# Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish that:

(1) **Insert Faculty Candidate’s Name,** referred to as the “candidate” from this point, has selected the Public Engagement Research Option (PERO) in the promotion and tenure process;

(2) the candidate’s Unit Executive Officer (EO) and Dean’s office are aware of and approve this decision; and

(3) all parties understand and will follow the PERO guidelines.

If after signing this MOU, the candidate decides to opt out of PERO, that decision must be made before the deadline for the candidate to submit their list of external evaluators and be documented in an addendum to the candidate’s MOU. The MOU and all addendums must be included in the candidate’s dossier (see attachments to [Provost Communication 9](https://uofi.app.box.com/s/9d7miwmgcvyk4v4xpjgfgdua83jauhhs/file/936591220113)).

# Background

The paramount consideration in the evaluation of publicly engaged research is the degree to which it has societal impact—as evident, for example, in changes in policies, practices, or community capacity. However, gauging such impact can be a challenge in the promotion and tenure process. Publicly engaged research may generate scholarly and/or creative products (e.g., policy reports, manuals, and/or museum exhibits) whose impact may not be adequately or accurately captured by traditional means of evaluation. PERO addresses this issue by permitting the addition of alternative means of evaluation that gauge societal impact.

As highlighted in [**Provost Communication 9**](https://uofi.app.box.com/s/9d7miwmgcvyk4v4xpjgfgdua83jauhhs/file/936591220113) (see section II.A.1), publicly engaged research draws on a faculty member’s expertise to define and address societal problems, concerns, issues, or interests to contribute to the public good. Such research occurs in ***collaboration*** with communities and/or organizations at the local, state, national, or international level.

# General Terms

## PERO IS FOR PUBLICLY ENGAGED RESEARCH

PERO is designed to support the evaluation of publicly engaged ***research***. Thus, PERO is only for faculty whose research program is largely publicly engaged and the discipline’s traditional review mechanisms are insufficient to evaluate the impact of the research. Beyond these considerations, PERO is likely an appropriate option for faculty answering in the affirmative to the majority of questions provided in the [***PERO Guide***](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/pero-guide/)in the attachments to [**Provost Communication 9**](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/)).

**Instructions for candidate**: Provide a three-page research statement in which you describe the goal(s) of your research program. Describe the process and methods of publicly engaged research undertaken in your work. Indicate what you are trying to accomplish in the next three to five years, particularly in terms of societal impact. Link your research program goal(s) to the types of alternative products and means of evaluation you specify in the table in Section E of this MOU. In addition, discuss how these products combine with your planned traditional products (e.g., peer reviewed journal articles, books, and/or grants) to achieve your goals. This statement will likely be a draft for the research statement you include in your promotion and tenure dossier. *Include this research statement as a pdf attachment to this MOU. Label the file with your first initial, last name, and “RS”—for example, LSmithRS.pdf.*

## TIMING OF THE PERO DECISION

The candidate should declare their decision to take PERO at least two academic years before submitting their materials for promotion. Thus, the completed PERO MOU needs to be reviewed by the Campus Public Engagement Research Option Advisory Committee (PERO Advisory Committee) and signed by the candidate’s EO and Dean (or designee) two academic years prior to the candidate’s submission of their materials. In rare circumstances, this timeline may be shortened for Associate Professors. However, the candidate may miss deadlines and thus not receive the benefit of review and guidance from the PERO Advisory Committee. The candidate should work with their EO to plan a timeline for preparation and review of their MOU in line with the detailed timeline, including MOU submission dates to the PERO Advisory Committee, in the [***PERO Guide***](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/pero-guide/)in the attachments to [**Provost Communication 9**](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/)).

PERO is nonbinding for the candidate until the deadline for the submission of their list of external reviewers. Prior to compiling their dossier, the candidate should meet with their EO to discuss whether PERO is still the best option; consultation with the PERO Advisory Committee may be useful in this process. If the candidate decides to opt out of PERO, that decision must be made before the deadline for the candidate to submit their list of external evaluators and be documented in an addendum to the candidate’s MOU.

Requests for consultations with the PERO Advisory Committee can be made by the candidate, EO, or Dean (or designee) to [**facultyaffairs@illinois.edu**](mailto:facultyaffairs@illinois.edu). Submission of draft and final MOUs as well as addendums should be submitted to [**facultyaffairs@illinois.edu**](mailto:facultyaffairs@illinois.edu).

## PERO EXTERNAL LETTER OPTIONS

For faculty taking PERO, two of the five required letters from external evaluators must be from experts ***outside*** academia who can objectively evaluate the societal impact of the candidate’s publicly engaged research (see section II.C.10 of [**Provost Communication 9**](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/)); the remaining three letters must be from external evaluators at academic institutions. The candidate should ***collaborate*** with their EO (or designee) in deciding what types of experts outside academia have the relevant knowledge to evaluate the societal impact of their research. It may also be useful to consult with the PERO Advisory Committee.

External evaluators outside academia can include, but are not limited to, someone in another community who holds a parallel position to a community partner, a leading public figure, and/or an expert in industry or government. Regardless of the letter writer’s position, letters from external evaluators outside academia must be appropriate in that they are from individuals who are (1) ***highly qualified*** in terms of their expertise and/or experience and (2) ***objective*** in that they do not directly benefit from the candidate’s promotion and tenure (see section II.C.10 of [**Provost Communication 9**](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/)).

**Instructions for candidate**: In the following table, provide the types of evaluators outside academia appropriate to speak to the societal impact of your research. Do not provide names, but rather the type of positions experts would hold (e.g., legislator with documented interest in the area and/or director of relevant organizations).

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| --- | --- |
| **TYPE OF EVALUATOR**  (25-word limit per cell) | **RATIONALE FOR TYPE OF EVALUATOR**  (75-word limit per cell) |
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In submitting their list of external evaluators to the promotion and tenure committee, the candidate should include not only evaluators at academic institutions, but also evaluators outside academia, with enough names to guarantee some degree of anonymity to each type of evaluator. Evaluators in the two categories may come from either the candidate’s list or the unit’s list. As is the case for all candidates, however, the majority of the five letters from external evaluators, regardless of whether they are from within or outside academia, must come from the unit’s list. **In sum, for PERO candidates, there must be at least three external evaluators at academic institutions along with the two from outside academia**.

## PERO ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS AND MEANS OF EVALUATING IMPACT

Candidates selecting PERO are expected to generate scholarly and/or creative products (e.g., peer reviewed journal articles, books, and/or grants) considered traditional in their discipline with traditional means of evaluation (e.g., publication outlet, type of grant, and/or h-index). However, they will also generate products whose impact may not adequately be captured by traditional means of evaluation. Thus, it may be necessary to define or specify alternative products and means of evaluating impact. The alternative products and means of evaluating impact must be connected to the goal(s) of the candidate’s research program and be identified in ***collaboration*** with the EO.

Given that the means for evaluating publicly engaged research are likely to evolve over time, addendums may be added to this MOU to reflect modifications to the alternative products and means of evaluation (see table below) up to a year before the candidate’s submission of their materials for promotion. Addendums should include a compelling rationale for the modifications, with attention to continuing to meet the research program goals. The initial MOU and all amendments will be included in the candidate’s dossier.

The specification of alternative products and means of evaluation is meant to serve as a guide, rather than a contract, for the candidate and internal reviewers. Thus, the candidate does not need to produce all the products specified in the *Alternative Products and Means of Evaluation* table and may produce some products not specified in the table. ***Regardless, it is essential that the candidate make the case for the significance and impact of their work in their promotion and tenure materials (e.g., via their research statement).***

**Instructions for candidate**: Specify the following in the table below using the word limitations indicated in the table:

1. ***Product***. Detail the entities and/or documents that will be created as a result of your research.
2. ***Means of evaluation***. Indicate how the societal value and/or impact of the product will be evaluated and/or measured. Articulate what evidence will indicate value and/or impact. When evidence is quantitative and/or numerical, give a range rather than a single target.
3. ***Rationale for product and means of evaluation***. Provide an explanation for why the product and means of evaluation demonstrate societal value and/or impact.
4. ***Rationale and goal statement***. Briefly explain how the product and means of evaluation contribute to the goal of your research program, particularly in terms of the public good; give attention to how the product is engaging the public in its creation and/or use. The rationale should be short and can refer to the research statement.

**ALTERNATIVE** **PRODUCTS AND MEANS OF EVALUATION**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PRODUCT**  (25-word limit per cell) | **MEANS OF EVALUATION**  (75-word limit per cell) | **RATIONALE FOR PRODUCT AND MEANS OF EVALUATION**  (75-word limit per cell) | **RATIONALE AND GOAL STATEMENT**  (75-word limit per cell) |
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## PERO ADVISORY COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

A draft version of the MOU, signed by both the candidate and their EO, must be shared with the PERO Advisory Committee. T*he feedback report from the PERO Advisory Committee must be attached* *as a pdf attachment to this MOU. Label the file with your first initial, last name, and “CF”—for example, LSmithCF.pdf.* In the space below, the candidate must provide a detailed response describing how the feedback from the PERO Advisory Committee was incorporated into the final MOU and/or why some feedback was not incorporated if that was the case. If feedback from the PERO Advisory Committee is not incorporated in the final MOU, give a detailed and compelling justification.

# All MOU addendums must be shared with the PERO Advisory Committee to determine if further review is necessary. If further review is necessary and the committee provides feedback, the instructions for responding to feedback outlined above should be followed with the response to the feedback provided for the addendum.

# Acknowledgement of Agreement

By signing this MOU, the candidate, the EO, and the Dean’s office acknowledge that the candidate has selected PERO; all three parties understand and will follow the guidelines for PERO as outlined here (see also [Provost Communication 9](https://uofi.app.box.com/s/9d7miwmgcvyk4v4xpjgfgdua83jauhhs/file/936591220113) and the[***PERO Guide***](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/pero-guide/)in the attachments to [**Provost Communication 9**](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/)). It is the EO’s and Dean’s shared responsibility to inform the promotion and tenure committees at every level that the candidate is taking PERO and ensure the unit and college committees follow the guidelines outlined in [Provost Communication 9](https://uofi.app.box.com/s/9d7miwmgcvyk4v4xpjgfgdua83jauhhs/file/936591220113) and the [***PERO Guide***](https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/pero-guide/)in the attachments to [Provost Communication 9](https://uofi.app.box.com/s/9d7miwmgcvyk4v4xpjgfgdua83jauhhs/file/936591220113) in regard to letter writers and alternative means of evaluation. All parties should have access to and retain a copy of the signed MOU, along with all addendums. Submit the final signed MOU to [**facultyaffairs@illinois.edu**](mailto:facultyaffairs@illinois.edu). ***Note.***Draft MOUs submitted to the Advisory Committee must be signed by the candidate and EO, but not the Dean’s office.

***Signatures on this MOU document indicate that each party agrees that the listed external evaluators, products, and means of evaluation are appropriate.******Signatures do not indicate an endorsement for promotion and tenure. They also do not indicate that if the candidate produces the products and meets the evaluative criteria specified in the table in Section E, they are guaranteed promotion and tenure.***

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## Faculty Candidate’s Name and Signature

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## Unit Executive Officer’s Name and Signature

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## Dean’s Name and Signature