

April 2019

FROM: Max Paul Friedman, Chair, Committee on Faculty Actions  
Mary L. Clark, Dean of Academic Affairs and Senior Vice Provost  
TO: American University Colleagues  
RE: Instructions for Submitting Files for Action

*Major change for 2019-20: hard copy files no longer required! New digital file requirements. See below.*

### CFA Schedule for 2019-2020

**April 24, 2019 12-1pm** Open CFA Meeting

**Sept. 25, 2019 12-1pm** Open CFA Meeting

**Oct. 23, 2019** Deadline for submitting files to the CFA for full university review for all pre-tenure reappointments and Professorial Lecturer sequence actions with disagreement at the unit level

**Jan. 15, 2020** Deadline for submitting files for tenure (if applicable) and promotion to Associate Professor to the CFA (term and tenure-line)

**Feb. 19, 2020** Deadline for submitting files for promotion to Full Professor to the CFA (term and tenure-line)

**April 22, 2020 12-1pm** Open CFA Meeting

### A. Introduction

Candidates, faculty coordinators, and all internal reviewers should carefully read these instructions for submitting Files for Action for reappointment, promotion or tenure to the Committee on Faculty Actions (CFA). The CFA and Dean of Academic Affairs (DAA) have prepared these instructions in accordance with the current [American University Faculty Manual](#). Candidates, faculty coordinators, and all internal reviewers should also carefully read the *Faculty Manual* and the guidelines for reappointment, promotion and tenure (tenure-line faculty) or guidelines for reappointment and promotion (term faculty) of the candidate's assigned teaching or academic unit, which are posted on the [Dean of Academic Affairs' website](#). The specifications in these instructions are required for all file submissions and the deadlines are final.

### B. General Information about the File for Action

Candidates for reappointment, promotion, or tenure submit a File for Action using the designated procedure of their teaching or academic unit. Candidates should prepare their file in accordance with their unit's guidelines, and any additional instructions that the unit provides. Internal reviewers evaluate the File for Action following criteria specified in the *Faculty Manual* and this memo. Once the file has moved through the appropriate levels of review within the unit, the dean or University Librarian will then review the file, make a recommendation, and send it forward to the Senate office, for a university-level review by the CFA and the Dean of Academic Affairs. In cases of tenure, and tenure-line promotion cases, the file then goes to the Provost. In the case of a positive decision from the Provost, a recommendation for tenure and tenure-line promotion goes forward to the Board of Trustees, which has the final decision-making authority. A decision by the Provost to deny promotion or tenure terminates the process. A faculty member can grieve the decision using the procedure specified in the *Faculty Manual*.

A File for Action documents the faculty member's development in three categories – scholarship, teaching, and service – as generally defined in the *Manual* and more specifically defined in the candidate's unit guidelines. In each of these three categories, candidates will address achievements,

areas where improvement was made, areas where there needs to be further improvement, plans for growth and development, and projected future outcomes. (Faculty on the Professorial Lecturer sequence use only two categories, teaching and service.)

Materials in the File for Action are to be concise, meaningful, and clearly related to the candidate's performance or development. The Files for Action will *not* overwhelm reviewers with extraneous material, such as multiple syllabi that all convey the same pedagogy. The candidate's narrative will refer to the unit's criteria for tenure and promotion (tenure-line faculty) or promotion (term faculty). If a candidate has work in progress near completion, such as a manuscript, the candidate may list the work on the curriculum vitae, noting that it is work in progress, and include the work in the Scholarly Appendix. If a work in progress is significant for the case, the CFA encourages the candidate to include it in the Scholarly Appendix so it can be evaluated by reviewers. The academic units themselves provide guidance to candidates on the form in which scholarship/creative/professional work is digitized for the Scholarly Appendix, and whether it is submitted as a link to a resource or as digitized material itself. The CFA encourages candidates to use links and cloud-based services as much as possible for videos or other files too large for Sharepoint.

No one but the candidate and/or those who submit written material as part of the established process (e.g. unit coordinators who add internal memos from previous evaluations) may include material in a File for Action. Reviewers may add only their own memo to the file. The CFA may add unredacted memos from previous reviews to the file. No one may remove or replace any part of a file, except to make minor non-substantive grammatical or typographical corrections. Candidates may add new information to the File for Action at any stage of the review process. A candidate wishing to update a narrative or curriculum vitae, once submitted, shall submit a new dated version of it with “\_revision1” added to the end of the file name. For subsequent revisions, the candidate should use the same procedure, and label the element “revision2,” “revision3,” etc. All internal parties who have contributed to the file up to that point need to be notified of additions, either by the candidate or the unit coordinator, with information redacted if necessary.

The CFA expects all contributors to the file to observe the CFA's deadlines *strictly*. The CFA does not review incomplete files. Each academic unit provides a checklist of the material required in a File for Action. The office of the Dean for Academic Affairs prepares templates for checklists annually.

Please note: All levels of review may ask the candidate about the status of scholarship in progress. Section 11 (g) of the *Faculty Manual* states, “The provost, in consultation with the dean of academic affairs, will review the file and may request clarifying or additional information from relevant persons or committees involved in the review at earlier stages. In extraordinary circumstances, the provost may request additional external review letters that will be reviewed at the previous levels. Such requests and any responses (or summaries thereof) must be included in the file.” In extraordinary circumstances, and with knowledge that doing so may delay the process, deans, the CFA chair, or the DAA may request additional information from the candidate, earlier internal reviewers and/or, in the case of seeking revised or new external letters, by submitting the request via the chair, dean, or University Librarian. If the deans, CFA, or DAA request such information, earlier reviewers must also be given an opportunity to review and comment upon the file in light of the additions, if necessary revise their earlier judgments, and if relevant take a new vote.

## **C. Components of a File for Action**

*1. Components of a File for Action for Tenure-Track Reappointment or Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor, or Term Promotion to Associate Professor, or Term Promotion to Senior Professorial Lecturer (in the event of a disagreement within the unit)*

Candidates will submit a File for Action in digital format. **Beginning this year, hard copies are no longer required at the CFA level and above, except for books (see “Scholarly Appendix” below).** Units that wish to continue requiring hard copies of Files for Action for reviews at the unit level must replicate the digital copy exactly. Candidates will submit their electronic copy through their own unit’s Sharepoint Team Site. (Professorial Lecturer sequence faculty do not submit their files to CFA unless there is a disagreement at previous levels of review.)

## **FILE STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS (this section replaces the “hard copy” and “digital copy” sections from previous years)**

Each File for Action **in digital format** must have the following elements in the order specified below. Wherever possible, a document saved as a searchable PDF is always preferable to a scanned paper document saved as a PDF image.

### **WHAT THE CANDIDATE WILL DO:**

The candidate will prepare the File as a set of PDF files with the body of text in 12-point type and one-inch margins. Please use the exact file names and Sharepoint document types specified below. Please use illustrations, graphs, or other aids sparingly, only if they significantly enhance the reader’s understanding of the file.

### **I. Comprehensive Narrative. Filename: candidatelastname\_narrative.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Narrative”**

Candidates are to write a single, comprehensive narrative that is no more than **2,250** words long (including footnotes, appendices and any other matter). Candidates must use double-spacing, 12-point type and 1-inch margins. The narrative should show how the candidate has met the unit’s criteria for promotion and tenure, if applicable. It will include:

- a scholarship section (not for Professorial Lecturer sequence) that describes with detail and specificity scholarly objectives and goals, including a discussion of the candidate’s future scholarly agenda, such as future projects and venues, funding prospects if relevant, and general trajectory toward the next promotion (note however that substantiating data, including metrics, go in the scholarship documentation section);
- a teaching section describing teaching philosophy, addressing achievements (including engagement with students beyond the classroom), charting improvement, and establishing areas of growth; term faculty must address “currency in the field” as per unit guidelines
- a service section describing engagement with the university community, profession, field, discipline and/or public life related to scholarly expertise, and referencing unit criteria.

### **II. Candidate’s CV. Filename: candidatelastname\_cv.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Curriculum Vitae”**

It is up to the candidate to provide the field-appropriate format for the CV. Candidates must put a date on the CV. All article and book chapter entries must include page numbers; annotate professional and creative productions with basic information on the scope of the project.

**III. Information on Scholarship. Filename: candidatelastname\_scholarship.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Scholarship”** (not for Professorial Lecturer sequence)

The scholarship section provides documentation for the context of the candidate’s scholarly accomplishments. Begin with a one-page Table of Contents, annotated where necessary. The candidate should not write additional narrative text beyond the one-page TOC.. This section includes information on the significance of publication or distribution venue (such as acceptance rates, impact factor and rank of journals; number of downloads, if available; status and scope of publishers, distributors, galleries, etc.); information on nature of collaboration in co-authored works (e.g., the candidate’s role and contributions in the project); relevant peer reviews (such as readers’ reviews if work is still unpublished), documentation of acceptance by publishers or distributors; published reviews; and, if appropriate, evidence from relevant citation indices, using the unit’s criteria. Please do not put publications or other original scholarly/professional/creative material here; put that material in the Scholarly Appendix.

**IV. Information on Teaching. Filename: candidatelastname\_teaching.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Teaching”**

The teaching section provides documentation for the candidate’s teaching accomplishments. Begin with a one-page Table of Contents, annotated where necessary. The candidate should not write additional narrative text beyond the one-page TOC.. This section must include the numerical portions of all student evaluations as well as evidence of assessment of teaching that goes beyond numerical ratings and provides information that points to the creative aspect of teaching, including a representative sample of syllabi, information on student engagement outside the classroom (e.g. dissertation and thesis advising, internship and community-based research supervision, independent studies, student mentoring, course design and/or, new curricular initiatives). If any narrative comments from student evaluations for a course are included, all the comments for that course must be included.

**V. Information on Service. Filename: candidatelastname\_service.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Service”**

The service section documents the candidate’s service contributions. This section includes any relevant documents associated with service to AU and external service. Begin with a one-page Table of Contents, annotated where necessary. The candidate should not write additional narrative text beyond the one-page TOC..

**VI. Scholarly Appendix. Filename: candidatelastname\_scholarlyappendix.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Scholarly Appendix”** (Not for Professorial Lecturer sequence)

The Scholarly Appendix contains the candidate’s publications or other original scholarly/professional/creative material. “Scholarly” is a term encompassing traditional academic research, creative and professional work. Each academic unit provides guidance on how to assemble this. Books must be submitted separately to the unit coordinator in hard copy in an envelope labeled with the candidate’s name. Unit coordinators submit the books to the DAA.

**WHAT THE DEAN’S OFFICE/UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN WILL DO:**

The faculty coordinator will create a Faculty Package in Sharepoint for each candidate’s File for Action. The name of the candidate in the Sharepoint form should be preceded by the year of reappointment (i.e. 2020 Jane Smith.)

The following documents should be created and added to the file:

**VII. Checklist. Filename: candidatelastname\_checklist.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Checklist”**

This is the File for Action checklist drawn up by the DAA. The dean’s office/office of the University Librarian is responsible for ensuring that all items are included.

**VIII. Additions. Filename: candidatelastname\_addition #.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Addition”**

Additions, if any, that occurred during the unit review process may include correspondence regarding manuscript acceptance, new service appointments, etc. Label the file “\_addition 1,” “\_addition 2,” etc. Please do not place candidate response memos here, they should be included in “Internal Evaluations.”

**IX. Previous Internal Evaluations. Filename: candidatelastname\_previouslyeval.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Internal Letters”**

Previous evaluations, that is, internal unredacted memos, vote counts, and any candidate responses from previous faculty actions including re-appointments, if applicable, along with any relevant paperwork such as communication waiving years of prior tenure service or delay of tenure, arranged chronologically with the earliest first and the most recent last. Please do *not* include annual reviews that remain internal to the academic or teaching unit in the file.

**X. Internal Evaluations. Filename: candidatelastname\_internal.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Internal Letters”**

This year’s unredacted internal letters and faculty votes, interspersed with any responses from the candidate, arranged chronologically in the following order:

- i. Report of the reading committee (if applicable)
- ii. Report of the Rank and Tenure/Personnel/Faculty Action Committee (with separate faculty vote)
- iii. Chair’s Memo (if applicable)
- iv. Dean’s Memo
- v. CFA Memo (added by Faculty Senate Operations Coordinator after CFA review)

**XI. External Evaluations. Filename: candidatelastname\_externalletters.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “External Letters” (not for pre-tenure reappointments or Professorial Lecturer sequence)**

Unredacted (and, of course, confidential) versions of external letters with any candidate’s responses to the redacted versions of these letters, where applicable. Each letter shall be designated as “letter 1,” “letter 2,” etc. by writing a number on the upper right-hand corner of each page of each letter. Numbers must be consecutive. Any missing numbers must be for disqualified letters included in the disqualified letters file.

**XII. External CVs. Filename: candidatelastname\_externalcv.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “External CVs”**

The curricula vitae of the reviewers in the same order as the letters themselves.

**XIII. External Correspondence. Filename: candidatelastname\_external\_correspondence.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “External Correspondence”**

All correspondence with the letter writers (e.g. soliciting and acceptance of the letter), including a list of documents sent to them.

**XIV. Disqualified Letters. Filename: candidatelastname\_disqualifiedletters.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “External Letters”**

If needed, any disqualified letters shall be included here, along with accompanying CV and correspondence.

**XV. Unit Guidelines. Filename: candidatelastname\_guidelines.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Guidelines”**

This should be the current version of the unit guidelines for tenure and promotion or term faculty appointment and promotion.

**XVI. Vote Counts. Filename: candidatelastname\_votes.pdf; Sharepoint document type: “Votes”**

All memos reporting vote counts from the current action shall be included here, in chronological order from earliest to most recent.

*2. Components of a File for Action for Tenure-Line Faculty Promotion to Full Professor or to Librarian, or Term Faculty Promotion to Full Professor or Hurst Senior Professorial Lecturer (in the event of disagreement within the unit)*

This File for Action follows the outline and format described in item C.1 above, with two differences: (1) only student evaluations for a maximum of six previous years of teaching are needed, and (2) only previous external and internal recommendations for most recent promotion and tenure (if applicable), including faculty votes, are needed. These letters must be unredacted. Internal letters for reappointment without promotion need not be included. Files for Hurst Senior Professorial Lecturer do not go to CFA except in the event of a disagreement within the unit.

External letters for promotion to Full Professor or Librarian shall not come from reviewers who provided letters for a previous promotion.

The File for Action for those seeking promotion after a prior denial of promotion must be as complete and detailed as any File for Action being submitted for the first time. For such a file, **new** external letters must be provided from reviewers who have not previously evaluated the candidate, and the old external letters must also be included in the file. The Dean’s Office/University Librarian must provide unredacted internal letters with faculty votes from the denial as well as from the candidate’s promotion/tenure when submitting a subsequent file for promotion to full professor.

*3. Components of a File for Action for Faculty Entering the University at a Tenured or an Associate or Full Professor Rank*

The content of these files will depend to some extent on the uniqueness of the individual case. In general, the CFA expects that the relevant unit will submit a curriculum vitae for the candidate; relevant correspondence from the candidate, e.g., a submission letter explaining interest, experience and credentials; any internal letters, including a letter from the relevant dean or University Librarian and reporting on off-list reference checks by whichever person or committee was responsible for

them; external evaluations, which could include evaluations provided for a recent promotion or evaluations solicited in the process of hiring; and evidence of teaching experience and quality, e.g., student evaluations, list of courses taught, statement of teaching philosophy or syllabi. In an appendix, the unit will also provide examples of scholarly/creative/professional work. The unit will use the DAA's checklist for senior hires with tenure. In exceptional cases, if one of the above-suggested items is missing, the unit will provide an explanation in the form of a separate memorandum from the dean or University Librarian.

#### 4. *Faculty Actions that Usually Do Not Go through CFA Review*

I. **Library Continuing Appointment** faculty promotions, unless there is a disagreement between the University Library Committee on Faculty Actions and the University Librarian. Such files should include a statement of professional contributions or scholarship as appropriate. No external letters required.

II. **Professorial Lecturer** sequence promotions, unless there is a disagreement among previous levels of review. No scholarship section and no external letters required.

### D. Procedures for Reviewing Files

#### 1. *Internal Letters*

The following internal letters at a minimum are required before submission to the CFA; individual unit requirements may mandate more:

- an evaluation from any other designated review committee, such as the rank and tenure or personnel or faculty action committee at the teaching/academic unit or a group of senior faculty, as the unit defines (n.b.: The memo must be signed by the individual heading or representing, for the purpose of correspondence, the committee in its letter, e.g. "Jane Smith, Chair, Rank and Tenure Committee"; letters from "Rank and Tenure Committee" or "Senior Faculty" are unacceptable);
- an evaluation from the head of the teaching unit, or equivalent as appropriate to the academic unit;
- an evaluation from the academic unit dean or the University Librarian.

Internal letter writers should briefly describe in the opening paragraph any conflict of interest that goes beyond the customary cooperation expected among unit colleagues and why the conflict of interest does not prevent an objective assessment or warrant recusal. As section 11(a) of the *Faculty Manual* states: "Faculty members should always avoid conflicts of interest involving the evaluation of individual faculty members for appointment, reappointment, tenure, or promotion. The university expects the provost, deans, members of the Committee on Faculty Actions, teaching unit chairs, and all other internal faculty reviewers to acknowledge such conflicts openly and to abstain from participation whenever such conflicts arise."

Letters at the unit level are each independent evaluations of the candidate's performance in scholarship, teaching and service, the candidate's response to previous evaluations, areas of needed improvement and growth, and promise of continuing activity in scholarship, teaching and service. Reviewers will use the unit criteria for the rank to which the candidate has applied when evaluating the file. The letters will address in detail the nature and quality of the candidate's scholarship. They will address questions that may arise for non-specialists later reading the file, for instance the meaning of a co-authorship or the prestige-level of a particular grant or patent. They will identify the rank and significance of venues in which the candidate's work has appeared. They will consider the

teaching record *beyond student evaluations*, and provide context that may help those outside the unit to interpret data.

All reviews, internal and external, are analytic and specific. They must include a recommendation either for or against the action. When a reviewing body is not unanimous, the memorandum of recommendation must include the reasoning of both the majority and minority.

The letters will address any issues flagged in earlier reviews. Quotations from other letter writers cannot substitute for one's own analysis, though quotations may be included. Any references to outside letters must strictly preserve the anonymity of those reviewers, avoiding even descriptors (e.g., gender, rank, department, type of university, etc.), since they may in many cases significantly narrow the pool of possible reviewers.

In the case of professional and creative work, letters need to engage not only the substance of material addressed but also the aesthetic and craft decisions chosen by the candidate, and the way in which those choices locate and position the candidate within their field.

The dean's or University Librarian's evaluation will provide an evaluation of the candidate's performance and role within the unit and university and their field, and indicate where he or she agrees or disagrees with unit reviewers and why.

## 2. *Vote count*

Within the unit, the reviewing body (e.g., a department, rank-and-tenure or faculty action committee) reviews the file for action and holds a secret-ballot four-part vote regarding the scholarship, teaching and service record of the candidate, as well as the overall action. (For the Professorial Lecturer sequence, it is a three-part vote on teaching [including currency in the field], service, and overall.) Members of reviewing bodies may vote yes, no, abstain or recuse. Abstentions should be a rare exception. Abstentions or recusals cannot be used to signal that the voter did not read the material. No person has more than a single vote in the process of evaluation of a faculty member. If an evaluator has more than one possible opportunity to vote (e.g., a faculty member on the CFA), the *Faculty Manual* requires that the evaluator vote only once and at the lowest level possible (e.g., in the unit rather than in the CFA). The numerical results of the faculty vote are included after the appropriate unredacted internal letter. If the vote is not unanimous, the internal letter must contain both the majority and minority viewpoints. The CFA will not review a file if the internal memos are missing any of these components. The CFA chair will ask the unit to provide them.

## 3. *Outside letters*

At minimum, five outside letters are required in the Files for Action for candidates seeking tenure and/or promotion. Soliciting more than five is prudent because of possible disqualification or uncompleted letters. We recommend soliciting external letters by the end of the spring semester, for submission at the beginning of the subsequent academic year, when the candidate will submit a file for action. This ensures ample time to find willing reviewers (and gives them the summer to do the review) while allowing sufficient time for internal levels of review that begin only after all external letters have been received. All solicited letters that are received must be included. Candidates submitting Files for Action do not solicit letters for their own files. The candidate may suggest names, but only a maximum of two of these can be used as actual external reviewers. The candidate may also provide names of persons whom the unit should not contact as potential reviewers because

they are inappropriate given insufficient arm's length or other reasons. The teaching unit chair or designated committee suggests a majority of reviewers' names. Each candidate decides, in conjunction with the unit, how much of the candidate's work is relevant to put forward to the reviewer. In general reviewers expect to read a strong representative sample of the work, but not everything on the curriculum vitae.

External reviewers are nationally or internationally respected individuals whose area of expertise qualify them to speak with authority about the candidate and whose professional and personal relationship with the candidate is such that the external reviewers can provide an objective review. Customarily, the majority of these letters must be from faculty members, typically full professors, who are affiliated with highly regarded institutions. In most cases, and appropriately to the discipline, at least two of the letters should come from someone outside the narrower niche within which the scholar works, who can provide assurance that the work rests on a solid foundation underlying the narrow area and meets the standards of the field or profession.

The identity of external letter writers remains confidential before, during, and after the review process. Teaching units decide whether external letters are completely closed to the candidate or strictly redacted, such that potential identifying characteristics of the author are removed. Those soliciting outside evaluation letters for promotion and tenure will consider the following, and so properly inform outside reviewers, in order to minimize the hazard of having letters disqualified or reviewers asked for further information:

- External reviews must be obtained from individuals who have no direct professional or personal interest in the outcome of the faculty action and are thus able to offer an independent judgment. Please consult the Provost's December 6, 2018 memorandum titled, "Standards for Obtaining Objective External Letters for Tenure and/or Promotion," <https://www.american.edu/provost/academicaffairs/upload/Standards-for-Obtaining-Objective-External-Letters-for-Tenure-and-Promotion.pdf>. Please note this memorandum supersedes the previous 2015 standards on assessing arm's length for external reviewers.
- This is a task of evaluation, grounded in analysis of scholarship/professional/creative work. The reviewer is also asked to comment on the candidate's service to the profession. A recommendation either for or against the candidate's action, based in the evaluation, will conclude the evaluation. **If a recommendation is not in the letter, it is the unit's responsibility to contact the reviewer and ask for a recommendation, which can be made in an e-mail or other correspondence that can serve as an addendum to the letter.** The reviewers will provide a context for the discussion of the candidate's work, to aid those who are not expert in the field, and analyze the specific work.
- Outside letters explicitly address the specific criteria associated with the rank. The letter writer **must be given a copy of unit guidelines** as well as *Faculty Manual* language on tenure expectations.

A template for a request letter to outside reviewers is available from the AU portal ([myau.american.edu](http://myau.american.edu)), on the Academics/Dean of Academic Affairs' page, under "Tenure-Line Faculty Re-appointments and Promotions."

#### *4. Communications in the File for Action review process*

At each level of review, authors of review memos must send copies of the memo to the candidate and to all previous authors of internal reviews or designee (i.e. unit coordinator). These memos will

be delivered via e-mail. All vote counts are redacted in the copies of the review memos that go to the candidate and all previous internal levels of review.

Candidates have the option to respond to the internal memo produced at each level of review. They have seven calendar days to do so from the date and time that the memo is sent to them electronically. A candidate wishing to respond to a review memo within the candidate's unit at any stage before the dean's memo should consult the unit coordinator regarding the procedure for doing so. A candidate choosing to respond to a dean's memo should address the response to the chair of the Committee on Faculty Actions and send it to [faculty senate@american.edu](mailto:faculty senate@american.edu), and send copies to all previous levels of review. A candidate wishing to respond to a CFA memo should address the response to the Dean of Academic Affairs and send copies to all previous levels of review. Reviewers to whom the candidate is responding do not comment on the candidate's response. It is up to the candidate to verify receipt of a response memo.