



### **Pandemic Changes to Milestone Reviews**

The [Academic Affairs AY2022/2023 retention, promotion, and tenure guidelines](#) are posted. There are a number of decisions related to the COVID-19 impact that will influence this process during not only this year, but future years.

ADVANCE tracks changes in policy and process on our [COVID-19 Policies and Resources for Faculty](#) page.

### **Opt-out tenure extension**

All tenure-track faculty who started before January 2021 received an automatic one-year tenure extension in April 2020, in a [memo from Provost Holloway](#). Faculty who began appointments in Fall 2020 received the same extension in a [memo from August 2020](#). This is not “extra time”, it is time to compensate for the slow-down or complete shutdown of research, scholarship and creative work during the pandemic. Faculty can opt-out of the time extension. The policy is extremely flexible, and therefore can lead to questions.

- A Frequently Asked Questions document is [here](#).
- The form for opting out of extensions is [here](#).
  - Faculty have until May 15<sup>th</sup> of the spring before they are scheduled to come up for P&T (in their Letter of Offer) to opt-out of the tenure extension.
  - Faculty have until August 30<sup>th</sup> of the semester they are scheduled to have a mid-pro review to opt-out of an extension of the time to mid-pro.
  - Faculty maintain their option to extend the tenure period if they do not extend the time to a mid-pro review.

Faculty who began tenure track appointments on or after January 2021 have not received an extension. Pre-tenure faculty who started in January 2021 or later can contact the Senior Vice Provost ([svp@unm.edu](mailto:svp@unm.edu)) to discuss options for extending the tenure clock due to pandemic impacts.

### **Faculty have flexibility in documenting the pandemic impact**

A [February 2021 memo](#) from the Senior Vice Provost provides options for addressing the pandemic impact in annual reviews and is still in effect. In meetings with department chairs, the Academic Affairs leadership has indicated that *faculty can decide how to address the pandemic impact in milestone evaluations*. Options available to faculty include:

- Discuss the pandemic impact as part of their research, teaching, and service statements (all of the statements or some of them)
- Include a separate pandemic impact statement in the Supplementary Documents section of the RPT software, and point to it in the research, teaching, and service statements, as appropriate
- Use a [pandemic impact checklist](#) and include in supplementary docs
- Refer to on-campus or national reports of faculty impact, for example:
  - [ADVANCE 2022 main campus faculty pandemic impact report](#)
  - [NASEM report on The Impact of COVID-19 on the Careers of Women in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#)

- [NIH survey of researchers and research and administrators](#)
- [NORC Survey: Graduate Schools Respond to COVID-19](#)
- [Chronicle of Higher Ed: The Disproportionate Impact of the Pandemic on Women and Caregivers in Higher Ed](#)
- [Chronicle of Higher Ed: "On the Verge of Burnout": COVID-19's Impact on Faculty Well-being and Career Plans](#)
- Decide not to refer to pandemic impacts

### **Use of Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) for Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 is optional**

Three different agreements leave the use of SETs up to the faculty member undergoing review. SETs from Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 cannot be required by the department, school or college.

- The Spring 2020 SET decision is [here](#), under Spring 2020 Student Teaching Evaluations, which includes a link to an April 10, 2020 memo from Provost Holloway.
- MOU's with UA-UNM cover the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters and are [here](#). Item 8 in the Unit 1 memo (8/19/20) and Item 9 in the 1/11/21 Unit 1 MOU state that SETs can't be required in annual or milestone reviews.
- The [Summary of Student Evaluations](#) and [Teaching Summary Tables](#) on the [Provost's Promotion & Tenure Guidelines](#) page have been updated to include this information.

### **External Reviewers' Invitation Template**

Candidates for P&T or promotion are expected to have 6 letters from external reviewers. The [new template for the letter to external reviewers](#) includes language reminding reviewers of the pandemic impact and stating that reviewers should assume candidates are coming up for review at the right time for UNM. The intent is to use this letter for at least the next 5-6 years, until faculty who began their careers at UNM during the pandemic have gone through P&T.

**Chairs should talk with faculty about milestone reviews and outcomes**, particularly given the decreased opportunities for informal discussions and mentoring during remote operations. P&T committees and voting faculty should be made aware of the continuing need to consider pandemic impact on faculty progress.

- Neither comments on faculty ballots nor external letters can be shared directly with the candidate.
- Constructive, anonymized comments can and should be shared by the Chair.
- The goal is to provide constructive and supportive feedback that can help faculty who went through mid-pro develop a promotion plan, and to help faculty who went through P&T or promotion think about the next phase of their career.
- Options include:
  - Meet with faculty member and verbally summarize helpful and constructive comments.
  - Anonymize comments and share them in a memo to the faculty member. Some chairs do this by making sure that no two comments from the same person are listed together.