

Below is the Provost's definition of 'arm's length'. Please go to the Provost's website below for more information.

- We urge you to stress with your department chairs, or the appropriate equivalent, that the external letters must be evaluative and at "arm's length." **Letters from persons who have been co-authors or major research collaborators in excess of ten years prior to the appointment or promotion are now allowed.** Letters from persons who have served as a candidate's thesis adviser or mentor are not considered to be "arm's length." While these kinds of letters can be especially helpful (because the letter writers can be presumed to have a good sense of both the person and the work), it is also true that their own reputations are involved in the work being evaluated. If such letters are included, they must be in addition to the minimum requirement of five "arm's length" letters. Letters from persons who do not know the candidate, but who may have a clear sense of the significance of the candidate's qualifications, are of greater value.
- On the Clinical track, "arm's length" letters from persons who may not be known to the candidate, but who have a clear sense of the significance of the candidate's qualifications, are unlikely to tell the story insofar as teaching and clinical work are concerned. Therefore it would be reasonable, **for Clinical track faculty only**, to have up to two of the five "arm's length" evaluative letters from local sources (these can be from persons within the University of Michigan and have seen the clinical work and actual teaching, but who are not mentors or scholarly collaborators nor persons who are in the same department as the candidate). At least three of the remaining letters would need to be "arm's length" as typically defined.

http://www.provost.umich.edu/faculty/promotion_guidelines/procedures.html (Item 3i).