

Chapter 6: Tenure

6.A General Principles

The University of Michigan believes that tenure is an essential part of the guarantee of academic freedom that is necessary for University-based intellectual life to flourish. The grant of indeterminate tenure to faculty members represents an enormous investment of University, and societal, resources, and those who receive this investment do so only after rigorous review which establishes that their scholarship, research, teaching, and service meet the highest standards and are congruent with the needs of the University.

Tenure is awarded only to faculty with appointments in the instructional track. Faculty on the clinical and research tracks are not eligible for tenure. Faculty members must hold their tenured positions in full recognition of the responsibilities they owe the University, as well as the responsibilities the University owes them.

Tenure for the instructional faculty at the University is defined and governed by [bylaws 5.08 and 5.09](#). On the Ann Arbor campus, the administrative supervision of these bylaws rests in the Office of the Provost. At the UM-Flint and UM- Dearborn campuses, the chancellors oversee the tenure process on their respective campuses. However, procedures for review for tenure are among the most unit-specific of all the procedures affecting faculty members. Those who come to the University without tenure must recognize that the tenure procedures of their department, school or college, or other unit are the crucial starting point in this process. Accordingly, faculty should familiarize themselves with those procedures and obtain a copy of their unit's written tenure guidelines from the dean. Some general principles and procedures, set forth below, do apply. ([SPG 201.13](#)) See also handbook section [5.B "Criteria for Appointment and Promotion of Instructional Faculty."](#)

Excellence: Faculty members are awarded tenure because they have distinguished themselves as scholars and teachers and show evidence that they will continue contributing at a very high level to scholarship, research, teaching, and service at the University of Michigan.

The Privilege and Responsibilities of Tenure: Faculty members who come to the University without tenure are not automatically entitled to tenure or to a review for tenure. Those who are offered tenured positions at the University, however, are entitled to its protections immediately upon arrival and must also assume the responsibilities of tenure. These responsibilities include the obligation to maintain high standards of teaching, scholarship, research, service, and professional conduct and to perform their responsibilities in accordance with University and other applicable policies and procedures.

The Protection of Tenure: The University safeguards academic freedom through its policy that no person who has been awarded tenure by the Regents or who has been employed by the University for a total of ten years at the rank of a full-time instructor or higher may, thereafter, be dismissed, demoted or recommended for terminal appointment without adequate cause and an opportunity for a review in accordance with bylaw 5.09, except pursuant to the Program Discontinuance Guidelines. See section [5.J "Status of Academic Appointments When Academic Programs are Discontinued,"](#) and [SPG 601.02](#).

Authority: Tenure is awarded only by the Board of Regents upon recommendation by the appropriate dean (and executive committee when applicable), by the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs (Ann Arbor campus only), by the chancellor (UM-Dearborn and UM-Flint campuses

only), and by the president. A decision to award tenure is not official unless and until it has been approved by the Board of Regents ([bylaw 5.08](#)). The authority for periodic reviews and tenure reviews resides with the individual schools, colleges, and departments.

6.B Criteria for Tenure

After the appropriate probationary period (see handbook section [6.C "Tenure Probationary Period"](#)), tenure may be granted to those instructional faculty members whose professional accomplishments indicate that they will continue to serve with distinction in their appointed roles. Tenure is awarded to those who demonstrate excellent teaching, outstanding research and scholarship, and substantial additional service, each of which must be relevant to the goals and needs of the University, college and department. The award of tenure is based on the achievement of distinction in an area of learning and the prediction of continued eminence throughout the individual's professional career.

6.C Tenure Probationary Period ("Tenure Clock")

The maximum probationary period of non-tenured instructional faculty consists of service with the University for a total of ten years in the rank of "full-time" instructor or higher ([bylaw 5.09](#) and [SPG 201.13](#)). (See "Appointment Fraction," below, for the definition of full-time). This ten-year period constitutes what is commonly referred to as the University's "tenure clock." In practice, however, most schools and colleges review untenured faculty members for tenure in the sixth or seventh year of the probationary period. This period of time constitutes the school or college's "tenure clock," which may not exceed the University's tenure clock.

Those who are not recommended for tenure are normally offered a one- year terminal appointment for the year following the review, which the faculty member must serve within the University's ten-year tenure clock.

As explained below, up to two years may be excluded from the countable years of service that constitute the relevant tenure probationary period in the case of childbearing or dependent care. See also handbook section [16.C.4 "Family and Medical Leave Act."](#) Tenure may be conferred after a shorter period than specified above, depending on the policies of the individual schools and colleges. It is possible for faculty to be hired with tenure depending on the credentials of the individual.

In determining how many years of service count toward the probationary period the following rules apply:

Title and Rank. The appointment must be a tenure-track, regular faculty appointment at the rank of instructor or higher. See handbook [Chapter 5 "Appointments,"](#) and [SPG 201.34-1](#). Periods of service in lecturer appointments or adjunct, clinical or visiting appointments do not count toward the tenure probationary period.

Appointment Fraction. The instructional-track appointment must be "full-time" within the University, which means an academic year or academic term appointment fraction of 80% or more. The appointment may be split between two or more instructional- track appointments as long as the total effort is at least 80%. ([SPG 201.13](#)).

Service. Each year of the appointment must be spent:

- in residence at the University of Michigan; or
- on paid duty off campus; or
- on Scholarly Activity Leave ([SPG 201.30-4](#)) for periods of one year or less unless the individual and the unit agree in writing to an exception to this provision at the time the leave is granted, and the exception is approved in writing by the Office of the Provost.
- On other forms of paid or unpaid leave.

Note: As the rules above indicate, periods of duty spent off campus or on scholarly activity leave are usually counted as part of the probationary period and therefore *do not* stop the tenure clock.

Changes in Appointment. Any change in title, rank, appointment fraction, or service that stops or starts the tenure clock requires the prior written approval of the Office of the Provost. See [SPG 201.13](#).

To clarify University policies that govern the timing of the tenure review, the provost's office has created, "[Guidelines Regarding University of Michigan Policies that Govern Time to Tenure Review \("The Tenure Clock"\) and Related Matters](#)" (Ann Arbor Campus).

6.D Extensions of the Probationary Period for Childbearing, Dependent Care, or Medical Leave

6.D.1 Introduction

As described in more detail below, faculty who bear children, have dependent care responsibilities, or take medical leaves, may apply to have time excluded from the countable years of service that constitute the relevant tenure probationary period and/or may take a period of modified duties. Access to paid leaves is also available to support faculty and staff who welcome children by birth, adoption, foster care or legal guardianship (see, "Paid Maternity [Childbirth] and Parental Leaves," [SPG 201.30-6](#)). In some instances, the leave is automatic upon request by a faculty member while in other instances the leave is discretionary to be determined by the appropriate dean. The right to the paid parental leave under [SPG 201.30-6](#) is automatic, but scheduling is at the discretion of the department.

Faculty are advised to check with their school or college for additional relevant policies. Faculty who benefit from one of these policies work throughout the tenure probationary period, carrying their usual range of responsibilities, except during those periods when they may be on modified duties, on extended sick leave, or other available leaves (e.g., Paid Maternity [Childbirth] and Parental Leaves, [SPG 201.30-6](#)). See handbook [Chapter 16, "Leaves, Absences, Holidays, Vacations, and University Closures"](#). Applications under these policies must be made to the dean of the relevant school or college, and implementation varies from unit to unit.

To promote University-wide consistency and record keeping, a copy of all requests and responses made under these policies must be forwarded to the [Office of Academic Human Resources](#) and, in the case of the UM-Dearborn and UM-Flint campuses, the chancellor.

6.D.2 Modified Duties for New Parents

To provide time to adjust to the demands of parenting newly born or adopted children, [SPG 201.93](#) (“Modified Duties for New Parents”) entitles professorial faculty members who meet the criteria described below, upon request, to a period of modified duties without a reduction in salary:

- Gives birth to a child, or becomes a parent of a newly born or adopted child (or children in the case of a multiple birth or adoption of more than one child simultaneously) under the age of six,
- Takes significant and sustained care-giving responsibility for the child (or children) during the period for which modified duties are requested as a single parent or, where there are two parents, that is at least as time-consuming as the care-giving responsibility of the faculty member’s spouse or partner, and
- Begins the period of modified duties within twelve months of the date of the relevant birth or adoption.

The relevant dean (or his or her designate), in consultation with the eligible faculty member, will determine the ways in which the faculty member’s duties will be modified. At a minimum the relevant school or college will make arrangements that relieve the faculty member from direct teaching responsibilities for the period of modified duties.

For faculty members with significant direct clinical responsibilities or limited teaching obligations, other modifications will be provided appropriate to their circumstances. Faculty on modified duties status will typically be expected to fulfill their other professional responsibilities during the period of modified duties, including those responsibilities for which the faculty member is uniquely qualified, such as advising doctoral candidates. The relevant dean or department chair is responsible for making the necessary teaching arrangements (i.e., for replacement teaching during the period of modified duties or replacement clinical services).

Eligible faculty members may choose to take one term of modified duties for each event that adds a child or children to his or her family through birth or adoption. If both parents are employed in an eligible position at the University, each of them may choose to take a period of modified duties for each event that adds a child or children to their family by birth or adoption if both of them meet the other eligibility criteria. See [SPG 201.93 “Modified Duties for New Parents”](#).

In addition, and to support the University of Michigan’s commitment to faculty and staff as they balance family, professional and academic responsibilities, the university is committed to providing paid time off for parents who give birth and for other parents who support both the physical recovery associated with birth and also provides bonding time with children new to the family. For that purpose, the university provides paid maternity (childbirth) leave and paid parental leave. The university’s maternity (childbirth) leave policy provides up to six weeks of paid time off for recovery from childbirth. A separate parental leave benefit provides all eligible parents, including non-birth parents, with up to six weeks of paid time off to bond with a new child (whether the child joins the family by birth, adoption, foster care or legal guardianship). Eligible birth parents may use both leaves for a total of 12 weeks.

Faculty who are eligible to take a period of modified duties may either do so or take parental leave instead. For more information, see [SPG 201.30-6](#). A period of modified duties does not, by itself, affect a faculty member’s tenure probationary period. The relevant complementary policy is [SPG 201.92: Tenure Probationary Period: Effects on Tenure Clock of Childbearing and Dependent Care Responsibilities](#), which provides guidelines about excluding time from the years of countable service that constitute the tenure probationary period due to the effects of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or due to

the demands of dependent care.

6.D.3 Stopping the Tenure Clock for Childbearing or Dependent Care

Childbearing

In recognition of the effects that pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions can have upon the time and energy a woman has to devote to her professional responsibilities and thus her ability to work at the pace or level expected to achieve tenure, a woman who bears one or more children during her tenure probationary period shall, upon written request to the relevant dean, or in the case of the Dearborn and Flint campuses, the relevant provost, be granted an exclusion of one year for each event of childbirth from the countable years of service that constitute such tenure probationary period, up to a maximum of two years.

Dependent Care

Also, the demands of caring for dependents (such as children¹, including newly adopted children; ill or injured partners; or aging parents) may seriously affect the time and energy faculty have to devote to their professional responsibilities during the tenure probationary period. In recognition of the difficulty of combining an academic career with such dependent care demands, a faculty member in such circumstances may, upon written request to the relevant dean, or, in the case of the Dearborn and Flint campuses, the relevant provost, be granted an exclusion of one year for each dependent care request from the countable years of service that constitute that individual's tenure probationary period, up to a maximum of two years.

Additional information about this topic is found in [SPG 201.92](#).

6.D.4 Medical Leave

If an untenured faculty member suffers a serious illness and receives an approved extended sick leave, the faculty member may, upon written application to the relevant dean and with the approval of the provost, be granted an exclusion of that period of illness (up to one year) from the countable years of service that constitute that individual's tenure probationary period. ([SPG 201.13](#)) For more information on sick leaves, see handbook [Chapter 16 "Leaves, Absences, Holidays, Vacations, and University Closures"](#) and [SPG 201.30-1](#).

6.E Pre-tenure Reviews for Tenure-track Faculty

Units must conduct interim reviews of full-time non-tenured regular instructional faculty members with the rank of instructor or higher. These reviews must take place no later than the third year of the pre-tenure period. Interim reviews need not include external inquiries and appropriately may be less exhaustive than tenure reviews. Faculty members should check with their dean or director for information about unit-level policies and procedures for these reviews and obtain a copy of any written guidelines. See [SPG 201.13](#).

Recommendations to reappoint or not reappoint non-tenured members of the regular instructional

faculty are made by the department chair or the dean, but should be based on reviews that include formal faculty involvement, rather than being based solely on individual determinations of the chair or dean. See [SPG 201.13](#).

6.F Non-reappointment of Tenure-track Faculty

When there is a decision by a department, division, school, or college not to recommend reappointment or tenure, the faculty member should be notified of that decision in writing as soon as possible. Faculty members should be offered the opportunity to discuss the decision at their request. The notification is the responsibility of the administrative head of the unit or department in which the decision is made.

Guidelines for giving notice of non- reappointment, as set forth in [SPG 201.88](#), are listed below. These are minimum requirements; school or college procedures may provide for earlier notice.

Regular instructional faculty members with one year of continuous service or less shall be given notice of non- reappointment at least three months before the scheduled expiration of that appointment.

Regular instructional faculty members with more than one year but less than two years of continuous service shall be given notice of non-reappointment by December 15 if the appointment expires at the end of the following winter term. In cases of appointments terminating at other times, notice will be given no later than five months before the termination date.

Regular instructional faculty members whose years of continuous service have extended beyond two years shall be given notice of non- reappointment not later than September 15 of the fall term of the last academic year of the appointment. If the appointment is scheduled to terminate at some time other than the end of the winter term, notice of non-reappointment shall be given no later than nine months before the end of that appointment.

(Supplemental instructional faculty appointments are considered to be terminal, and notice is not required; see handbook subsection [5.C.3 "Lecturers."](#))

6.G Guidelines Related to Tenure Reviews

The Office of the Provost requires that before any decision is made within an academic or research unit to recommend promotion to a tenured appointment, the faculty member should be notified that the question is under consideration and encouraged to see that the files to be reviewed contain current and relevant material.

A faculty member may request a tenure review at any time, but the decision to conduct a tenure review is within the discretion of the chair or dean, according to the policy of the school or college. Often, the review for tenure is conducted during the faculty member's sixth year of appointment, but there are variations among schools and colleges.

The tenure review must include a careful examination of the candidate's credentials and performance and should be conducted by a committee of the faculty. The review must incorporate both internal and external evaluations. [SPG 201.13](#) details procedures relevant to tenure decisions.

Tenure recommendations to the dean should be made by a committee, the majority of whom are tenured members of the school or college faculty. Tenure recommendations that are to be forwarded to the Regents shall proceed according to [bylaw 5.08](#).

Tenure recommendations and other tenure decisions of the school or college should be communicated to the candidate in writing in a timely fashion. Instructional-track faculty members who have not been recommended for tenure after a tenure review are normally offered a one-year, terminal contract for the next year, their last year at the University.

In 2002 the Office of the Provost endorsed a set of [guiding principles for tenure review](#) at the University, based on recommendations from several faculty committees.

6.H Joint Appointments

One of the University of Michigan's great strengths is its commitment to help faculty move across disciplinary boundaries to undertake innovative intellectual, scientific, and artistic endeavors and to create new knowledge. When a faculty member's sense of academic "home" crosses disciplinary boundaries, he or she may establish and maintain two or more academic bases.

A joint appointment occurs when a faculty member holds appointments in more than one unit (for example: in two academic units; in an academic unit and a research unit; or in an academic unit and an administrative unit) (see, e.g., [SPG 201.10](#) ("Administrative Department")).

The Office of the Provost has developed a set of [guidelines for joint academic appointments](#), with contributions from associate deans and deans. The purpose of the guidelines is to assist deans, directors, and department chairs in helping faculty members who hold joint appointments to succeed and thrive as scholars at the University of Michigan.

Unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by all parties (the faculty member and all deans and chairs or directors of the appointing units), a primary unit should be identified for each faculty member. [SPG 202.10](#) – "Administrative Department." The policies and practices of that primary unit will usually govern any subsequent review process and decision regarding the awarding of tenure to that faculty member. In such cases, the tenure granted may be associated with only one of the appointments. In instances where tenure could be awarded in more than one unit, the policies and practices of each unit will usually govern the review processes and decisions regarding the awarding of tenure in each particular appointing unit. See [SPG 201.13](#).

Year-to-year fluctuations in actual assignments across different appointing units do not change a unit's responsibility for the faculty member's tenured appointment fraction. That is, the fraction of the appointment that is formally tenured in any given unit is the portion of the appointment that is afforded the protections of tenure. See [SPG 201.13](#). If tenure in a unit is associated with a partial appointment, the University is not obligated to increase the percentage of the individual's tenure-track appointment.

6.I Partial Appointments

A partial appointment is an appointment that is less than 100% effort. If the instructional track portion of a partial appointment is less than 80% effort, the University “tenure clock” does not run during the time the appointment is below 80%. Any changes in title, rank, or appointment fractions that start or stop the tenure clock require the prior written approval of the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. See [SPG 201.13](#) and handbook section [6.C “Tenure Probationary Period.”](#)

6.J Tenure: Campus Location

All of the foregoing principles, policies and procedures relating to tenure are applicable in all schools, colleges, and departments on all campuses. An instructional faculty member’s tenure is specific to the campus (Ann Arbor, UM- Dearborn, UM-Flint), school/college, and where applicable, department in which it is granted. Any subsequent changes affecting the location of the instructional faculty member’s tenure appointment must be agreed to in writing by the University and the tenured instructional faculty member. The Regents’ communication establishing the appointment delineates the title and location of tenure (i.e., department, unit, and campus) that correspond to that appointment.

In any case in which the position of the instructional faculty member with tenure has been eliminated or has been removed from the jurisdiction of the University, the University will make reasonable efforts to place the faculty member in a comparable position elsewhere in the University. See [SPG 601.02](#) and handbook section [5.J “Status of Appointments When Academic Programs are Discontinued.”](#)

6.K Professional Responsibilities

The privilege of a faculty appointment brings with it commensurate responsibilities: responsibilities to serve students, colleagues, and the University, as well as academe and society; to hold oneself to high standards of teaching, scholarship, research, and service; and to adhere to high standards of professional integrity and conduct. Integrity in scholarship, research, and teaching is a fundamental value upon which the University is founded.

Without integrity, we could not justify the privilege of academic freedom intrinsic to scholarship, research, and education, nor could we provide to society the advancements of knowledge that derive from open inquiry. It is, therefore, a fundamental responsibility of the faculty to abide by University and professional standards of academic and research integrity. See handbook section [7.C “Norms, Policies, and Regulations Guiding Scholarship and Research.”](#)

Professional responsibility also requires conduct that is in accord with all University policies, and state and federal laws and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, policies and laws on the proper use of University funds and conflict of interest (see section 9.G “Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Commitment”), use of animals and human subjects in research (see handbook subsection [7.C.9 “Use of Human or Animal Subjects”](#)), occupational safety (see handbook section [18.H “Campus Health and Safety”](#)), discrimination (see handbook [Chapter 2 “Diversity and Nondiscrimination”](#)), and sexual harassment (see handbook [Chapter 11 “Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct”](#)). See also handbook [Chapter 9 “Faculty as Representatives of the University/Service.”](#)

Failure to maintain these standards may be sufficient cause for a faculty member to be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the faculty under [bylaw 5.09](#) or other applicable procedures.

6.L Termination for Cause

[Bylaw 5.09](#) outlines procedures governing dismissals or demotions of tenured faculty and tenure-track faculty during the term of their appointment. Instructional faculty covered by the collective bargaining Agreement with the Lecturers' Employee Organization ("LEO") are subject to the Discipline and Dismissal provisions of that Agreement. Instructional faculty members are obligated to maintain high standards of teaching, scholarship, research, service, and professional conduct. A recommendation of dismissal, demotion, or terminal appointment may be made on the basis of demonstrated misconduct in teaching or research, substantial and manifest neglect of duty, and/or personal conduct that substantially impairs the individual's fulfillment of institutional responsibilities; this includes acts involving moral turpitude or professional or scholarly misconduct.

6.M Applicability of Tenure to Research Faculty, Librarians, Curators, Archivists, and Clinical Faculty

Research faculty (research professor and research scientist tracks), librarians, curators, archivists, and clinical faculty are not tenured. In some instances, however, research professors and research scientists may be eligible for bridge funding should sponsored funding lapse. See handbook section [5.M "Cessation of Funding for Appointments Supported by Grants and Contracts."](#) Librarians, archivists, and curators, who are included in the LEO-GLAM collective bargaining unit, serve a one- year probationary period. Research professors and research scientists may also hold instructional appointments, and if so, the portion of the appointment held in the instructional units may be tenured.