

Appendix D: Case Preparation

The *case*—whether for appointment, reappointment, promotion, or tenure—documents the candidate’s standing both at MIT and externally.

The format of a case reflects standard MIT practice and should be followed closely. Since the job of the Academic Appointments Subgroup of the Academic Council is to study thoroughly each of the cases put forward for tenure or promotion, a standard format facilitates this process. The emphasis on the presentation of a case should be on ordering, summarizing, and listing, where possible, so the readers can grasp the salient issues of each case quickly and easily. Individual differences in style, order, and format will not further the success of a case. For useful information about case preparation and what it takes to get tenure at MIT see documents written by former Dean William J. Mitchell, *Preparing Successful Promotion and Tenure Cases* ([Link being updated](#)) and *What Does it Take to Get Tenure at MIT* ([Link being updated](#)).

Previous cases are not available as a guide due to the confidential information contained within and cannot be shared.

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Case Overview

The same format should be used in presenting cases to the ranks of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor without tenure, Associate Professor with tenure, Full Professor, Senior Lecturer, Adjunct Associate Professor and Associate Professor of the Practice, Professor of the Practice and Adjunct Professor, Principal Research Scientist and Principal Research Associate, Senior Research Scientist and Senior Research Associate.

These cases should contain all of the components listed below in the order indicated. These components are discussed in complete detail in [Case Content and Format, page D-4](#).

Components

- 1** *Table of Contents*
- 2** *Summary Sheet*
- 3** *Letter of Recommendation from Department Head to Dean*
- 4** *Letter of Recommendation from the Department Review Committee to the Department Head*
- 5** *Candidate's Electronic Professional Record*
- 6** *Personal Statement by the Candidate*
- 7** *List of External Reviewers and bios*
- 8** *List of Internal Reviewers and bios*
- 9** *Sample Letter to Reviewers including Confidentiality Statement*
- 10** *Reviewer Letters, External followed by Internal letters*
- 11** *Teaching Evaluation Summary*
- 12a** *Cases proceeding to School Council include a list of Student Reviewers and their letters*
- 12b** *Cases proceeding to Academic Council do not include a list of Student Reviewers and letters*

Case Distribution

Pagination. All pages of the case must be numbered consecutively.

Submission. For submission to the voting members of School Council case is posted electronically on the pandt.mit.edu website (requires certificates and password) no later than noon one week before the case is to be presented. The department/program head prepares their presentation for School Council using the [slide template](#) provided by the dean's office. After their presentation the department/program head forwards their slides to the academic administrator in the dean's office.

For submission to Academic Council the department is responsible for delivering the following material, in the format indicated, to the dean's office:

- The completed case, fully formatted, electronically on the date requested by the dean's office.

Case Content and Format¹

1. Table of Contents	
Content	Format
The Table of Contents must include every section and with page numbers for each.	All the pages must be numbered consecutively—typewritten, not handwritten. The Table of Contents does not have a page number—page numbering begins on the Case Summary Sheet which is Page 1. The electronic file should be a pdf format which has electronic bookmarks, opens with bookmarks showing, and has been formatted for text recognition. (see sample TOC , and a MSWord version TOC , note SA+P does not require a separate list of peers or a photo. <i>See tips on pandt.mit.edu website for more information.</i>

2. School of Architecture + Planning Case Summary Sheet	
Content	Format
The summary should provide a succinct and persuasive statement of the basis for a positive decision. If the case goes forward, this document is, ultimately the only document that is presented to the Executive Committee of the Corporation.	The Case Summary Sheet must only be one page in length. The Case Summary Sheet is Page 1. <i>See Appendix E: Case Summary Sheet. Please click here to go directly to a Summary Sheet template in MS Word.</i>

3. Letter of Recommendation from Department Head to Dean	
Content	Format
The letter should include an accurate reflection of the degree of endorsement by the department, and the process by which the endorsement was achieved. It should provide a candid summary of the candidate's achievements; her/his strengths and weaknesses; a comparison with peers; a discussion of the importance of the appointment/promotion to the department; and a summary of letters.	1-2 pages

¹ The case content described in these tables concentrates primarily on faculty cases. For particulars about the content of staff cases, see the specific guidance for different staff positions that is provided in *Chapter 5: About Academic Instructional Staff* (currently under revision) and *Chapter 6: About Academic and Sponsored Research Staff* (currently under revision).

4. Letter of Recommendation from the Department Review Committee to the Department Head

Content

Topics covered by the letter should include:

Committee process: Information on how the committee conducted its review and the names of the committee members.

Summary: A frank summary of the candidate's achievements, including strengths and weaknesses, current research and teaching, and its importance to the field and the department. Questions which deserve attention might include:

- Is there a body of work which can be viewed or used by others, and which gives evidence of accomplishment? Does the work provide a basis for, contribute to, or build on the work of others?
- Is the candidate's research/practice sufficiently original to justify further development? Is there any national or international recognition of the importance of the candidate's work?
- Does the candidate, through the ways she/he conceptualizes, represents, or embodies her/his concerns, communicate with others outside the field? Does she/he make contact wherever possible with developed areas of competence in other fields?
- Is the candidate an effective teacher? (Include a summary of what the committee gleaned, both positive and negative, from student letters, subject evaluations, or other sources.)

Contribution to Department: The importance of this appointment/promotion to long-term departmental goals. A delineation of the intellectual place that the candidate holds within the department relative to others in the same area and relative to some "mapping" of all the intellectual areas of the department.

Defense: A defense of the candidate as among the best in the country for this position in terms of excellence, performance, experiences, and availability. Include some discussion, by name, of others who are also top in the candidate's area of expertise.

Letters Received: A summary of the letters included in the case.

5. Candidate's Electronic Professional Record

Content

The format (see [Appendix F: Electronic Professional Record](#)) should be followed exactly for ease of review by Academic Council. See [Electronic Professional Record](#) for a template for a template or see the MSWord version in Attachments.

6. Personal Statement by the Candidate	
Content	Format
This is a succinct statement by the candidate of her/his research, practice or other creative accomplishments, and her/his long-range career objectives at MIT as related to teaching and to research or creative activities.	This statement should be approximately 1,000 – 2,500 words in length.

7. External Reviewer List with short biography	
Content	Format
A list of external reviewers, including their full name, title, affiliation, a short biographical sketch and an indication of how the reviewer was chosen (i.e., by candidate, committee or both). If a reviewer is unable to write on behalf of the candidate this should be noted in the case by including their decline and indicating it by their bio.	External reviewers should be listed alphabetically by last name and next to her/his name it should be noted whether they were suggested by the committee or by the candidate. Also note if letter was received or declined. See <i>sample</i> list.

8. Internal Reviewer List	
Content	Format
A list of internal reviewers, including their rank, affiliation and bio. There should be an indication of how the reviewer was chosen (i.e., by candidate, committee or both).	Internal reviewers should be listed alphabetically by last name. See <i>sample</i> list.

9. Sample letter to reviewers and confidentiality statement

Content	Format
<p>This letter should be brief and to the point. It should ask the reviewers to characterize the nature of their relationship with the candidate and to give their comments and evaluation based on their knowledge of the candidate's work and (where relevant) their experience of the candidate's teaching and service. The letter to the reviewers should specifically request a ranking of the candidate with other people of comparable seniority in the same field. It should also request an evaluation of the candidate as a teacher. This letter should be as neutral as possible, neither indicating that a favorable review is sought, nor a negative one by raising specific questions about the candidate's scholarship. Since these letters have an important impact on the outcome of the case, considerable care should be given to writing them. The confidentiality statement should be included at the bottom of the letter after the signature. A copy of one of the solicitation letters sent should be included in the case.</p>	<p>Sample letters for soliciting evaluations are in Appendix G: Sample Letters to Reviewers. Adherence to the sample format as much as possible is advised. The statement on confidentiality that is part of the sample letter is a legal statement that was carefully crafted and cannot be edited in any way and is to be appended to the bottom of the letter, under the signature as shown. It must be included in its entirety.</p>

10. Reviewer letters	
Content	Format
<p>Letters should be solicited from the most significant scholars and practitioners in the candidate’s field. Careful selection of letter writers is essential. To ensure an objective review, letter writers should not be contacted prior to the official letter request. Included among the letter writers should be some individuals with whom the candidate has had major professional relationships outside MIT and outside the department. Letters should be solicited to document the range of the candidate’s experiences and accomplishments and to provide a balanced view of the candidate. Every effort should be made by the department head and committee chair to obtain letters solicited.</p> <p>Letters from colleagues inside MIT should also be included to complement outside letters, for example, with respect to importance of candidate’s work to other work at MIT, and, for promotion cases, with respect to teaching skills, collegiality, etc.</p> <p>The material provided to the letter writers should include the candidate’s electronic professional record (ePR), personal statement, and a selective—rather than an exhaustive—set of his or her most relevant work.</p> <p>It is important for the department review committee and the department head to make a careful reading of the letters for appropriateness, potential problems, need for further clarification, etc.</p> <p>The School’s academic units have a valued practice of seeking student letters especially in relation to teaching competence. These letters should be included in the Teaching Appendix (see below), which is attached to the case reaching School Council. The letters are removed from the Teaching Appendix when the case is forwarded to Academic Council but the teaching evaluation chart stays. Their contents should be summarized in the letter from the review committee to the department head.</p> <p>Letters about the candidate: All letters about the candidate must be recent, up-to-date, on letterhead and written for this purpose. All letters requested and received must be included in the case with the exception of student letters which are not included in the cases proceeding to Academic Council.</p>	<p>See <i>Appendix H: Letter Chart</i> for numbers of external and internal letters required.</p> <p>Distinguish between names supplied by the committee and names supplied by the candidate.</p> <p>All handwritten letters should be typed for inclusion in the case. A note which indicates that this has been done should be typed at the top of the letter. References sent by email can be included in the case, however, they are required to be on letterhead.</p>

11. Teaching Evaluation Summary	
Content	Format
<p>A Teaching Evaluation Summary should be prepared whenever the candidate is internal or external to MIT. The Teaching Evaluation Summary is omitted for external candidates but evidence of their teaching ability should be discussed in the <i>Letter of Recommendation from the Department Review Committee to the Department Head</i>, page D-4. The Teaching Evaluation Summary includes the chart of teaching evaluation scores received by the candidate. It should also discuss any other evidence of teaching effectiveness.</p>	<p>The complete Teaching Evaluation Summary, including the student letters, should be brought forward in the case presented to School Council. The summary statement alone, without the student letters, will become part of the case presented to Academic Council. See <i>sample</i>.</p>

12a and 12b. Student Solicitation Letter and Student Review Letters	
Content	Format
<p>Appended to the Teaching Evaluation Summary is a copy of the Student Solicitation letter and the student review letters. Also, included in the summary statement, is a brief description of the committee's methodology: in particular, the number of student letters that were solicited and obtained, the sampling strategy that was used in selecting students to write, the return rate, and the coverage of teaching activities that the sample provided.</p>	<p>The complete Teaching Evaluation Summary, including the student letters, should be brought forward in the case presented to School Council. The summary statement alone, without the student letters, will become part of the case presented to Academic Council. (<i>see sample letter to students</i>).</p>