

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” \(Ann Arbor Campus\).](#)