Letter to external referees for initial appointment or promotion to Professor in the Practice

 *The substantive responses of five referees/evaluators will be sought to clarify the strengths (in a comparative context) of a candidate for this rank. The list of external referees/evaluators and the list of comparison practitioners must be approved by the relevant divisional dean and the FAS Dean’s Office. These letters/evaluations must be solicited and reviewed by the department prior to its making a recommendation to forward the case or not forward the case to the relevant Tenure and Appointments Committee.*

Dear [Referee Name],

Thank you for agreeing to assist us in considering the [SELECT ONE: initial appointment/promotion] of [Professor] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [FOR PROMOTIONS: from the rank of] **[**Candidate’s current rank**]** to the rank of Professor in the Practice in the [SELECT ONE: Department(s)/Program(s)] of [Department Name(s)]at Yale. The department faculty who will be voting on this case greatly appreciate your willingness to evaluate [SELECT ONE: his/her/their] qualifications for this [SELECT ONE: appointment/promotion].

To be appointed at this rank at Yale requires that the candidates “*be distinguished practitioners who demonstrate eminence in the field, sustained accomplishment, and sustained activity in their area of practice. They will hold national or international reputations for their innovative and transformational contributions to their practice, through creative work, professional leadership, practice-centered publications, or other demonstrations of significant accomplishment. Exceptional contributions as a practitioner are the basis of evaluation*.”

The term of appointment would be for up to five years and is renewable conditional upon a favorable review in the penultimate year.

The [SELECT ONE: Department/Program] is seeking your assessment of [Professor] [Candidate Name]’s contributions to the advancement of [SELECT ONE: his/her/their] field(s); we also welcome any information you might have about [SELECT ONE: his/her/their] qualities and promise as a teacher, colleague, and university or professional citizen. We are interested not only in your assessment of [SELECT ONE: his/her/their] past accomplishments but also in your views about [SELECT ONE: his/her/their] promise for lasting and distinguished contributions in the future.

[Professor] [Candidate Name]’s materials may be accessed through Interfolio once you accept the request.

We have also attached guidelines for preparing your letter/evaluation. Your letter/evaluation will be most helpful to us if it provides answers to each of the questions on that list. Please begin by explaining how well and in what capacity you know the candidate.

The central question, of course, is whether [Professor] [Candidate Name]’s work meets the criteria for the rank articulated above. To help us assess the candidate’s standing in their field(s), we ask you to compare [SELECT ONE: his/her/their]work to that of the leading practitioners in [SELECT ONE: his/her/their] field(s) from a variety of career stages. We would appreciate your comments on the candidate’s work in comparison to the work of [Comparator #1 Name], [Comparator #2 Name], [Comparator #3 Name], and [Comparator #4 Name]. If there are others to whom we should be comparing [SELECT ONE: him/her/them], please include them in your comparison. What is your assessment of Professor [Candidate Name]’s chances of eventually attaining a similar level of distinction as the most distinguished of these practitioners when they reach a similar stage of their career?

On behalf of us all, I thank you in advance for your assistance. It would be most helpful if we could have your confidential response by [Response Deadline]. There is no need for a hard copy; an electronic version is sufficient.

Your letter/evaluation will be kept in strict confidence, read only by the voting members of the [SELECT: department(s)/program(s)], by full professors on the appropriate Tenure and Appointments Committee, and by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Office. Please keep in mind that these readers will include both experts and non-experts in the candidate’s field(s) of practice.

We thank you in advance for offering your wisdom and expertise in this evaluation.

Cordially,

[Chair Name]

Chair, [SELECT ONE: Department/Program] of [Department Name]

*Template updated 10/23/2020*

Guidelines for referees/evaluators

We would be grateful if you would consider the points below as you prepare your letter/evaluation.

1. What are the candidate’s principal professional contributions, and what is your critical assessment (both strengths and weaknesses) of the originality, quality, and impact of the candidate’s professional practice and output?
2. What is your overall appraisal of the candidate’s record of achievement and productivity? (Paths to distinguished professional practice, of course, can differ for candidates for a number of reasons such as child rearing, national service, and disability. Please be assured that any such adjustments of the candidate’s timeline will be factored into our understanding of your comments about achievement and productivity.)
3. What is your assessment of the professional trajectory of the candidate’s work? If the candidate does not currently hold a national or international reputation for their innovative and transformational contributions to their practice, are they likely to rise to that status within the next few years?
4. If applicable, is the candidate’s work in their subfield(s) relevant to practitioners in broader or adjacent fields or disciplines, and if so, how?
5. We welcome comments on the candidate’s field(s), the quality of professional output within it, and its relationship to broader contours of area of practice.

8/19/2020