuals and the process by which the names of such individuals will be chosen should be more clearly stated. Letters on a candidate from any source that have not been actively and officially solicited by a department, i.e., that are un-solicited, may not be placed in that candidate’s dossier.
11. Professional biographies of external referees. (*not required for reappointment or contract renewal*)

Where the candidate’s dossier necessarily includes letters of recommendation from external referees, the department should provide a brief identifying statement for each such referee sufficient to indicate to TPAC why the opinions of that individual are given particular weight by the department. In presenting such biographical information on the external referees, departments should not only describe the credentials of each but also indicate the basis for selection, particularly in the case of referees who either have a working relationship with the candidate or have previously provided an assessment of the candidate.

12. Minutes. The dossier should include the minutes of the official meeting at which the vote was taken. Minutes should be a detailed transcript of remarks, providing a full accounting of the issues that arose in discussions of the case. There is no need to attribute remarks to participants.

If more than one candidate is discussed at the same meeting, the minutes should be redacted so that each candidate’s dossier includes only a discussion of his/her case.

13. Standards and Criteria. TPAC requires a copy of the department’s current Standards and Criteria for faculty reappointment, appointment, promotion and tenure so that TPAC members can evaluate the stipulations of this document against the arguments advanced by the department in support of the recommendation.

14. Actual publications/completed work. The dossier transmitted to TPAC should be accompanied by one copy of each of the candidate’s principal publications and/or completed work. These will be returned.

15. Teaching evaluations. All teaching evaluations since the last TPAC review should be included. If this is the first time the candidate is being reviewed by TPAC, evaluations since the start of the appointment should be included.