



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

# RPT - Notes on Dossiers

Jeff Nelson, Physics  
(CCPD meeting on 10/10/19)

edited by Rex Kincaid and Lily Panoussi  
on 3/10/23

# Format for the talk

## Left hand side

- Direct quotes from the Dean's memo
- Deliverables or key points in orange
- Important things to remember in grey

## Comments on the section

- Notes on the most common issues with dossiers
- Suggestions on best practices to deliver the requested items in the memo
- Occasional suggestions on the content to help the committee

# Memo item I.A.2.a (C.V.)

The complete and current curriculum vitae of the candidate that **clearly distinguishes between scholarship that is published, accepted for publication, and currently under review**. Dates and page numbers for publication are mandatory. **Peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed publications and other creative activities should be clearly distinguished**. In cases of co-authored, co-edited, or edited work, candidates should indicate their contributions to the publication. A list of **grant proposals** both submitted and/or funded should be included in the CV. Sources of external funding should include the candidate's role on the project, the total amount of the award, and, in the case of a collaborative project, the amount of funding awarded to the candidate.

It should also clearly distinguish work that was substantially completed at W&M vs prior work, unless hired at advanced rank or a Provost's memo.

We primarily evaluate W&M work.

Role in collaborative work:  
lead author, involved in all aspects of the publication, collected and calibrated the data, analysis of data ...

PI, Co-PI, subaward...

Note if it was at W&M or prior

# Memo item I.A.2.b (Scholarly material)

- Put in one item for each work
- This can be a good place to state the candidate's role in each multi-author work
- This is also a good place to indicate if W&M or prior work

# Memo item I.A.2.d (Narrative)

A narrative statement, referred to in the Provost's memo as a "self-evaluation" by the candidate, should consist of an evaluation by the candidate of his/her own **scholarship, teaching, and service**. This should include a statement of future plans in all three areas. The narrative should be no more than **8 single-spaced pages or the equivalent double-spaced**.

Remember the 3 audiences:

- External experts in the field
- Your departmental colleagues
- RPT & Deans – no one in your field reads it at this level

Give us at least one paragraph at the non-expert level

- Something atypical? Bump along the way? Address it here, in departmental report, and/or chair's letter

# Memo item I.A.2.e (External Letters)

A minimum of four letters from external reviewers with full or abbreviated CVs along with a sample of the letter sent to the external reviewers from the Department

Much more on this later



# Memo item I.A.2.e

## (Department report/Meeting minutes)

The **report of the faculty meeting** at which the recommendation of the faculty committee is discussed and voted upon. The vote totals, the number of faculty eligible to vote, and the date of that vote must also be included (see Section E). The report should be limited to no more than 8 single-spaced pages, excluding supplemental tables. The report should **articulate departmental expectations for tenure or promotion, including those pertaining to varied types of scholarly work** (e.g., sole author monograph, edited book, first-author or peer-reviewed article) **and external grants**. The report should provide a context for the candidate's dossier. It should not simply summarize the candidate's narrative statement or the external reviewers' letters, but **should give the committee's independent assessment of the candidate's dossier**.

How many voted, how many eligible? Show quorum

Date

How many Pro/Con/Abstain?  
(no need to report absences person-by-person but note why someone missed)  
"Three faculty were traveling, two on leave, and one recused due to senior administrative appointment"

Please be clear on expectations especially if the field is evolving

Include evaluative statements/discussion conclusions in each area

# Memo item I.A.2.h (Departmental standards)

A copy of the **department's standards for tenure and promotion.**

One of the most missed items in dossiers

There is a placeholder item in the template and many chairs do not notice that their committee failed to upload the actual document

Check each table of contents item explicitly!!!



# Memo item I.A.2.k

## (deviations from standard timeline)

If a candidate's date for mandatory review for tenure has been changed since the time of appointment, or if the candidate has been approved for early tenure, this **change must be clearly documented and a copy of the Provost's approval must be included in the dossier.** In the case of early tenure, **candidates must indicate that they realize that they will have only one opportunity to be considered for tenure.**

Another frequently missed item in dossiers

A scanned copy

This can be in the narrative, but should be called out clearly

# Memo item I.A.2.1

## (Signed Table of Contents)

Candidates and their department Chair should review the entire dossier, except for the external reviewers' original letters, their CVs, and the letter concerning how the reviewers were chosen. (The list or table of contents does not need to itemize every document but should account for each dossier folder and subfolder as appropriate.) **They should sign and date a list of contents of the dossier** attesting that the dossier contains all the items and that the candidate has seen them. This attestation is signed by the department Chair as the representative of the Dean.

Another of the most missed items in dossiers

The memo says this goes in before the unredacted letters, certainly before sending it to the Dean's office

If there are additions after the signature (candidates can add at any time of the review process), it should be noted in the committee report, chair's letter, or in an addendum to the chair's letter

# Memo item I.B.3

## (Selection of external reviews)

The **minimum number of external letters** to be included in the dossier is **four**. The candidate should put together a list of possible external reviewers. The department should compile a second list. All members of the department may contribute to this list, regardless of rank, unless prohibited by departmental procedures. Moreover, unless prohibited by departmental procedures, the candidate may be allowed to see the department's initial list and exclude individuals from that list for reasonable cause. Under normal circumstances, at least one reviewer will be chosen from the list produced by the candidate and at least one chosen from the list created by the department. **If all letters are from the candidate's list or if all are from the department's list, this must be explained in the department's letter about how the reviewers were chosen. All letters received must be put in the candidate's dossier.** At no time should candidates see a final list of the external reviewers.

Please explain the procedure even if it is "by the book"

Explain who did/didn't respond  
In the secure area

All letters, even if not at arm's length, must be included in the dossier. Note the letter's status in the memo

Don't cut it too tight on number of people asked – expect some number will not deliver but don't overdo it either (4-6 is ideal)

# Memo item I.B.4

## (Selection of external reviews)

External reviewers should come from programs, institutions, or agencies of a quality commensurate with the reputation and standards of the College of William & Mary. Letters should be solicited whenever possible from individuals at or above the rank to which the candidate aspires to be promoted. A copy of the **solicitation letter** should be included in the candidate's dossier (in the Secure Materials folder).

Some programs put in a few sentences on the qualifications of each reviewer in the secure area. This is helpful.

All letters in the solicitation process must be included

Not every little nag, though...

Missing the follow-on letters is common

# Memo item I.B.4

## (Selection of external reviews, part II)

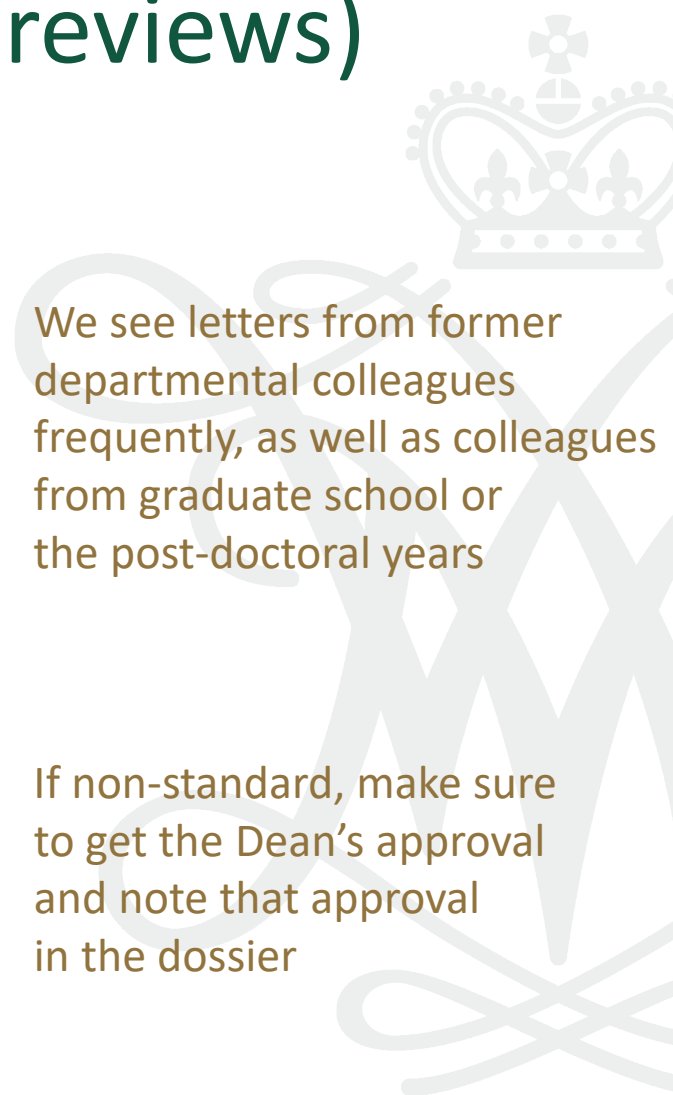
- The following statement **must also be included in the original solicitation letter** sent to external reviewers:
- “The University will, to the extent permitted by law, hold your letter (or statement) in confidence. The Virginia Freedom of Information Act permits the university to withhold confidential letters and statements of recommendation respecting applications for employment or promotion. The letter may be disclosed within the university if necessary in connection with an internal investigation into allegations of discrimination or the like, and will be disclosed as required under subpoena or other legal process. The candidate will be allowed to view redacted versions of the external reviewer letters.”

In almost a third of cases this required wording in the external reviewer correspondence is missing

# Memo item I.B.5

## (Selection of external reviews)

External reviewers must be wholly disinterested, i.e., what has traditionally been known as “arms-length.” According to the Provost’s memo, “**individuals with whom a professional or personal relationship exists such as might reduce the objectivity or perceived objectivity of the review**” are not at “arms-length.” The test for being wholly disinterested is that potential reviewers should not have even the appearance of a vested interest based on their own careers, nor a personal interest in the career advancement of the faculty member under review. For example, external reviewers should not have mentored, financially supported, or taught the faculty member during the faculty member’s graduate education or post-doctoral experience, ***be a former colleague*** or supervisor, or have **collaborated closely with the faculty member on publications or grants**. They may have been in contact with and/or served with the faculty member in editorial roles, on review panels, in conferences and professional organizations. In some fields or cases, this may mean trading a degree of expertise for added distance, and in some cases, especially where there are many authors, exceptions to this standard may be appropriate. If a department has a question as to whether or not a proposed reviewer is wholly disinterested, the Chair should contact the Dean in advance of soliciting letters who will then discuss the case with the Chair of the RPT Committee and, if necessary, the Faculty Affairs Committee. The final decision rests with the Dean.



We see letters from former departmental colleagues frequently, as well as colleagues from graduate school or the post-doctoral years

If non-standard, make sure to get the Dean’s approval and note that approval in the dossier

# Memo item I.B.6

## (Selection of external reviews)

If, after a letter is received, the department finds that the **external reviewer is not, in fact, “arms-length,” it must include a statement in the dossier that the letter was solicited and received but did not contribute to the department’s decision.** If the RPT Committee, in the course of its reading of the dossier, finds that an external reviewer is not “arms-length,” the committee will inform the Dean and the department, and **request permission** from the Dean not to consider the letter. If this is approved by the Dean, the Dean will inform the department, and the letter will remain in the dossier with a statement added that the letter did not contribute to the committee’s decision. The department may request that the Dean reconsider the decision. If this results in fewer than four letters that are “arms-length,” the department must obtain a replacement and reconsider the dossier as soon as possible.

All received letters must be included...

# Memo item I.B.7

## (Materials to external reviewers)

There is a list of what to provide and nothing beyond that list may be provided

- This can be on Bb
- Some use box site for secure dissemination of the materials



# Memo item I.B.8 (arm's length statement from external reviews)

8. External reviewers will be asked to provide information on their relationship to the candidate in a manner that will allow this information to be kept confidential from the candidate. They will also be asked to provide a full or abbreviated CV.

Departments must also instruct the reviewers to use one of the following:

- a. **A separate letter attached to the letter evaluating the candidate**
- b. **An initial paragraph of the letter evaluating the candidate**
- c. **A final paragraph below the signature line of the letter evaluating the candidate**

This must be in the solicitation. Missing or unrequested in 15% of reviewers

It is pretty embarrassing to have to come back and ask for it later (esp. since they, typically, also weren't informed of the expectations of redacted letters)

# Memo item I.B.9 (redacted letters statement)

9. **Departments must also instruct the reviewers that only the evaluative text of their letters will be shared with the candidate and that any identifying information about them or their institution in the evaluative letter will be blocked out.**

What we do is non-standard.

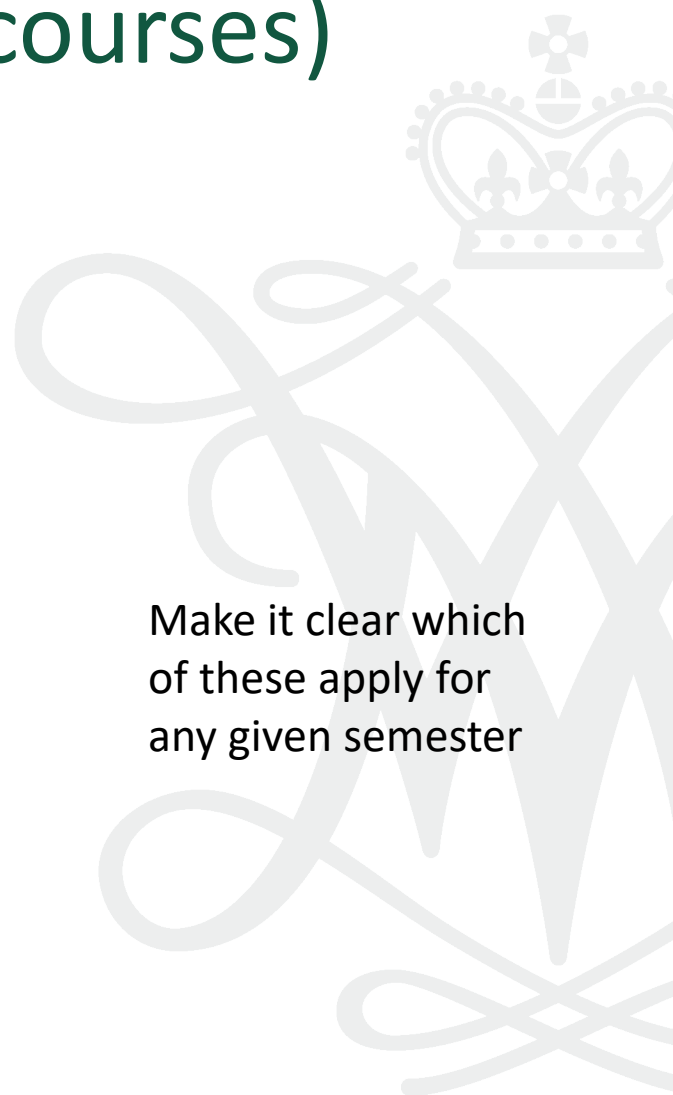
Sometime reviewers refuse.

They need to be informed!

# Memo item I.C.12

## (Teaching – types of courses)

A description of the kinds of courses offered by the candidate, such as survey or introductory, upper level, or seminar must be included in the report of the Chair, the department, or the departmental personnel committee. **Any gaps in teaching must be clarified (e.g., junior leave, SSRL, FLMA).** This may be done in the candidate's CV, the department report, or the Chair's letter, and in the section listing courses taught.



Make it clear which of these apply for any given semester

# Memo item I.C.13

## (Teaching – 2<sup>nd</sup> form of evaluation)

**A second means of evaluating the faculty member's teaching must be included** besides student evaluations. A unit's failure to comply with this College policy may delay a candidate's evaluation. The **department report must state the nature of the second method of assessment (e.g., review of exams and syllabi, peer observation) and contain an evaluation of these materials.**

Make explicit the second means of evaluation

If the department uses teaching observations, these should be included in the dossier, preferably under Teaching

# Memo item I.C.14

## (Teaching – evaluations and table)

Candidates for tenure will include **all evaluations for each course taught since they arrived at the College** and those for promotion will include all student evaluations for **each course taught since tenure or for the previous eight consecutive years**, whichever is shorter.

The department is required to **provide a single table summarizing the candidate's scores for all courses on the question "what is this instructor's overall teaching effectiveness."** The department should also include in this table a specified numerical **comparison (e.g. the departmental mean) to other departmental courses.**

Additionally, the department must include the **comments from the student evaluations** in one of the following forms: a PDF of the complete evaluations or a compilation of all student comments, clearly identified by course, semester, and year.

**This has been problematic**

Example that hits all the requirements

Be sure it is easy to find

Term	Course	Enrolment	Responses	Course Average OTE	Departmental average OTE
Fall 2010	AAA 999	10	8	4.73	4.33
Fall 2010	AAA 999	11	7	4.73	4.33
Spring 2011	AAA 999	1	0	-	-
Spring 2011	AAA 999	153	37	5.00	4.49
Fall 2011	AAA 999	10	8	5.00	4.51
Fall 2011	AAA 999	11	7	5.00	4.51
Spring 2012	AAA 999	10	8	5.00	4.49
Spring 2012	AAA 999	11	7	3.92	4.49
Fall 2012	AAA 999	10	8	4.83	4.37
Fall 2012	AAA 999	11	7	4.52	4.37
Spring 2013	AAA 999	10	8	4.71	4.03

X.XX – at least one or two two decimal places

# Service

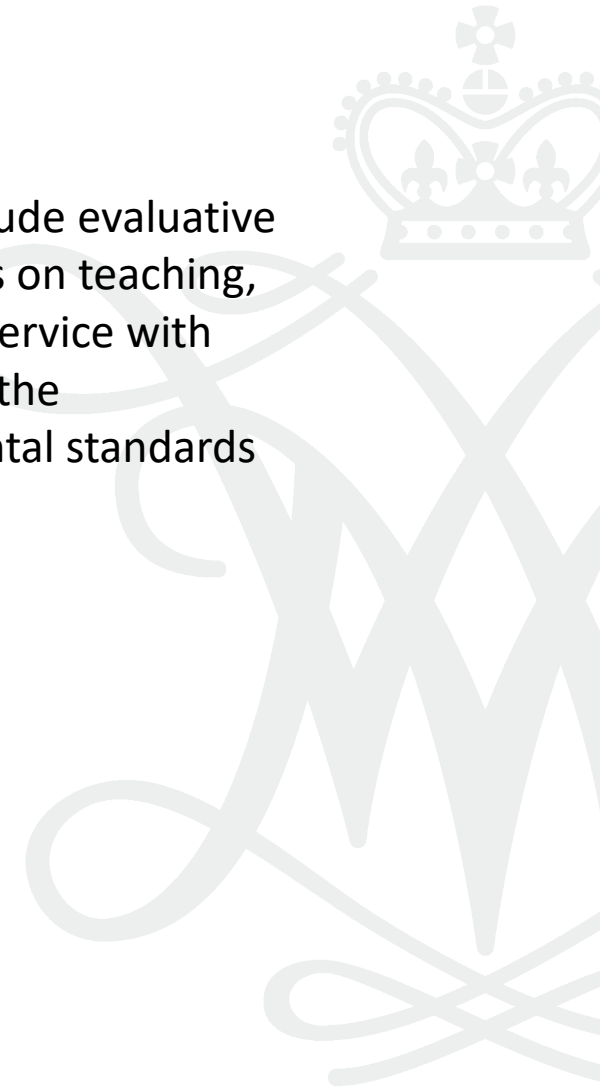
Service on **departmental committees** and service on **committees outside the faculty member's department or in other activities** for the College such as first-year advising are **expected of all candidates** considered for tenure. Editorial work and membership on editorial boards shall be considered as either service or scholarship depending on the decision of the candidate, in consultation with the department. This categorization should be clearly spelled out in the department's report or the Chair's letter.

Note possible special circumstances that modify the service load (e.g. joint appointment, special role in a center, etc.)

# Chair's report

- Whether the Chair votes as a member of the department will depend on departmental personnel policies. **When the Chair votes, the Chair's letter will be primarily descriptive of the process. When the Chair does not vote, the Chair will provide an independent assessment of the candidate in the Chair's letter.**

Please include evaluative statements on teaching, research, service with respect to the departmental standards



# Others...

- MOUs for joint appointments must be included