

AY 2025-26 TIPS FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

The CALL is the authoritative guidance on personnel. These tips are not intended to replace the CALL rather they highlight sections of the CALL which CAP feels may help chair in writing the department letter and mentoring faculty during file preparation.

Always defer to the CALL AY25-26 for official policy and procedures. The [2025-2026 The CALL and Summary of Changes](#) can be found at their respective links. Department chairs are free to share these tips with faculty. Additional suggestions may be found on the CAP web site and also on the APO web site [here](#).

Be explicit about rank and step recommendations: e.g. have language such as “The department supports a one-step merit advancement based on ...”

Higher-than-normal advancements require explicit justification

Higher-than-normal advancements can be achieved through (i) requests for additional off-scale (Pg. 31-32, CALL); or (ii) the acceleration criteria for merit/promotion/Professor-VI cases since the candidate’s last positive personnel review (Pg. 12, CALL); or (iii) the placement criteria for promotion/Professor-VI cases over the candidate's entire career (Pg. 32-33, CALL). **Each** recommendation for higher-than-normal advancement should be accompanied by an explicit justification for the action and framed in terms of the relevant language of the CALL. E.g. “support for a 1-year acceleration is justified by...” or “support for a one-step higher placement is justified by...”

Department letters should be evaluative relative to the criteria for the actions being proposed

It is understandable that departments wish to advocate for their candidates and use the Department letter to do so. But department letters are intended to be letters of evaluation, not simply advocacy. Furthermore, Department letters that are full of adjectives but have little in the way of substantive evaluation or data rarely make for effective advocacy. Letters which simply list in detail factual material already evident in e-file also rarely make for effective advocacy.

Department letter should state clearly 'the driver(s)' especially for a file that asked for an acceleration or additional O/S

What helps in assessing a file is when Department letters contextualize and evaluate the significance of the candidate’s work and achievement in ways helpful for those outside the field. Department letters can offer expertise to help readers beyond the departmental levels of review to understand the quality, quantity, significance, impact of the research, and an evaluation of the publication outlets (e.g. journal rankings/impact factors or the prestige of an academic press) or performance venues, and how these metrics compare to standards in your discipline.

For actions that require outside letters of evaluation please review guidelines in the CALL relating to outside letters. (e.g. no more than two letters from the same institution; letters should be from letter writers already the rank sought i.e. no letters from Associate Professors for cases of promotion to Full; please be sure to document which letters are nominated by the Department/Candidate etc.). Provide a range of letters from UC and UC-equivalent institutions; acknowledge the positive, but do not gloss over the negatives that emerge in these letters. Evaluate

the professional stature of extramural reviewers, addressed in the confidential list of letter writers to protect confidentiality. Balance solicitations from the candidate's former mentors and/or collaborators with more clearly independent evaluation (Pg. 48-50, CALL). Letters from faculty at UC campuses are especially helpful e.g in evaluations

Teaching: Evaluate the candidate's teaching performance

Candidates may include teaching evidence beyond student evaluations as noted in APM 210-1-d-1 and The CALL (Pg. 45-46 and 54-56). Department letters should explain why student evaluations for some specific courses are not provided (Pg. 54-55, CALL). In general, if there are elements of the file that could be perceived to be weaknesses it is helpful if – as part of the evaluation – these are addressed in the department letter. If student evaluations point to weaknesses, address them explicitly as well as methods of remedy *e.g.* seeking mentorship from the Academy of Distinguished Teachers; consultation with Professors of Teaching in the Department etc.

Service remains an important one of the three areas of evaluation. No one can do everything in terms of service and so there will be trade-offs in terms of time commitments. Some service commitments are more visible – and more demanding – than others. **Evaluate service contributions** in light of the time commitment required and the overall value of those contributions to the constituencies they serve.

Mentoring: candidates are encouraged to include a one-page mentorship statement to highlight their mentoring activities. Although this statement is included in the Teaching Information section of eFile, mentorship can occur outside of formal pedagogical situations and may be part of a candidate's research or service work within or outside the university. Such extraordinary or extramural mentoring can be mentioned in the mentorship statement.

Be clear and explicit in explaining departmental votes. Provide a balanced view of both the majority and minority opinions. Please provide the reasoning behind any “no” votes.

A large number of “unavailable” votes (i.e. a small number of counted voters relative to the size of the department) does not provide a clear recommendation. Encourage faculty to participate in the academic personnel review process and to vote on all files.

If there are discrepancies between facts stated on the self-statement/department letter/Dean letter and the review file, CAP will defer to the eFilePlus as the true/accurate record (Pg. 54, CALL). Departments therefore should not cut and paste from the self-statement without verifying data in statements.

Please check that **eFile contains the most current departmental research statement and teaching expectations.**