



**MEMORANDUM**

Date: April 17, 2020

To: Georgia Tech Faculty

From: Rafael L. Bras, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Subject: Adjustments to Faculty Tenure and Similar Events Due to the Impact of COVID-19

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Dear Colleagues:

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic required faculty to rapidly adjust their teaching methods to conduct instruction in a distance format; to figure out alternative locations, arrangements, and resources for continuing research; to increase their service load by mentoring and advising others during this period; and/or to meet challenges posed by the sudden shift in working arrangements in the context of family and community responsibilities.

In order to mitigate the impact of the disruption to normal faculty workload due to COVID-19, we are adjusting the timelines of some faculty member reviews as described below. These actions are the result of recommendations made by a working group that includes the vice provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development, the associate deans for Faculty Development, and the Office of Faculty Affairs, with input from the ADVANCE Professors and review by the Faculty Executive Board.

**Tenure and Critical Review Decisions:** After consultation with chairs, deans, and the provost, the president will add a one-year automatic extension to the probationary period for each individual untenured tenure-track faculty member hired between Oct. 16, 2014, and Oct. 15, 2019 (that is, faculty currently serving their first through fifth year of service). Additionally, tenure-track faculty members who were hired between Oct. 16, 2013, and Oct. 15, 2014, who have already been awarded one extension will automatically be granted an additional one-year extension.

Faculty members may individually then choose to use or not use that extension, meaning that this does not change the first year that they can go up for tenure, but it does change the last year that they must go up. Tenure policies and procedures will be applied to individuals who receive this extension in a manner consistent with extensions granted for other reasons. Several special cases are clarified below.

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#### Clarification on Special Cases:

- Faculty members hired between Oct. 16, 2019, and Oct. 15, 2020, do not receive the extension because AY2019-2020 does not count toward their probationary period.
- Faculty members who have not yet gone through the Third Year Critical Review would have a choice of going up in their third year (if they chose not to use the tenure extension) or the following year (if they do use the tenure extension). Their choice to use or not use the extension when they go up for tenure is independent of the choice that they made for Critical Review.
  - Under normal conditions, faculty members who receive a decision of “Reappointment with Warning” during the AY2019-2020 review cycle would need to go through a Critical Review the following year. The automatic extension means that these faculty members may delay that review until the AY2021-2022 review cycle.
- Faculty members who go up early for tenure (in their fifth year or less in service) do not forfeit their extension and may use it after an unsuccessful bid for tenure. This includes faculty members who went up early for tenure in AY2019-2020.
- Faculty members who were denied tenure and are on a terminal year contract for AY2019-2020 or AY2020-2021 do not receive an extension.
- Faculty members who receive an approved extension for circumstances other than COVID-19 during AY2019-2020 will not receive a second extension for this period.

Policy: <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/faculty-handbook/3.3.5-tenure>

**Lecturers Third Year Critical Review:** Add an automatic one-year extension to the period for all lecturers hired prior to Oct. 16, 2019, who have not gone through their Third-Year Critical Review. Lecturers would have a choice of going up for their third-year review in their third year (if they chose not to use the review time extension) or the following year (if they do use the review extension). The lecturer third-year review process is determined and coordinated by the schools or appropriate home unit, which will work with lecturers to determine individual preferences for using the extension or not. If a lecturer does or does not accept the extension, the school or appropriate home unit will notify Faculty Affairs when submitting the review documentation to Faculty Affairs so that it is noted in their file.

Policy: <http://policylibrary.gatech.edu/faculty-handbook/3.2.2-non-tenure-track-academic-faculty-members-hiring-and-promotion-guidelines>

**Librarians/Archivists:** Following a discussion with Library leadership, it was determined that no automatic extension to the timeline for current faculty members in the librarian I or archivist I roles or for the third-year cumulative review for faculty members in all ranks was needed. However, if a faculty member (in any rank) determines that he/she needs an extension due to COVID-19 circumstances, the faculty member would make a request in writing to his/her supervisor no later than May 2021. Each request would be considered on a case-by-case basis and requires approval by the supervisor, dean, and Faculty Affairs in GT-TRACS as an “Other” package.

Policy: <http://policylibrary.gatech.edu/faculty-handbook/3.2.2-non-tenure-track-academic-faculty-members-hiring-and-promotion-guidelines>

**Promotion:** There are no automatic changes to the timelines for any faculty promotion process since there is no designated last time that a faculty member must go up for promotion, with the

exception of librarian I and archivist I. This decision applies to all tenure-track faculty, librarians, and archivists other than the first rank, academic professionals, lecturers, and research faculty. For all promotion and review cases, faculty may choose to include a brief statement in their narrative on how COVID-19 impacted their research, teaching, and service. There may be changes to the external letter requests as well, asking for reviewers to consider the impact.

**Periodic Peer Review (PPR):** Since this is a peer-review process, adjustments to the standard review process and timelines should be done with oversight by faculty governance. The standard process does allow for exceptions to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Policy: <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/faculty-handbook/3.3.9-periodic-peer-review-policy>

**In summary:** We have tried to consider all types of faculty and their individual situations. However, we recognize that there may be faculty and circumstances that these guidelines do not address. Other extensions or requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and should be approved and documented in GT-TRACs, as appropriate. We urge any faculty member to discuss their situation with their school chair and/or supervisor.

Rafael L. Bras, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs