



## **SURVEY RESULTS**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Introduction

According to data collected in 2000, librarians at 41 of the 111 reporting academic ARL member libraries (37%) are in tenure track positions; librarians are eligible for a comparable continuing appointment at another 23 academic libraries (21%). In addition, data collected as part of the ARL annual salary survey shows that all but eight academic libraries have a multi-tier ranking system for librarians. This is a clear indication that there is an evaluation process in place for librarian promotion and tenure or other continuing appointment at most ARL libraries.

When a librarian becomes eligible for promotion to the next rank or for permanent appointment many institutions require external reviews of the candidate by peers at other institutions. These reviews become an important part of the evaluation of a librarian's potential for ongoing contributions to the position and the profession.

A literature search reveals that little has been written about the external review process for librarians seeking promotion or continuing appointment. Bradigan and Mularski (1996) conducted a study of criteria used by library administrators to evaluate candidate publications for promotion and tenure and discovered that solicited external assessments were key to their evaluations. Leyson and Black (1998) surveyed Carnegie research institutions on whether they required peer review of faculty. Their study focused primarily on peer review

within an institution and mentioned that review by external peers was an important part of the review. Expanding the search to higher education literature, a few additional articles rise to the surface that specifically address external review procedures used to evaluate English (Poston, 1984), nursing school (Reilly, Carlisle, Mikan and Goldsmith, 1996), political science (Schlozman, 1998), and accounting faculty (Schwartz and Schroeder, 1997). Although these articles provide some information that may be applicable to external review of library faculty, nothing in library literature specifically addresses procedures used in academic libraries to conduct external reviews of candidates for promotion and tenure.

The authors of this survey have performed a number of external reviews and have experienced a wide variety of procedures and policies from the requesting libraries. For example, the contents of candidates' portfolios have varied greatly. Some have contained only publications. Others have included a wide variety of material demonstrating work in service and job performance. One included the performance evaluations of the candidate. Some portfolios included the institutions' standards; others did not. The instructions to the reviewers have also varied. Some institutions instructed the reviewer to evaluate the quality of the candidate's work based on the included standards. Some asked the reviewer to evaluate the candidate

based on the reviewer's institutional standards. Others asked whether the candidate would receive tenure at the reviewer's institution. Occasionally, the reviewers were offered compensation in exchange for the review.

This survey was designed to identify the policies and procedures that ARL member libraries are using in the external review process for candidates who are eligible for promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment. It examines how external reviewers are identified and asked to participate in the review process, what instructions are given to reviewers, what materials are included in candidates' portfolios, and the criteria for evaluating candidates' portfolios, among other questions.

## Background

The survey was distributed to the 123 ARL member libraries in February 2006. Seventy-seven libraries (63%) responded to the survey. Librarians at 35 of the responding institutions have faculty status. Forty-four institutions offer tenure or other permanent appointments (32 with faculty status and 12 without). Slightly more than half of the respondents (39 or 51%) do not require external reviews for librarians who are candidates for promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment. While the majority of these have neither faculty status nor permanent appointments (27 or 69%), they also include six whose librarians have faculty status and 11 that offer tenure or other permanent appointments (five with faculty status and six without).

Of the 38 respondents that do require external reviews, 36 require them for candidates seeking promotion to the next level, 27 require them for tenure candidates, and seven require them for continuous appointment candidates. Not surprisingly, most of these respondents have faculty status and/or offer tenure or other permanent appointment. Librarians at 29 institutions have faculty status and 28 of these require external reviews for promotion candidates. Twenty-seven of these also offer tenure and all require external reviews for tenure candi-

dates. Eight of the nine institutions where librarians do not have faculty status require external reviews for promotion candidates. Six of the nine offer permanent appointments and five of them require external reviews for those candidates.

## Review of Terminology

Thirty of the responding institutions that require external review (79%) provided promotion and tenure criteria and procedural documents. Findings from a review of this documentation are included here and in the survey data analysis that follows. A large majority of the procedural documents distinguish reviewers outside an institution from those within the institution with terminology such as "external reviewer," "outside referee," and "external referee" and call their reviews "external evaluations," "outside review letters," or "letters of evaluation." A third specifically contrast these external letters from "solicited letters of support"—letters solicited by the candidate—and internal documents or letters written by supervisors or co-authors/collaborators of the candidate. A few use "references," "referees," "external reviewers," and "evaluation letters" interchangeably and solicit reviews both from writers familiar with the candidate or internal to the university and external writers unfamiliar with or unknown to the candidate. Others refer to "letters of reference" or "references" when discussing procedures that clearly describe external reviews.

## Purpose of External Reviews

A few documents include a clear statement of the purpose of external reviews, such as to provide an "independent, unbiased evaluation of the candidate's scholarly attainment." One document states that, "The function of outside reviewers is to provide independent assessments of the candidate's work and professional standing."

In some cases, the purpose of the review can be gleaned from the instructions to the external reviewers—to "provide evaluative information,"

“evaluative comments,” “objective appraisal,” “candid appraisal,” “critical evaluation,” “letter of assessment,” “substantive and rigorous evaluation,” or “comment in a discriminating and objective way”—or from the criteria for selecting external reviewers, such as “Objective evaluators without conflicts of interest,” and “unbiased, external evaluators.” Based on these statements, for nearly half of the institutions external reviews are to be unbiased evaluations or critical assessments of the candidates.

At three institutions, the language in the instructions to the external reviewers or from the criteria for selecting external reviewers reveals that the purpose of the external review is to put the candidate in a positive light. For example: “Your name has been suggested...as someone who could write a recommendation on [candidate’s] behalf;” referees contacted by the candidate who have “agreed to write positive written letters of recommendation;” and external reviewers are “expected to display the academic professional and his/her activities and achievements in the most advantageous light.” At one of these institutions, the positive letters are paired with letters designed to evaluate the candidate critically and objectively.

Five institutions (17%) require external reviews only for those candidates seeking the top one or two highest ranks and this occurs primarily in systems with four or five ranks. One institution requires external reviews only for candidates seeking continuing appointment.

### **Soliciting Reviews**

At 30 of the responding libraries (79%), candidates for promotion or tenure identify potential external reviewers. In all but six of these libraries, they receive assistance from review committees and/or the library director. It is also not unusual for supervisors to assist candidates in this process. Personnel officers are involved at only three of the libraries. At five of the eight libraries where the candidate does not identify reviewers, the com-

mittee and/or library director most often does so. At one library, the external reviewers are those library directors who serve on the visiting Library Advisory Council. At another, the candidate’s supervisor identifies reviewers, while at the third it is the unit director, who may not be the candidate’s immediate supervisor.

Somewhat unexpectedly, the documentation of five institutions specifies that the candidate has the opportunity to identify people (s)he would prefer not be asked to provide an external review and why. At two of these institutions, a person who has been identified by the candidate as inappropriate may still be asked to write a review, but the review must be accompanied by the candidate’s objection and a rationale on why (s)he was chosen as a reviewer against the candidate’s expressed concerns.

Nearly three-fourths of the respondents indicated that reviewers are selected based on their reputation in the candidate’s area of expertise. For six, this is the only criterion, the remainder chose multiple criteria. Rank of the reviewer is the second most important factor and some select reviewers because their home institution has similar promotion and tenure criteria. Other criteria include the reviewer’s knowledge of the candidate’s contributions and the favorable reputation of the reviewer’s institution. For example, six institutions specifically require that reviewers come from a “comparable,” “peer,” or “benchmark” institution or otherwise comment on the quality of the institution where the reviewer works. Four require that reviewers be considered experts in their field. Five require a specific rank for the external reviewer, most commonly at the rank to which the candidate aspires or above. In one case, only full professors or the equivalent can be selected as external reviewers.

Some libraries seek input from reviewers who have had limited or no contact with the candidate while others seek out reviewers with knowledge of the candidate and his/her contributions. According to a review of the procedural documents, five institutions either require that letters come both from

reviewers familiar with the candidate and those who are not, or allow a portion of the reviewers to be familiar with the candidate. Three specifically exclude co-authors, people in direct supervisory line, and former students or teachers from writing reviews. One of these states that reviewers must be “sufficiently at arms length” to provide an objective assessment. Another six state that reviewers should be knowledgeable about the candidate or the candidate’s accomplishments, or should be people who have direct knowledge about the candidate’s performance. Interestingly, one of these institutions also specifically instructs the reviewer to supply an “objective appraisal.”

On average, institutions seek five reviewers for each candidate. The minimum number of external reviews sought was one; three respondents solicit up to 10. According to the documentation, three institutions require an increasing number of external reviews with increasing rank. Forty percent do not specify a number of external reviewers required while a third state a minimum number of reviewers required. According to the survey responses, five of the ten institutions that specify a minimum number regularly require more than the minimum when soliciting reviews while two typically request the minimum number required by their institutions.

Many survey respondents convene a review committee to oversee promotion and tenure activities. These committees, or the committee chair, most frequently make the initial contact with potential reviewers (14 responses or 38%). Library directors and personnel officers are next most likely to initiate contact. At only four libraries do immediate supervisors contact reviewers. In no case does the candidate contact the reviewer directly.

Very rarely are reviewers unable to participate. Seven libraries (19%) indicated that a request to serve as a reviewer had never been rejected. Occasionally, a reviewer is unable to provide input due to other work commitments or because they are deemed ineligible due to rank, lack of tenure,

etc. In some cases, reviewers simply do not respond to letters seeking input on a candidate’s portfolio. Although the numbers are small and probably not large enough to illustrate a clear pattern, there does not seem to be any correlation between the way an external review is solicited and the likelihood that the request will be turned down.

### **The Candidate’s Portfolio**

Few candidates have complete control of the contents of the portfolio sent to reviewers. Most often the contents are dictated by administrative/procedural requirements (17 responses or 46%). Occasionally, candidates are able to select materials to include in their portfolios, in combination with required materials (11 or 30%).

Generally, the candidate’s portfolio is sent after initial contact has been made with a potential reviewer and the person has agreed to serve (24 responses or 67%). Materials included in the portfolio nearly always include the candidate’s curriculum vitae (CV) or “factual résumé” (33 or 89%) and evidence of publishing or scholarly activities (26 or 70%). Respondents who send the CV/résumé with the candidate’s portfolio tend to send additional supporting documentation, as well. A significant number include a summary of accomplishments written by the candidate (20 or 54%), evidence of creative and service activities (17 or 46% each), and job related materials (13 or 35%). Other materials include criteria for assessment, institutional documents, peer assessments of teaching, and letters of reference. One institution reported that they sent “whatever the candidate submits.” According to the procedural documents reviewed, only one institution sends copies of performance appraisals with the candidate’s portfolio.

A third of the respondents (12) send the reviewer a candidate’s portfolio along with the initial letter of inquiry. The procedural documents of five of these institutions include a list of the portfolio contents. All of these institutions submit the candidate’s CV or résumé. Other documents include

the institution's criteria/standards for promotion and tenure, copies of the candidate's publications, the candidate's statement of accomplishments, research, etc., and the candidate's position description, among others.

Four respondents do not send external reviewers either the CV or résumé. A review of these institutions' documentation reveals that the reviewers are asked to comment only on firsthand knowledge of the candidate or are required/expected to be familiar with at least some aspect of the candidate's work. Of these four institutions, two send a candidate's summary statement of accomplishments, one sends publications, and one sends nothing from the candidate's portfolio.

### **Instructions to Reviewers**

The majority of respondents (30 or 81%) indicate that external reviewers are asked to evaluate the candidate based on the promotion and tenure standards of the candidate's library. All but one send the standards or a URL where they may be retrieved with the candidate's portfolio; the other sends the university's minimum guidelines for promotion and tenure reviews. Three institutions (8%) ask the reviewer to evaluate the candidate using the criteria of the reviewer's library. Interestingly, two of these also send copies of the criteria of the candidate's library with the portfolio.

One institution responded that they do not specify criteria with which to evaluate a candidate; three had other criteria. A review of the documentation for these four institutions shows that they ask reviewers to comment only on aspects of the candidate's work with which the reviewer is familiar, have firsthand knowledge or have directly observed, or instruct them to comment on both the evidence in the folder and their personal knowledge about the candidate.

Reviewers are asked to evaluate a variety of the candidate's activities and areas of performance. The candidate's record of publishing or scholarly activities is the most common area evaluated by

external reviewers (34 or 89%). The candidate's creative and service activities tie for second with 25 responses each (66%). Job performance is included in the evaluation by about a third of respondents. According to the documents reviewed, the most common areas reviewers were asked to evaluate include pattern of productivity, quality and significance of the candidate's work, the impact of the candidate's work on the institution and/or the profession, and the potential for further growth and/or continued professional productivity.

A reading of the procedural documents shows that three of the institutions ask reviewers to make a recommendation on whether the candidate should be awarded promotion or continuing appointment, while an equal number specifically tell reviewers not to make a recommendation on whether the candidate should be awarded promotion or continuing appointment. Ten institutions ask external reviewers to compare the candidate to librarians at other institutions or in similar positions. Eight ask that external reviewers evaluate or estimate the candidate's stature or standing in the field, or comment on the degree of recognition the candidate has achieved in the profession. For example, one library asks reviewers to compare the candidate with others in positions nationally and internationally, another requests that reviewers evaluate the recognition the candidate has received at regional, national and international levels, and a third asks that reviewers evaluate the state/regional/national/international stature of the candidate as a result of his/her work. One institution asks the evaluator to comment on the manner in which the candidate's work "enhances the effectiveness or standing" of the university.

Reviewers are asked to comment on other aspects of the candidate's performance, as well. External reviewers for one library are asked "whether [the candidate] would be ranked among the most capable and promising librarians in his/her area;" another asks reviewers to evaluate the originality of the candidate's achievements; yet



another requests that reviewers evaluate the independence of the candidate's contributions.

Fifty-four percent of the respondents (20) give the reviewer more than one month to complete the review while 46% (17) allow two weeks to one month for completion of the review. No respondent gives the reviewer less than two weeks. If the reviewer has questions about the review process or instructions, in almost every case (s)he is instructed to contact the person who made the initial contact. In one case, the personnel officer makes first contact, but the reviewer is told to contact the library director if there are questions. In another case, just the opposite is true. In a third case, the review committee makes the initial contact, but the library director is the contact for questions. The candidate is never designated as a contact.

### **Relationship of the Portfolio Contents to Reviewer Instructions**

A comparison of the responses to the questions about what the reviewer is asked to evaluate and what documentation is submitted as part of the candidate's portfolio reveals that the majority of respondents (28 or 76%) provide sufficient evidence of the candidate's performance in each area they ask the external reviewer to evaluate. A few send very little material, but also only ask for a limited review. For example, one respondent only sends examples of the candidate's publications and only asks the reviewer to evaluate those publications. Another sends only a summary statement, but instructs the reviewer to "evaluate only areas within the criteria of which the reviewer has personal knowledge." A third doesn't send a portfolio at all, but explains that the "reviewer is asked to comment on specific accomplishments and/or position responsibilities suggested by the candidate."

What is notable is the number of respondents who rely heavily on the candidate's CV or summary statement for evidence of performance. For example, three respondents send only a CV or summary, four send both a CV and summary, and two

send a CV and publications. All ask the reviewer to evaluate publications, creative and service activities, and job performance. Also of note are the practices of the three institutions that stated the purpose of the review is to show the candidate in a positive light. One of these sends the reviewers the CV and publications; the other two send all categories of portfolio materials. Together these examples raise the unanswered question of what is sufficient evidence of the quality of the performance the reviewer is being asked to evaluate.

Procedural documents were available for seven of the institutions that ask reviewers to evaluate a candidate's job performance. In two cases, reviewers are specifically chosen because they are acquainted with the candidate's work or have a professional connection with him/her. In two others, reviewers include both those who are familiar with the candidate and those who are not. The remaining three documents were unclear on these points.

### **Estimated Costs of Time Spent on a Review**

Not surprisingly, none of the survey respondents track or have tried to track the costs of requiring external reviews for candidates. None track or try to estimate the time spent by candidates and others in preparing documentation for external reviews, either. Likewise, none of the respondents compensate reviewers financially for conducting reviews of their candidates.

In the absence of this information, the survey authors developed a rough estimate of the cost of conducting external reviews using data available from this survey and the ARL annual salary survey. Administrative and department chair positions and library faculty with longer years of service are most likely to be external reviewers. Using salary survey data on the average salaries for these positions and assuming a 40-hour workweek for a 52-week year, an average hourly rate of each position was calculated. According to this survey's respondents, one review takes 5.9 hours of labor, on average, and 24 hours at most. The cost of conducting one review



was calculated by multiplying the hourly rate by the mean and maximum amount of time reported for conducting a review. The table of data that was generated is below.

A director completing one review a year in 5.9 hours would cost \$479, while a director taking the maximum number of hours for one review would cost \$1,948. At the other end of the scale, the cost of a cataloging or reference librarian conducting one external review might range from \$163 to \$682. Clearly the cost of conducting external reviews varies considerably based on the position level of the reviewer, the amount of time (s)he spends, and the number of reviews conducted each year.

### The Role of External Reviews in the Promotion and Tenure Process

External reviews of candidates appear to carry fairly significant weight with both peers and administrators. Seventy-nine percent of respondents (27) rated the influence of external review letters on administrators as a four or five on a five-point scale where five equaled "very much;" only one rated the influence below a three. The influence of external review letters on peers was slightly lower; 66% of respondents (23) rated their influence as a four or five, the remaining 34% (12) as a three.

### Responding to Review Requests

Seventy-two percent of the survey respondents (53) said that librarians at their institutions conduct reviews of candidates at other institutions. Of the 38 institutions that require external reviews of their candidates, only one institution said they do not conduct external reviews of candidates from other institutions. Of the institutions that do not require external reviews of their candidates, 46% (18) accept invitations to review candidates from other institutions.

Estimates of the number of external reviews by library faculty and time spent on them are anecdotal or rough estimates at best, as this work is often not reported to their home institutions. However, survey respondents estimated that the number of reviews conducted annually ranged from one to 22. The average was 6.6. Reviewers spent a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 24 hours on each review or an average of 5.9 hours.

### Privacy Concerns

One concern about external reviews that came out in the comments and in the review of procedural documents is the confidentiality of external review letters. Often, a candidate's right to see an external review of his/her candidacy is dictated by state

Position	Average Salary**	Hourly Rate***	Cost Estimate to Conduct One Review	
			Mean (5.9 hrs)	Maximum (24 hrs)
Director	\$168,894	\$81.20	\$479.07	\$1,948.78
Associate Director	\$102,484	\$49.27	\$290.70	\$1,182.51
Assistant Director	\$92,478	\$44.46	\$262.32	\$1,067.05
Head, Branch	\$70,179	\$33.74	\$199.07	\$809.76
Department Chair*	\$67,490	\$32.45	\$191.44	\$778.73
Reference				
over 14 years experience	\$59,134	\$28.43	\$167.74	\$682.32
Cataloging				
over 14 years experience	\$57,631	\$27.71	\$163.47	\$664.97
* calculated as an average of all types of department heads				
** Source: "Table 25: Average Salaries of ARL University Librarians by Position and Geographic Region," <i>ARL Annual Salary Survey 2005-06</i> , Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2005.				
*** Average salary / 2080 hours				

law or university policy. More than a third of the documents reviewed required that external review letters remain strictly confidential; the candidate is not allowed to see them or respond to their contents. A small number state that the candidate can request to see the letter in redacted form where all identifying information is blacked out. In one case, the candidate has five days to respond to the contents of a letter, but it is not clear whether the letter is in redacted form. In another case, state law dictates that the candidate has the right to see external review letters if (s)he makes a request. It is not clear whether the letters are in redacted form or identifying information is available to the candidate who reviews them. In two cases, the institution allows the candidate to choose among options: waiving their rights to see the letter, seeing the letter in redacted form, or seeing the complete letter with identification of the reviewer included. In both cases, the reviewer is apprised of whether the candidate will see the letter when they conduct the review.

### Unique Features of the Review Process

The review of procedural documents also revealed these interesting features of the external review process:

- A small number of institutions specifically state that external review letters may be used again for another review at a later date. For example, documentation from one university says that external review letters “may be used again” but cannot be used selectively. All of the letters must be used or none of them may be.
- The documentation for another university talks about “interviews with referees,” but it isn’t clear whether this is done in addition to a written external evaluation or in lieu of a written review.
- In one document, knowledge of the candidate is considered “evidence of the candidate’s

visibility” and is defined as having heard the candidate present a paper, having read an article by the candidate, etc.

- At another university, the library faculty personnel committee reads the external review letters and prepares a “written analysis of the validity and significance of the reviews received.”
- Three institutions specifically require that all letters solicited must be included in the file whether negative or positive.
- Several institutions also state that negative input from external evaluators should be addressed rather than ignored.
- Nearly all of the institutions that supplied procedural documents specifically require reviewers or the person who selects the reviewer to document the relationship of the reviewer to the candidate.
- Two institutions specifically require that letters written to solicit outside evaluation contain neutral language about the candidate.

### Conclusion

These survey results clearly show that external reviews carry weight in tenure and promotion decisions with both peers and administrators. They also show a significant amount of collegiality on the part of faculty who are asked to perform external reviews. Although there are some similarities and patterns in the process of conducting outside peer reviews, procedures vary across institutions. In some cases, these variations are due to institutional policy. In others, they seem to be choices made by the library faculty in developing their internal procedures.

Nonetheless, what is striking about these survey results is how closely they mirror other studies of the external review process in some areas, yet differ widely in others. For example, when Reilly, Carlisle, Mikan, and Goldsmith surveyed nursing schools, they found that external reviews were required by 60% of institutions for tenure and 64%

for promotion, compared with this survey's results of 31% and 43% respectively. (1996, p. 370)

Schlozman researched the external review process of political science faculty from the point of view of full professors who completed the reviews. She found that faculty spent an average of 10.6 hours on reviews of candidates for tenure and nine hours on candidates for promotion, compared to the estimate of 5.9 hours in this survey. (1998, p. 624) It would be interesting to survey library faculty directly to see if the estimates from those who have completed external reviews are closer to those estimated by the political science faculty. Schlozman also found that the burden of completing external reviews was shared very unevenly in her profession. This may be true in academic libraries, too, since at eleven of the responding institutions reviewers complete fewer than five evaluations a year while at three they complete more than ten.

None of the literature found on external reviews discussed cost estimates for the process and no one

requiring external reviews in this survey is tracking the cost, either. The estimate of the cost of an external review is very rough and only takes into account the time spent by the faculty performing the reviews. Perhaps the dollar cost of the process is not as critical as ensuring that good decisions on promotion and tenure are being made, though. As one survey respondent noted, "Money spent on getting a tenure decision correct is money very well spent."

This survey begins to describe the external review process in research libraries and points to areas where more research could be undertaken. Additional research could attempt to more accurately estimate the costs of personnel and resources for portfolio preparation, identify best practices, and answer questions such as: What is the success rate for candidates who undergo external review? How does the success rate relate to the rigorosity of the process? What are the privacy issues? Do all promotions require external review or only those to specific ranks?



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## SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

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The SPEC survey on External Review for Promotion and Tenure was designed by Tracy Bicknell-Holmes, Chair, Research and Instructional Services, and Kay Logan-Peters, Chair, Access and Branch Services, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. These results are based on data submitted by 77 of the 123 ARL member libraries (63%) by the deadline of March 15, 2006. The survey's introductory text and questions are reproduced below, followed by the response data and selected comments from the respondents.

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According to data collected in 2000, librarians at 41 of the 111 reporting academic ARL member libraries (37%) are in tenure track positions; librarians are eligible for a comparable continuing appointment at another 23 academic libraries (21%). In addition, data collected as part of the ARL annual salary survey shows that all but eight academic libraries have a multi-tier ranking system for librarians. This is a clear indication that there is an evaluation process in place for librarian promotion and tenure or other continuing appointment at most ARL libraries. When a librarian becomes eligible for promotion to the next rank or for permanent appointment, some institutions require external reviews of the candidate by peers at another institution. These reviews become an important part of the evaluation of a librarian's potential for ongoing contributions to the position and the profession.

A quick literature search reveals that little has been written about the external review process for librarians. The authors of this survey have performed a number of external reviews and have experienced a wide variety of procedures and policies from the requesting libraries. For example, the contents of candidates' portfolios have varied greatly. Some have contained only publications. Others have included a wide variety of material demonstrating work in service and job performance. One included the performance evaluations of the candidate. Some portfolios included the institutions' standards; others did not. The instructions to the reviewers have also varied. Some institutions instructed the reviewer to evaluate the quality of the candidate's work based on the included standards. Some asked the reviewer to evaluate the candidate based on the reviewer's institutional standards. Others asked whether the candidate would receive tenure at the reviewer's institution. Occasionally, the reviewers were offered compensation in exchange for the review.

This survey is designed to identify the policies and procedures that ARL member libraries are using in the external review process for candidates who are eligible for promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment. It examines how external reviewers are identified and asked to participate in the review process; what instructions are given to reviewers; what materials are included in candidates' portfolios; and the criteria for evaluating candidates' portfolios, among other questions.

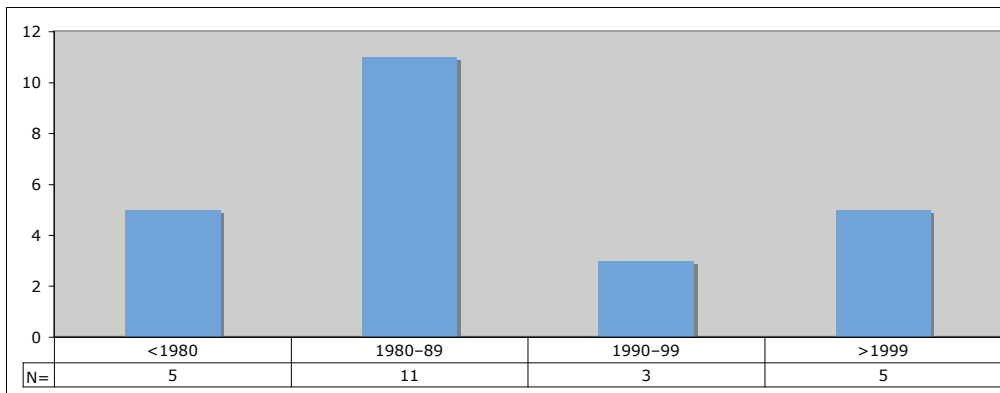
## BACKGROUND

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1. Does your library require external reviews of librarians who are candidates for promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment (P/T/CA)? N=77

<b>Yes, for promotion</b>	36	47%	
<b>Yes, for tenure</b>	27	35%	
<b>Yes, for continuing appointment</b>	7	9%	
<b>Yes Total</b>	38	49%	
<b>No</b>	39	51%	Please skip to question 18.

If yes, in what year did your library begin requiring external reviews of P/T/CA candidates?  
N=24



## SOLICITING REVIEWS

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2. At your library, who identifies potential external reviewers? Please check all that apply. N=38

The candidate	30	79%
Library dean/director	16	42%
Review committee or review committee chair	13	34%
The candidate's immediate supervisor	10	26%
Personnel officer	4	11%
Other, please explain	6	16%

## Selected Comments from Respondents

"Two are nominated by candidate, three by library (Dean with advice of EC)."

"Candidates identify three possible reviewers and the Personnel Officer selects one of the three."

"Final recommendation is made by Unit Director, but others are consulted in the process."

"The candidate's associate dean."

"The external reviewers are those library directors who serve on the (visiting) Library Advisory Council."

"Unit director who may or may not be the immediate supervisor."

### 3. What criteria are used to identify potential external reviewers? Please check all that apply. N=38

The reviewer's reputation in the candidate's field of expertise	28	74%
The rank of the reviewer (assistant, associate, professor/librarian)	20	53%
The reviewer's library's promotion and tenure standards	14	37%
Other, please explain	16	42%

## Selected Comments from Respondents

"Appropriateness of reviewer's position relative to the candidate's position"

"None"

"Other criteria include the reviewer's professional relationship to the candidate and the reviewer's ability to evaluate the candidate's work."

"Relative standing of institution, prefer faculty, must not be a research collaborator of candidate"

"Reputation of reviewer's institution"

"Reviewer's knowledge of candidate's contributions"

"Reviewer's knowledge of the candidate's activities, accomplishments, contributions to library and profession"

"Reviewer's knowledge of the candidate's work and professional activities"

"Subject area"

"The external reviewers are those library directors who serve on the (visiting) Library Advisory Council."

"The reviewer's academic institution"

"The reviewer's knowledge of the candidate's achievements during the period under review"



"The reviewer's publication record, activity in professional associations, experience with faculty status, and employment at one of our peer institutions."

"We look for a reviewer from a comparable institution, reviewer holds a position at a comparable institution that allows him/her to serve as a reviewer and, if possible, the reviewer comes from an institution that has a similar personnel process/system."

"What part of the candidate's qualifications the individual can address."

**4. How many external reviewers are sought for each P/T/CA candidate? N=37**

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std Dev
1	10	5.3	5.0	2.2

**5. Who contacts potential external reviewers? N=38**

Review committee or review committee chair	14	38%
Library dean/director	8	22%
Personnel officer	8	22%
The candidate's immediate supervisor	4	11%
The candidate	0	0%
Other, please explain	4	8%

**Selected Comments from Respondents**

"Candidate's immediate supervisor OR personnel officer."

"This is a shared responsibility between the Personnel Officer and the Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair."

"Assistant to the Dean on behalf of the Dean."

"Unit director."

6. In your experience, how often are potential reviewers unable or unwilling to perform an external review? N=37

Frequently	1	3%
Occasionally	29	78%
Never	7	19%

**Selected Comments from Respondents**

“Rarely’ would be a better answer. Very few say no.”

“Almost never. They are asked to nominate alternates.”

“Frequently is about 1 out of 3.”

“Only if overextended due to other requests or personal reasons.”

“Sometimes a reviewer will not respond. Many supervisors write to six or more reviewers to ensure that we get at least three letters. We also suggest the supervisor provide at least a month for the reviewer to write and respond.”

“The one or two times that the reviewer was not able to participate resulted from their unavailability during the review period.”

“This occurs when the reviewer discloses information that makes the reviewer ineligible; such as not having faculty rank, or not tenured.”

**THE CANDIDATE’S PORTFOLIO**

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7. When is the candidate’s portfolio sent to the external reviewer? N=36

After (s)he has agreed to perform the review	24	67%
With initial inquiry letter	12	33%

8. What materials typically go into the portfolio that is sent to the external reviewer? Check all that apply. N=37

Curriculum Vitae	33	89%
Evidence of publishing or scholarly activities	26	70%
Summary of accomplishments	20	54%
Evidence of creative activities	17	46%
Evidence of service activities	17	46%
Job related materials	13	35%
Other, please explain	11	30%

### Selected Comments from Respondents

"Candidate's narrative statement."

"Candidate's statement, promotion & tenure document."

"Criteria for assessment."

"Criteria for promotion and/or continuing appointment; position description."

"CV, accomplishments, job-related materials may be sent; not required."

"Peer assessments of teaching, self-assessment of progress, evidence of professional practice, evidence of teaching, etc."

"Library's statement on promotion and tenure. In past years, also include candidate's statement of research goals and accomplishments."

"Performance appraisals, letters of reference."

"Statement of research interests & service statement & our criteria document."

"The actual application and the criteria and weightings that we use."

"The portfolio is not sent to external reviewer. Reviewer is asked to comment on specific accomplishments and or position responsibilities suggested by the candidate."

"Whatever the candidate submits."

9. What level of input does the candidate have over the contents of the portfolio? N=37

Administration and/or procedures dictate the contents of the portfolios	17	46%
Some documents are required, the candidate decides on other documentation to include	11	30%
The candidate decides what to send	3	8%
Other, please explain	6	16%

**Selected Comments from Respondents**

“Usually the supervisor just sends a letter; in some cases a CV or summary of recent activities is included.”

“The candidate communicates to the promotion committee which accomplishments and or position responsibilities each external reviewer should be asked to comment on.”

“Candidate provides CV and publications (max 3).”

“Supervisor determines with suggestions from candidate.”

“Procedures require CV & criteria and accomplishments; candidate decides on other documents.”

“The second option is the closest. Standards indicate specific documentation that is required; the candidates can put in other evidence in the case file. The case file is sent to the reviewers.”

**INSTRUCTIONS TO REVIEWERS**

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10. By what criteria or standards are reviewers asked to evaluate the candidate? N=37

By our (the requesting) library’s P/T/CA criteria	30	81%
By reviewer’s library’s P/T/CA criteria	3	8%
No specific criteria recommended	1	3%
Other, please explain	3	8%

**Selected Comments from Respondents**

“Reviewer’s knowledge of the candidate’s contribution.”

“Significance and impact of scholarly activity.”

“By the standards of leading higher education institutions.”

"[By our criteria], also by our institution's criteria."

If by your (the requesting) library's P/T/CA criteria, is a copy of the criteria sent to the reviewer?  
N=30

Yes	29	96%
No	1	4%

### Selected Comments from Respondents

"The reviewer is given the URL for locating the document which outlines the criteria for the institution."

"Send a cover letter and the university's minimum guidelines for P&T reviews."

"We also send [the university's] criteria for P&T."

11. Please indicate which aspects of the candidate's performance reviewers are asked to evaluate.  
Check all that apply. N=38

Record of publishing or scholarly activities	34	89%
Record of creative activities	25	66%
Record of service activities	25	66%
Job performance	13	34%
Other, please explain	12	32%

### Selected Comments from Respondents

"'Professional accomplishments and activities'—specifically how the candidate 'enhances the effectiveness and standing of the Libraries, demonstrates his/her ability to meet the responsibilities of the desired rank, and enhances and contributes to the profession.'"

"All of the above (we have four criteria—job performance, professional activities, university and community service, research and creative activity."

"Any and all areas with which the reviewer is familiar (from among: job performance, professional contribution, and service.)"

"Career development, contributions to the discipline, national reputation."

"Involvement at the national level whether or not it constitutes service."

"It depends; some are asked to address scholarly activities; others service, etc."

"Local and national/international committees, leadership."

"Only areas within criteria of which the reviewer has personal knowledge."

"Other knowledge they may have."

"Primarily research and scholarly work (Section 5.2) of the standards—Section 5 is Practice of Professional Skills."

"Some or all of the above, depending on the relationship and professional expertise of the external reviewer to the candidate."

"Tenurability or promotability comparable to their institution."

## 12. How long are external reviewers given to complete the review? N=37

More than one month	20	54%
Two weeks to one month	17	46%
Less than two weeks	0	0%

## 13. Who are reviewers instructed to contact if they have questions about the review process or instructions? N=38

Review committee or review committee chair	12	32%
Library dean/director	10	26%
Personnel officer	8	21%
The candidate's immediate supervisor	5	13%
The candidate	0	0%
Other, please explain	3	8%

## Selected Comments from Respondents

"This is shared between the personnel officer and the committee chair."

"Either committee chair or personnel officer."

"The unit director."

## ESTIMATED COSTS

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14. Does your library track or try to estimate the cost of external reviews in terms of administrative and staff time, costs of copying and postage, etc.? N=38

<b>Yes</b>	0	0%
<b>No</b>	38	100%

"As external reviews are required by the Standards (university and ours), we have not invested the time to determine the costs."

"Money spent on getting a tenure decision correct is money very well spent!"

15. Does your library track or try to estimate how much time candidates spend preparing documentation for an external reviewer? N=37

<b>Yes</b>	0	0%
<b>No</b>	37	100%

16. Does your library compensate external reviewers? N=37

<b>Yes</b>	0	0%
<b>No</b>	37	100%

"We thank them as much and as sincerely as we can!!"



## THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL REVIEWS IN THE PROMOTION & TENURE PROCESS

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equals very little and 5 equals very much, how much influence does the evaluation of a candidate by an external reviewer carry during the P/T/CA process? N=35

	N	1	2	3	4	5
Influences the candidate's peer evaluators	35	—	—	12	15	8
Influences the institution's administrators	34	—	1	6	15	12

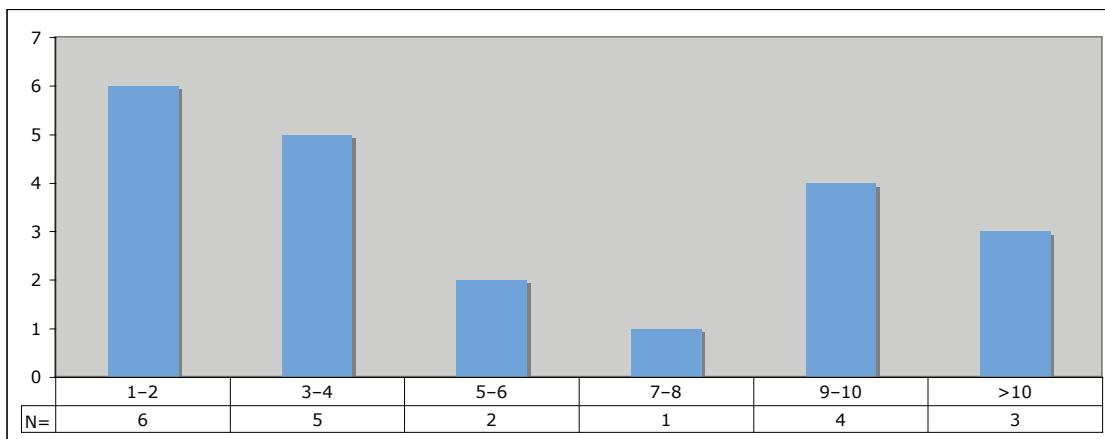
## RESPONDING TO REVIEW REQUESTS

18. Do librarians at your institution complete external reviews of candidates for promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment at other institutions? N=74

<b>Yes</b>	53	72%
<b>No</b>	21	28%

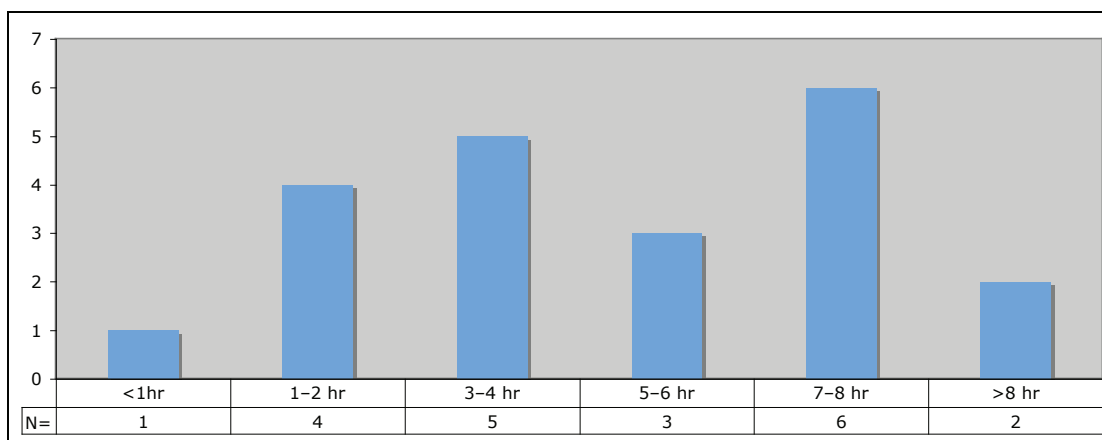
If yes, about how many external reviews are conducted by librarians at your institution annually? N=21

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std Dev
1	22	6.6	4.0	6.1



On average, how much time does a librarian spend on each external review for another institution? N=21

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std Dev
.5 hours	24 hours	5.9 hours	5.0 hours	5.0



## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

19. Please submit any additional information regarding the external review process at your library that may assist the authors in accurately analyzing the results of this survey.

### Selected Comments from Respondents

"We have had a dual track system since the early 1990s: Librarian Faculty and Regular (tenure-track/tenured) Faculty. External reviews are required for tenure-track positions and optional for librarian track. We only have one librarian on tenure track at present; we have not tenured any librarian since the late 1990s."

"At our institution continuing appointment and tenure are synonymous."

"The only promotion that bears external review is that of being promoted from Associate Librarian to Full Librarian."

"[Our] librarians achieved faculty status in 1968. We believe that external review was undoubtedly part of the process from the beginning at our institution."

"There is no way we can track how much external reviewing our librarians are doing and how much time it takes. We probably get a modest amount of requests a year (less than a dozen, if that many) and it probably takes people several hours (at least four hours and probably much longer at times) to do an assessment and write an evaluation."

"[We have] five librarian ranks. Outside reviewers are used only in those cases where librarians are being considered for promotion to Librarian IV or V. Our Personnel Program for Librarians is under review and the current way that we use outside reviewers is one area of the program that might very well be changed."

"External reviews should be a critical component of gaining tenure or, in our case, continuing appointment in any research institution. I believe our institution has been derelict in having not required it to date. Not requiring rigorous external evaluations of librarians keeps them in a second-class citizenship in relation to the professorate."

"Librarians are library faculty, which is one of four types of faculty here. We are non tenure-track. For promotion to assistant, associate, or full, librarians can certainly furnish names of external people as reviewers, but we do not require external reviews. Second, when names of external reviewers are given, we furnish a minimum of information, but which does include the criteria and the candidate's CV."

"Solicitation for comments from librarians at our institution would come directly to the librarian and be considered confidential. Therefore we would have no way of knowing the volume or the level of effort our librarians may be putting into such solicitations."

"Our librarians do not have faculty rank or status. They serve on yearly renewable appointments."

"Our staff is involved in reviewing sporadically, and not frequently. The number I've given occurred within the last five years. Eleven librarians out of 102 took part in at least one review in that time frame. At the top of the range was someone who's done five. I then asked them to gauge the time spent in work days (=7 hrs). Here the range was from 2 hours to 21. I tossed out the person who spent three work days on one review(!) to get the average of four hours."

"Our University Library Director and some AULs do external reviews for individuals at other institutions on occasion."

"Question #4: The number of reviewers depends on the rank to which the candidate seeks promotion. The candidate is the one who recommends the reviewers. Question #7: The library does not send candidate's portfolio to reviewers. Question #18: Library administration does not track who participates from existing library staff in the external review of colleagues at other institutions. It is believed that tracking this type of professional service would violate the confidentiality of the review process and that those persons who are asked for an external review for a person at another institution would decline to reveal this information."

"I am aware that some staff members, particularly at the higher levels, participate in external reviews of staff from other institutions. However, we have no data or further information about numbers of reviews or time used for that purpose."

"Librarians are not faculty; they are academic appointees. Career status is awarded after a suitable trial period. Letters from referees/reviewers are required for promotion in rank and other actions, i.e., acceleration and distinguished status."

"We are strongly considering inclusion of external reviews in our rank and status process."

"We have two librarians that spend about four hours on each external review. One librarian spent 12 hours but it was her first (and only) external review."

"We have an internal peer review process but do not require external reviews."

## RESPONDING INSTITUTIONS

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University of Alabama	University of Louisville
University at Albany, SUNY	University of Manitoba
University of Alberta	University of Maryland
University of Arizona	University of Massachusetts Amherst
Arizona State University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Auburn University	University of Miami
Boston College	University of Michigan
Brigham Young University	Université de Montréal
Brown University	University of Nebraska–Lincoln
University at Buffalo, SUNY	North Carolina State University
University of California, Davis	Northwestern University
University of California, Irvine	University of Notre Dame
University of California, Los Angeles	Ohio University
University of California, San Diego	University of Oklahoma
University of California, Santa Barbara	University of Oregon
Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information	University of Pennsylvania
Case Western Reserve University	Pennsylvania State University
University of Chicago	University of Pittsburgh
Colorado State University	Purdue University
University of Connecticut	Rice University
Cornell University	Rutgers University
University of Delaware	University of Saskatchewan
Duke University	University of Southern California
George Washington University	Southern Illinois University Carbondale
University of Georgia	Syracuse University
Georgia Institute of Technology	University of Tennessee
University of Guelph	University of Texas at Austin
University of Houston	Texas A&M University
University of Illinois at Chicago	University of Utah
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Vanderbilt University
Indiana University Bloomington	University of Virginia
University of Iowa	Virginia Tech
Iowa State University	University of Washington
University of Kansas	Washington State University
Kent State University	Washington University in St. Louis
University of Kentucky	University of Western Ontario
Library of Congress	University of Wisconsin–Madison
Louisiana State University	Yale University