Faculty Appointments & Promotions at the Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (GSDM)

The Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (GSDM) is committed to being the premier academic dental institution promoting excellence in dental education, research, oral health care, and community service to improve the overall health of the global population. The School actively encourages and supports professional growth and development within its diverse and internationally renowned faculty of 325 educators, researchers and clinicians.

Professional development is an important component of a career in higher education. Beginning when an individual joins the faculty at GSDM, he or she will collaborate closely with his or her department Chair to map out a series of professional goals leading to excellence in the areas of scholarly activity, research, teaching and service. Over time, such development ultimately merits advancement in academic rank as an individual’s achievements mark his or her professional development as an educator, clinician or researcher.

Promotion at GSDM is based on individual merit and is realized following demonstrated professional growth and excellence in scholarly activity and service over a period of years. When an individual, in collaboration with his or her Chair, has determined that such development warrants academic promotion, the Chair will work closely with the faculty member to create a promotion application which quantifies the individual’s professional accomplishments.

The Appointments & Promotions Process

Each application for initial appointment or academic promotion is peer-reviewed at the department level before being evaluated and formally approved by the School’s Faculty Appointment & Promotions Committee, the GSDM Executive Committee and the Dean of the School. Academic track (unmodified) promotions require additional review and approval by the Medical Campus Provost (Assistant Professor) and/or the President of Boston University (Associate Professor and Professor).

Materials Required for Initial Appointment or Promotions Applications

The information required for initial appointments or promotion applications is identical. Each packet will consist of:

- Initial Appointment or Promotion form (Department)
- Chair’s cover memo to the Dean (Department)
- Candidate’s curriculum vitae (Candidate) – Preferably in BU CV format
- List of Evaluators
- Letters of support (Candidate/Department)
- Supporting materials (Candidate – only if requested)
Support Letters for Faculty Appointments & Promotions

Each application for initial appointment or promotion will contain the minimum number of support letters noted in the table below. Candidates for initial appointment or promotion will confer with their Chair regarding the solicitation of support letters and the Department will reach out to request all letters. The Chair is ultimately responsible for determining from whom support letters will be requested and which of the letters received will ultimately accompany the final application. It is also the Chair’s prerogative to seek evaluations without consulting or notifying the applicant relative to selection of evaluators. At no time should the content of the support letters be shared with the candidate.

For appointments or promotions to unmodified ranks (Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor), all letters must come from individuals based outside of GSDM. This is also highly encouraged for appointments to the Research track. Clinical track appointments or promotions may contain letters from members of the School’s faculty. In this case, it is highly encouraged that as many letters as possible are obtained from objective reviewers outside of the candidate’s department or direct work environment. With the exception of the rank of Clinical Instructor, all other clinical ranks must contain a minimum of one (1) external letter, preferably 2 or more for senior ranks (Clinical Associate Professor and Clinical Professor). For the rank of Clinical Assistant Professor, the external letter may come from another department at GSDM, but for higher ranks, they must be from outside GSDM and be at ‘arms length’. All letters must be from individuals holding a rank in academia at the same level (or higher) than the rank being proposed. Letters may not be provided by members of the School’s Faculty Appointments & Promotions Committee and must state that the reviewer feels that the candidate is qualified to hold the rank being proposed (which should be explicitly cited in the letter) at their own institution.

Objective Evaluation Letters at “Arm’s-Length”

In the interest of objectivity, consistency and transparency, it is highly recommended that support letters be evaluative and where possible, supplied by individuals at arm’s-length to the candidate. This is a requirement for all letters accompanying unmodified appointments.

An "arm’s-length" letter is defined as an evaluation provided by an individual who is outside the present institution of the candidate and who did not work or train with the candidate at other institutions. Although these individuals may know the candidate or may have worked with the candidate briefly in the field, they may not have been at the same institution, and may not have been the candidate’s teacher, mentor, student, or major research collaborator. While letters from such persons can be especially helpful (because they 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 and consequently such letters may be biased. Letters from persons
who may be unknown to the candidate, but may have a clear sense of the significance of the candidate’s qualifications, are of greater value.

“Arm’s length” letters, however, 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 is allowable (for Clinical track faculty only) to have a majority of their evaluation letters come from local (i.e., internal) sources. The letters from local sources should preferably be from outside of the candidate’s department or immediate work environment and from individuals who may have observed the candidate’s clinical work and teaching, but whom are not mentors or scholarly collaborators. At least one of the remaining letters would need to be external or at “arm's length” as described above.

A routing matrix and support letter guide for the various ranks and tracks is below:

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Approval Flow*</th>
<th># letters Internal (BU)</th>
<th># letters External</th>
<th>Approval Flow*</th>
<th># letters Internal (BU)</th>
<th># letters External</th>
<th>Approval Flow*</th>
<th># letters Internal (BU)</th>
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<td>See above</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†With the exception of the rank of Clinical Instructor and Clinical Assistant Professor, all Clinical track appointments and promotions require a minimum of one external letter or a letter at arm’s-length. The remaining letters may be from BU sources, preferably from evaluators outside of the individual’s department or immediate work environment.

*Approval Flow for Faculty Actions
1) Departmental Appointments & Promotions Committee
2) GSDM Faculty Appointments & Promotions Committee
3) GSDM Executive Committee
4) Dean of GSDM
5) Medical Campus Provost
6) President of Boston University
Appointment and Promotion Procedures

1. The first level of Appointment or Promotion Review takes place in the candidate’s department and is conducted by a local committee comprised of faculty members holding a rank at least as high as that for which the candidate is being considered. The Chair of the department reports the result of the department faculty review as well as his or her own recommendation to the Dean.

2. The Dean then refers the recommendation to the GSDM Faculty Appointments & Promotions Committee.

3. Following successful review and approval of the rank by the GSDM Faculty Appointments & Promotions Committee, the application is moved forward to the GSDM Executive Committee for review and approval.

4. In the case of modified appointments (Clinical, Research, Emeritus, Visiting), when the Dean approves the appointment or promotion after considering the recommendations of the GSDM Faculty Appointments & Promotions Committee and the GSDM Executive Committee, the action is considered fully approved and the individual and his or her Chair are notified in writing of the outcome.

5. For unmodified appointments, when the Dean approves the appointment or promotion after considering the recommendation of the GSDM Faculty Appointments & Promotions Committee and the GSDM Executive Committee, the recommendation is forwarded by the School to the Medical Campus Provost and then to the University President (Associate Professor or Professor ranks only).

6. The candidate shall, at his or her request, be given copies of reports and rationales from each level of the promotion review process. To facilitate this procedure, reports and rationales are formulated to preserve the anonymity of participants in the judgment (to the extent that this is consistent with the communication of the basis of judgment) at each level. The candidate is not given access to individual evaluations submitted in confidence.

7. The candidate being reviewed for promotion has the right to appeal a negative recommendation of the Dean to the Medical Campus Provost or of the Medical Campus Provost to the President, indicating the grounds of his or her dissatisfaction with the negative recommendations. This right of appeal does not extend beyond the President.

^ Adopted April 18, 2007, by the University Council.

Review of all initial appointments and promotion applications is undertaken with reference to the criteria for faculty appointments and ranks as outlined in the following documents:

Boston University Faculty Handbook
GSDM Bylaws