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 (e.g., 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 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 birth mothers and other parents that supports 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 mothers 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

In recognition of the effects that pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions can have upon the time and energy a woman can devote to her professional responsibilities, and thus on 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 (in the case of the UM-Dearborn and UM-Flint campuses, the relevant provost) be granted an exclusion of one year for each event from the countable years of service that constitute the tenure probationary period to a maximum of two years. The exclusion for pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions is automatic on request for dependent care leave, but requests must be made prior to the initiation of the tenure review. See SPG 201.92.

Similarly, the demands of caring for dependents (such as children, including newly adopted children, ill or injured spouses or partners, or aging parents) may seriously affect the time and energy faculty can devote to their professional responsibilities during the tenure probationary period. In recognition of the difficulty of combining an academic career with significant dependent care demands, any faculty member (male or female) in these circumstances may, upon written request to the relevant dean (in the
case of the UM-Dearborn and UM-Flint campuses, the provost), be granted an exclusion of two years from the countable years of service that constitute that individual’s tenure probationary period. The two-year exclusion for dependent care responsibility is not automatic. Requests must be made prior to the initiation of the tenure review.

Under these policies, only two years may be excluded from the countable years of service that constitute an individual’s tenure probationary period at the University of Michigan, regardless of the combination of circumstances. See SPG 201.92.

With respect to caring for one or more newly born or adopted children under the dependent care section of this policy, during the year for which the exclusion is requested the faculty member must take significant and sustained care-giving responsibility for the child (or children) as a single parent or, where there are two parents, must take care-giving responsibility that is at least as time-consuming as the care-giving responsibility of the faculty member’s spouse or partner.

A faculty member who benefits from this policy carries a usual range of responsibilities during the time the policy is in effect unless alternative arrangements have been made. Events that occur in the final year of a faculty member’s tenure probationary period may not be the basis for a request under this policy, and all requests under the policy must be made before the date that has been communicated to the faculty member as the date on which the unit will initiate the tenure review. See SPG 201.92.

Specific schools or colleges may have their own policies and programs regarding stopping the tenure clock for childbearing or dependent care, and faculty members are encouraged to contact the dean’s office for additional information on this topic.

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.