

Proposed revisions to the 2017 Faculty Handbook

Contents

2.1.2 Tenure-Track Appointment	2
2.7.3 Procedures for Promotion and Tenure	3
2.7.4 Tenure-Track Contract Extension.....	11

Changes for 3-9-18

Slight re-write in first sentence of 2.1.2, p. 2:

This is an instructional faculty appointment for a fixed term which allows [faculty](#) ~~for~~ the opportunity to meet the requirements for tenure.

Delete on p. 3: the word “confidential” in the 3rd line from the bottom.

Significant re-write in 2.7.3, p. 4 and p. 10:

Candidates who withdraw from the review process in a mandatory decision year for tenure will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next academic year with workload expectations [determined by the unit’s workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty](#) ~~essentially unchanged from the previous renewal contract.~~

In the event tenure is not granted in a faculty member's final year on the tenure-track, the faculty member will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next [academic](#) year with workload expectations ~~essentially unchanged from the previous renewal contract~~ [determined by the unit’s workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty.](#)

Significant re-write p. 5:

[Committees may provide in their bylaws or standing rules for faculty to attend meetings using an electronic connection.](#) ~~Tenured faculty who cannot attend the meeting in person may participate using an electronic connection.~~

A faculty member may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom he or she has, or has had, a family or close personal relationship [or other conflict of interest \(see Section 2.3.1.1\).](#)

Slight re-write p. 6:

The second level of review is carried out by a committee of tenured faculty, none of whom hold [an](#) administrative appointments ~~s~~ at or above the level of [an Assistant](#) Dean.

2.1.2 Tenure-Track Appointment

This is an instructional faculty appointment for a fixed term in which ~~service is applied to consideration~~ allows faculty the opportunity to meet the requirements for tenure. These appointments are issued for terms of up to three years. The University can, but is not required to, renew such appointments for additional terms up to a total of six years of service ~~(, not counting any time period off-extension of the tenure-clock-track contract~~ (see Section 2.7.4). Faculty on tenure-track appointments may hold the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor.

Faculty in their sixth year ~~of on the~~ tenure-track ~~service~~ at George Mason University stand for tenure at that time if they wish to retain their position beyond the seventh year ~~(see Section 2.7.2 for policy on notification to faculty terminated for failure to receive tenure)~~. Earlier consideration for a tenured appointment is possible under certain conditions. For example, experienced faculty hired on tenure-track appointments from other institutions will not normally be expected to serve a six-year tenure-track period, although there is no requirement that they stand for tenure prior to their sixth year of tenure-track service at George Mason University. Exceptionally, ~~other~~ faculty may be suggested apply for early consideration based on unusually strong performance. ~~Unsuccessful tenure evaluations for faculty prior to their sixth year of tenure-track service do not reduce the six-year tenure-track period.~~

[Note: Insertion of newly renumbered section on Tenure Contract Extension.]

[Rationale: The deleted "see Section 2.7.2", above, is concerned with renewal and non-renewal, not "failure to receive tenure".]

[Note: The last sentence is moved to Sec. 2.7.3.]

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Faculty in their sixth year on the tenure-track at George Mason University stand for tenure at that time if they wish to retain their position beyond the seventh year. Earlier consideration for a tenured appointment is possible under certain conditions. For example, experienced faculty hired on tenure-track appointments from other institutions will not normally be expected to serve a six-year tenure-track period, although there is no requirement that they stand for tenure prior to their sixth year of tenure-track service at George Mason University. Exceptionally, faculty may apply for early consideration based on unusually strong performance.

2.7.3 Procedures for Promotion and Tenure

The process for promotion and tenure is initiated by the local academic unit ~~Candidacy for tenure or promotion is normally initiated by the local unit administrator,~~ with the faculty member's concurrence. Self-nomination is also permitted.

A decision on tenure may be made in any year that the candidate is appointed to the tenure-track unless a specific time is required by the appointment contract. A candidate must be considered no later than the final year of appointment to the tenure-track. An unsuccessful tenure evaluation decision for faculty prior to their sixth final year of on the tenure-track service does not reduce the six-year tenure-track period.

[Note: The last sentence is moved from Sec. 2.1.2 and revised.]

The Provost establishes the annual schedule for promotion and tenure review. Dossiers are to be prepared in accordance with the format provided by the Provost and the Dean. ~~Except for external references,~~ The candidate is responsible for assembling the contents of the dossier. The local unit administrator is responsible for ensuring that items the University is required to provide for the candidate's dossier are completed in a timely manner ~~inserting the confidential external reference letters in the assembled dossier.~~ Each formal internal evaluation letter is included in the dossier before sending it to the next level of review.

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At any time in the promotion/tenure review process before a decision is made by the Provost, a faculty member may withdraw from candidacy by so stating in writing to the Dean and the Provost. After withdrawal from candidacy, there is no further review of the dossier. Candidates who withdraw from the review process in a mandatory decision year for tenure will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next academic year with workload expectations ~~essentially unchanged from the previous renewal contract~~ determined by the unit's workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty.

[Note: ~~The language on the new contract workload is taken from the end of Section 2.7, with the insertion of "academic" before "year".~~]

If a faculty member is (or is to be) appointed to primary affiliation in more than one local academic unit, a recommendation for promotion and/or tenure may be initiated by any of the units. A separate evaluation leading to a recommendation and decision will be made by each unit. An action by one local academic unit does not obligate another local academic unit to act similarly. It is required, however, that in each evaluation process the promotion and tenure committee must solicit and consider evaluations from the other units. All evaluations become part of the candidate's dossier.

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In all cases of promotion and/or tenure, there are two levels of faculty review. At both levels, evaluations are carried out only by tenured faculty in accordance with Sections 2.4 and 2.5. In addition to considering the candidate's dossier prepared by the candidate, faculty committees on promotion and tenure examine, and include in the dossier, all relevant written evidence and testimony offered to them by members of the academic community and others with direct knowledge of the candidate's professional qualifications and achievements. Committees may provide in their bylaws or standing rules for faculty to attend meetings using an electronic connection. For all voting pertaining to promotion and tenure, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot.

[Note: Ballots submitted by email may be subject to FOIA requests by the candidate.]

A faculty member may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom he or she has, or has had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see Section 2.3.1.1).

The purpose of the first-level review is for the candidate to be evaluated by colleagues who are in the best position to have observed the candidate's performance in teaching and service and who are best able to professionally evaluate the candidate's research/scholarship and publication record. Accordingly, t
The first-level review is undertaken by faculty in the candidate's local academic unit, which must have published bylaws or standing rules that govern renewal, promotion, and tenure procedures (Section 1.3.3).

In departmentalized colleges/schools (see Section 1.3.5), the first level of review is departmental.

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In departmentalized colleges/schools (see Section 1.3.5), the first level of review is departmental.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are subdivided into programs or other divisions, the first level of review is carried out by faculty appointed to program(s) or division(s) to which the candidate belongs. Tenured faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on a candidate's first-level review committee if there is an insufficient number of qualified tenured faculty in the candidate's affiliated program(s)/division(s). Program or division faculties cannot exist solely to make personnel evaluations.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are not further subdivided, the first-level review is carried out by [all eligible tenured faculty](#) in the candidate's college/school. [Tenured faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on a candidate's first-level review committee if there is an insufficient number of eligible or qualified tenured faculty in the college/school.](#)

[The purpose of the second-level review committee is to evaluate all the candidates for promotion and/or tenure in the school/college and to make a recommendation to the Dean. ~~In all cases,~~ the second level of review is carried out by a ~~peer-elected~~ committee of tenured faculty, none of whom hold administrative appointments at or above the level of a Dean. The committee members are elected by ~~of~~ the college/school in accordance with its bylaws or standing rules \(Section 1.3.3\). The second-level review committee can include members from outside the college/school who are elected in the same manner as other members of the second-level review committee.](#)

[Note: This requirement reinforces that only tenured faculty, not administrators, may participate in P&T proceedings.]

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~~In no case may a faculty member vote more than once on any candidate.~~

[Note: this sentence is deleted and the eligibility to vote at the two levels is addressed below.]

At no time shall a faculty member evaluate a candidate at both the first and second levels of review. Faculty eligible for the first level review cannot withhold their participation at the first level to participate in the second level review.

The School of Law is exempt from the provisions specified in the above paragraphs, but it is not exempt from the requirement for two-level peer review.

The procedure for considering promotion and tenure cases is as follows:

1a. Departmental review is initiated by the local first-level promotion and tenure committee, which may be a committee of the whole. The committee communicates the results of its review to the tenured members of the department who then vote. Normally, Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to the rank of Professor. Other voting combinations may be specified in the bylaws or standing rules. ~~Only full professors vote in cases involving promotion to the rank of professor.~~ The department chair does not vote with the tenured faculty. The committee transmits the departmental recommendation and accompanying justification, including the division of the vote, to the department chair. The department chair transmits to the second-level review committee: (1) the candidate's dossier and related materials; (2) the recommendation of the departmental committee with appropriate justifications; and (3) his/her own

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recommendation and justification, if the chair is tenured. If the chair is not tenured, the chair submits a summary of the promotion/tenure proceedings. Notification of the recommendation of the local academic unit and copies of the accompanying justifications are sent promptly to the candidate and to the faculty who participated in the deliberations before the dossier is sent to the second-level committee.

*[Notes: a) Schools/colleges/LAU's decide which faculty ranks may vote in P&T decisions.
b) This addresses the situation for a non-tenured chair in the tenure and promotion process.]*

The candidate is evaluated ~~in like manner~~ by the second-level review committee, which must have published procedures that govern its deliberations. The procedures must include a method for communication between the committee, the candidate, the department chair, and the first-level review committee. Normally, Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion to the rank of Professor. Other voting combinations may be specified in the college/school bylaws or standing rules.

~~Professors vote in cases involving promotion to the rank of Professor, although a vote may also be taken of all committee members.~~ The committee forwards its recommendation along with all preceding reports and recommendations to the Dean. Notification of the recommendation of the second-level review committee is sent to the faculty who participated in the deliberations at the first level of review. Copies of the statement of justification are sent promptly to the candidate and the department chair.

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The committee forwards its recommendation along with all preceding reports and recommendations to the Dean. Notification of the recommendation of the second-level review committee is sent to the faculty who participated in the deliberations at the first level of review. Copies of the statement of justification are sent promptly to the candidate and the department chair.

If the second-level review committee's recommendation differs from that of the first-level review committee, the second-level review committee's recommendation and accompanying justification are sent to the first-level review committee.

1b. The process is analogous in non-departmentalized units, except that the role assigned to department chairs is omitted.

2. All materials are reviewed by the Dean of the candidate's college/school. The dossier and the recommendation of the Dean ~~is~~ are forwarded to the Provost. Notification of the recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review and a copy of the accompanying justification is promptly sent to the candidate and the local unit administrator (the latter copy to be retained in the candidate's permanent file).

[Note insertion of "promptly" in the paragraphs above and below. Timely notification is still a problem.]

If the Dean's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in the recommendation, which is sent to the candidate, to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process, and to the Provost.

3. ~~All relevant materials are~~ The complete dossier is reviewed by the Provost. The Provost may consult with other academic administrators who have direct knowledge of one or more aspects of the candidate's professional performance. The Provost makes a recommendation as to whether promotion or tenure should be granted. Notification of the Provost's recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review, and a copy of the accompanying

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2. All materials are reviewed by the Dean of the candidate's college/school. The dossier and the recommendation of the Dean are forwarded to the Provost. Notification of the recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review and a copy of the accompanying justification is promptly sent to the candidate and the local unit administrator (the latter copy to be retained in the candidate's permanent file).

If the Dean's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in the recommendation, which is sent to the candidate, to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process, and to the Provost.

3. The complete dossier is reviewed by the Provost. The Provost may consult with other academic administrators who have direct knowledge of one or more aspects of the candidate's professional performance. The Provost makes a recommendation as to whether promotion or tenure should be granted. Notification of the Provost's recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review, and a copy of the accompanying

There are no further changes to Section 2.7.3 on this page

justification is sent to the Dean, the candidate and the local unit administrator. The justification shall be retained in the candidate's personnel file.

If the Provost's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in writing and sent to the candidate and to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process.

4. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion be granted, the candidate's dossier, with all previously generated recommendations, is forwarded to the President. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the President.

5. The President makes a recommendation as to whether tenure or promotion should be granted. If the President recommends tenure or promotion be granted, such recommendation is forwarded to the Board of Visitors. If the President recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the Board of Visitors.

6. Tenure, and promotion to the rank of associate professor or professor, can only be conferred by the Board of Visitors. If the Board of Visitors decides to grant promotion or tenure, the candidate will be notified in writing by the Secretary of the Board of Visitors.

7. If either the Provost or the President recommends that tenure or promotion not be granted, the candidate will be notified of the decision on or before May 1. Upon receiving notice of the Provost's or President's decision, the candidate may:

- a. accept the decision; or
- b. appeal the decision according to the procedure described in Section 2.8.

In the event tenure is not granted in a faculty member's final year on the tenure-track, the faculty member will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next year with workload expectations determined by the unit's workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty~~essentially unchanged from the previous renewal contract.~~

8. Tenure and promotion are never granted by default.

[Notes: The following text is the proposed revised policy to appear in the Faculty Handbook. The 2017 language begins on p. 12. The original several sections of the 2017 FH will be combined and reorganized under a new Section 2.7.4.

There is no definition for “tenure clock” in the Faculty Handbook. Rather, the extension is to the faculty member’s contract while on the tenure-track.]

2.7.4 Tenure-Track Contract Extension

Extension of a tenure-track contract is granted when circumstances arise that may interfere substantially with a faculty member's ability to pursue his or her professional responsibilities (teaching, research/scholarship, service) while on the tenure track. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member who has received an extension or extensions will be considered using the same tenure criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school.

Length and Frequency

Tenure-track contract extensions are granted in one-year increments. Two extensions are normally the maximum that will be granted for any combination of circumstances. The Provost may approve exceptions to this limit. However, in no case will a candidate receive more than three extensions. Tenure-track study leaves are independent of these extensions, but should generally not immediately follow a tenure-track contract extension.

[Note: Three years of extensions is 50% of the normal tenure-track period.]

Procedure for Request and Approval

The faculty member’s request, in writing, to his or her local academic unit head must clearly state the circumstances that justify an extension of the tenure-track contract. The recommendation of the local academic unit head is forwarded to the Dean, if applicable, who forwards his or her recommendation to the Provost for final approval.

Medically-related extensions will correspond with the Department of Labor Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), University Policy 2215 (Family Medical Leave), University Policy 2230 (Parental Leave for Instructional 9-month Faculty), University Policy 2232 (Sick Leave Policy for Faculty under the Traditional Sick Leave Plan), and/or the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP).

Circumstances

1. The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child

A faculty member who becomes a parent should request the tenure-track contract extension within one year of the child's arrival in the family and prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. Multiple births or multiple adoptions at the same time result in the same one-year extension as single births or adoptions.

2. Serious health condition

A tenure-track contract extension may be requested based on a serious personal health condition or a serious health condition of a member of the faculty member's immediate family. A serious personal health condition or serious health condition within the immediate family will be defined according to the FMLA criteria for family and medical leave. Human Resources must receive written certification by the primary treating physician. The request for extension must be made within three months of Human Resources & Payroll's certification of family and medical leave.

3. Military Service

In accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), a tenure-track faculty member who is also a member of the U.S. military and is called to active duty will be granted a tenure-track contract extension. The extension will last for the duration of the active duty assignment, rounded to the nearest year, but will not exceed the extension period provided by USERRA. For example, an active duty assignment lasting between 4 through 15 months will earn a one-year extension, 16 through 27 months will earn a two-year extension. The faculty member should make the request as early as possible before entering active duty and prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

4. Other Extraordinary Circumstances

Tenure-track faculty members who engage in important public or University service may request a tenure-track contract extension. The request should be made prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. If there are circumstances beyond the faculty member's control that prevent him or her from fulfilling the professional responsibilities required for tenure consideration, the faculty member may request a tenure-track contract extension. The request should be made prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

[Note: Examples of circumstances beyond the faculty's control are lack of assignment of lab space or lack of disbursement of start-up funds.]

2017 Faculty Handbook

2.7.3.1 Tenure Clock Extension for New Parents

A tenure-track faculty member who becomes the parent of a child by birth or by adoption will be entitled to a one-year automatic tenure clock extension. This extension will be granted automatically upon the faculty member's notifying in writing the chair of the department or the Dean of the college/school in which the faculty member serves. The faculty member should make the request within one year of the child's arrival in the family and prior to September 1 of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

A faculty member is limited to one automatic extension of term during the time she or he is serving in tenure-track status, although a second extension of term may be requested for a new birth or adoption. A faculty member who declines to request an extension remains eligible for later extensions up to the two-year maximum. Multiple births or multiple adoptions at the same time result in the same one-year extension right as single births or adoptions. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member who has received an extension or extensions will be considered using the same tenure criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school. Extensions due to parenthood are independent of study leaves.

2.7.3.2 Tenure Clock Extension for Serious Illness

Extension of the tenure clock for a tenure-track faculty member will be approved for circumstances that have a significant impact on the faculty member's productivity, such as serious personal illness or a major illness of a member of the faculty member's immediate family, under the following conditions and definitions. Serious personal illness or illness within the immediate family will be defined according to the Department of Labor's criteria for family and medical leave, already used by the university. Certification of illness by a physician is required and will be handled by Human Resources. Once certification of the illness has been approved by Human Resources, the faculty member can extend the tenure clock by notifying, in writing, the chair of the department or the Dean of the college/school in which the faculty member serves. The request must be made within three months of certification of sick or family leave by Human Resources. Tenure clock extensions will be granted in one-year increments, with the maximum extension being a cumulative total of two years. An extension beyond one year will require discussion with the appropriate department chair and Dean. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member will be considered using the same criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school. Extensions due to serious illness are independent of study leaves.

2.7.3.3 Tenure Clock Extension for Military Service

A tenure-track faculty member who is also a member of the U.S. military and is called to active duty will be entitled to an automatic extension of the term in which she or he is currently employed in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The extension will last for the duration of the active duty assignment, rounded to the nearest year, but will not exceed the extension period provided by USERRA. Therefore, for example, an active duty assignment lasting between 4 through 15 months will earn a one-year extension, 16 through 27 months will earn a two-year extension. This extension will be granted

automatically upon the faculty member's notifying in writing the chair of the department or the Dean of the college/school in which the faculty member serves. The faculty member should make the request as far as possible prior to entering active duty and prior to September 1 of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member will be considered using the same criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school. Extensions due to military service are independent of study leaves.

2.7.3.4 Tenure Clock Extension for Administrative/Professional Faculty

Tenure-track faculty members who are appointed to an administrative/professional faculty position may continue on their tenure-track appointment while serving in that capacity. The tenure-track faculty member may request that the tenure clock be stopped during the term of the administrative appointment. Such request must be made to the Office of the Provost.