**University of Texas at Arlington**

**Policy Statement on Tenure Clock due to Covid-19**

**Original Posting: April 27, 2020; Update 12/10/2020**

Background

UT System Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations 31007, Sec. 5.1(b)(4) delegates the authority to the provost (chief academic officer) to make the decision to grant a one-year extension of the tenure clock. RR 31007 addresses extension requests that are due to a faculty member's personal circumstances. In those cases, RR 31007 allows for two one-year extensions.

One-Year Additional Extension for FY2019-2020

In the face of extraordinary circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic where actions of the university curtail the research, teaching, and service of faculty, to alleviate the stress that pre-tenure faculty may experience, the UT System authorizes a one-year extension of the tenure clock at all eight academic institutions. This has been done and tenure track faculty starting fall 2019 or previously have had a year added one to their tenure clock to use or not as they see fit.

Options

Each institution may choose one of the following two ways of implementing this policy. An institution may choose an opt-in approach, whereby a faculty member must request the authorized one-year extension. Alternatively, the institution may choose an opt-out policy, whereby an additional year will be added to the tenure clock for all current tenure-track faculty. In the case of the opt-out policy, pre-tenure faculty who believe they are sufficiently advanced in their careers may opt out of the additional one-year extension and maintain their original tenure review schedule. This decision is strictly at the discretion of the faculty member.

**Policy Adopted by UT Arlington (published 4/27/20)**

UT Arlington with endorsement from the council of deans and faculty senate choose to add an additional year to the tenure clock for all current tenure-track faculty (9/1/2019 or earlier start date) with each faculty member having the choice to **opt-out** of the additional one-year extension and maintain their original tenure review schedule.

UT System is currently holding discussions on whether to extend these options to faculty starting fall 2020. I know that uncertainty is stressful. While we wait, please note that whether UT System decides or not to include faculty starting fall 2020 in the tenure and promotion extensions or not, tenure track faculty can and always were able to request a one-year extension with justification. Please see in our Handbook of Operating Policies,Policy AA-FPT-PO1 Promotion and Tenure, Sec. II, B, 6. The paragraph reads:

*Faculty members who determine that personal circumstances may impede their progress toward earning tenure may make a written request to their chair, or in the case of the schools, to their dean, for an extension, specifying the reason(s) for the requested extension. Personal circumstances that may justify the extension include, but are not limited to, birth of a child, disability or illness of the faculty member, and status of the faculty member as a principal caregiver of a preschool child or a disabled, elderly, or ill person in the faculty member's family or household. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to provide appropriate documentation demonstrating why the request should be granted.*

<https://secure.compliancebridge.com/utaprod/utaportal/index.php?fuseaction=app.main>

**For third year reviews**, you may request a delay of one year if you need it. If you do not, then we would rather you keep to your schedule. This is not an automatic extension; if you need an extension, faculty need to submit a written request to their chair, or in the case of the schools, to their dean, for an extension, specifying the reason(s) for the requested extension. The chair will approve or not and send it to the dean and then the provost for their approval.

**Workload:** For faculty annual evaluations, workload apportionments can be modified to reflect the actual work that can be done in these unusual circumstances. Please discuss any need for workload modification in workload with your department chair or program director.

**SFS:** Let me remind you as well that for spring 2020 evaluations, we added a exclude from reports button on the course page. I do not recommend excluding the Student Feedback Surveys. I do recommend discussing the difficulties and things learned, sessions attended, strategies that worked or not in the teaching statement. We are not just teachers but lifelong learners as well. We should not hide our challenges but share how we dealt with them, learned what to do and not to do from them, what we will do moving forward. But just know that if you really need/want to do so, you can exclude them.

**FDLs:** Faculty with scheduled developmental leaves for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters have been allowed to request a postponement of their leave so that research projects can be conducted later if needed.

**Research:** For Information on Research and the impact it may have on your work, please go to and look under the heading Research. <https://resources.uta.edu/coronavirus/index.php>

**Start Up Funds:** If you are getting to the end of your two year time limit on your start up funds, you can request an extension from your chair and your dean. They will approve the extension (or not) and, if the funds are the portion funded by the provost, they will forward the request to our office. In your request, make sure you explain why you need the extension and your plans to spend it in the future.

If you decide you need the extension, submit your request about mid to late spring of the year they will “expire.” So if the end of your second year is August 2021, submit your request in April or May of 2021. We all should have a better idea of what the near future will look like. If you submit too early, they will just tell you to come back later.

**General Advice for moving forward**: In general, we need to recognize that the impact of the pandemic is differential and affects some of us more than others, some areas more than others. Keeping track of the teaching and research impediments now, if this is applicable to you, will help you write your annual review area statements for the AY 2020-21 review, which we will do next year, as well as T and P statements later.

Some areas for which you may want to note the challenges are how the pandemic and the restrictions affected the scope of your work.

**Teaching:** Note how moving your course online and learning new technologies worked out, how much more time needed to be dedicated to learning new skills. Note the pedagogical workshops attended, etc. Note specific technological challenges such as access to high-speed broadband or wifi, software, cameras, etc. Note any issue with courses, additional load, additional students, increased class size, etc. How much of your time was spent generously helping colleagues figure out their technology? Note time spent planning new modalities, additional work to re-open or launch virtual laboratories, coordinate research teams, developing safe lab protocols, attending pedagogy and technology workshops, Canvas and Teams workshops, etc.

**Research:** Identify how research, scholarship, and creative activities were disrupted. Any loss of access to funds, research time lost to increased teaching responsibilities, access to research facilities, labs, computing resources, archives, libraries, studios, or performance venues. You might have lost access to research subjects, specimens, animals or other necessary things to advance your work.  Impediments to travel and to carry out field research, cancellation of seminars, conferences, ateliers should be noted, etc.

These are some of the areas for which you might consider documenting now while we are experiencing them and how they affect your work for your information later. You might like to read this article “In the wake of Covid-19, academia needs new solutions to ensure gender equity,” Malisch et als. : <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/27/15378>

Hang in there, be kind to yourself and those around you, and, above all, stay safe!

Toni