

VTC School of Medicine, Office of Faculty Affairs  
Writing Letters in Support of Promotion  
Updated February, 2025

NOTE: please also refer to promotion guidelines found  
on the VTCSOM Faculty Affairs web site

1. General Guidelines for all letters of support:
  - a. Letters from the department chair and the chair of the departmental APRT Committee do not count toward the total of number required. Members of the APRT Committee cannot furnish support letters.
  - b. All letters must be written by persons who hold an academic appointment at or above the rank to which the candidate seeks promotion.
  - c. Candidates for promotion must furnish up to 4 names for consideration to the departmental APRT Committee; for tracks/ranks that allow letters from local persons, must include at least one local person who would be able to comment from personal knowledge on the candidate's teaching, clinical and service abilities.
  - d. The departmental APRT Committee selects the reviewers who will write letters; no more than one letter may be written by people whose names are furnished by the candidate. The APRT Committee letter must state from whom the letters were sought including their institution; and how many of the letters ultimately received were from people suggested by the candidate.
  - e. Promotion candidates are **not** allowed to know the identity of persons who ultimately write internal or external review letters; and, **there is to be no contact** of any kind between the candidate and any person who writes internal or external review letters; contact between candidates and letter writers may lead to disqualification of the candidate from further consideration until a future promotion cycle.
  - f. All letters must address whether the candidate meets requirements for promotion within the specified track/rank at VTCSOM; they should **not** comment on whether the candidate would meet requirements for the same desired rank/track at the institution of the letter writer.
  - g. A template cover letter, which will guide the person writing a letter of support, must be provided, and a copy of this letter must be included in the portfolio. All letter writers should address as many of the following items as possible related to the candidate:
    - i. Teaching and related skills
    - ii. Extent of scholarly activity/productivity
    - iii. Relevance/quality of scholarly activity; comments on journal impact factor, citation index and/or other quality indicators associated with scholarly work should be included
    - iv. Leadership abilities/qualities
    - v. Service contributions
    - vi. Reputation at local, regional and/or national levels
    - vii. Character and other miscellaneous attributes
    - viii. For clinicians seeking promotion, must comment on clinical abilities and how they relate to the education of learners
2. Number of Letters Required (but also see section 3 below):
  - a. Tenure track:
    - i. For promotion from Assistant to Associate: 4 letters, all external
    - ii. For promotion from Associate to Professor: 4 letters, all external
  - b. Tenure to title track:
    - i. For promotion from Assistant to Associate: 3 letters, all external
    - ii. For promotion from Associate to Professor: 4 letters, all external
  - c. Non-tenure track (non-VT employed faculty):
    - i. For promotion from lower rank to Assistant: 2 letters, can be external or internal
    - ii. For promotion from Assistant to Associate: 2 letters, 1 external and 1 internal
    - iii. For promotion from Associate to Professor: 4 letters, all external

3. Special Circumstances:

- a. Promotion of faculty employed by VT: may be subject to different/additional requirements, depending upon the faculty track.
- b. Promotion of a department chair: same requirements based on track and rank; college level APT Committee serves role of departmental committee; letter from either the Carilion Clinic Chief Medical Officer (for chairs of clinical departments) or a senior faculty member (for chairs of non-clinical departments) is required in lieu of the typical chair's letter, but does not count toward total number required; contact Faculty Affairs for further guidance.
- c. Promotion of faculty member with co-appointment in a second department: typically promoted simultaneously with promotion in primary department; contact Faculty Affairs for further guidance.