



**Guidelines for Tenure System Faculty Reappointment,  
Promotion and Tenure in the College of Natural Science at  
Michigan State University**

**Contents**

Introduction ..... 2

NatSci Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee Policies and Procedures..... 3

    Committee Membership..... 3

University-Level Standards (from Provost 2022 Statement on Faculty Tenure and Promotion)..... 4

College-level Standards..... 6

Reappointment to a second probationary appointment..... 6

    Research..... 6

    Teaching/Student Engagement..... 7

    Service/Leadership..... 7

    Timing of Review for Reappointment to a second probationary appointment..... 7

Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure..... 9

    Research..... 9

    Teaching/Student Engagement..... 10

    Service/Leadership..... 10

    Timing of Review for Promotion to Associate Professor..... 11

    Extension of the Tenure Clock..... 11

Promotion to Full Professor..... 12

    Teaching/Student Engagement..... 13

    Service/Leadership..... 13

    Timing of Promotion to Professor..... 13

External Evaluators..... 15

Promotion Package Checklist..... 18

Funded Grants Only..... 24

NatSci RPT Numerical Student Evaluation Summaries..... 25

    I. Stopping the Tenure Clock..... 26

    II. A Delay..... 27

## Introduction

Faculty reappointment, promotion, and tenure are among the most important decisions made by the university. As described in the university policies concerning appointment, reappointment, tenure, and promotion, Michigan State University is a research intensive, land-grant university that is dedicated to the highest levels of scholarship and education and to continuous enhancement of its academic excellence. This document describes the criteria for reappointment, promotion, and tenure in the College of Natural Science as well as guidelines for the evaluation process. It adds to and is consistent with university policies.

Promotion in the College of Natural Science is evaluated in the areas of research, teaching and student engagement, and leadership and service. The following describes the characteristics expected for reappointment and promotion for standard, tenure-system faculty positions. Following the university policy of continuous enhancement of academic stature, the expected level of performance for promotion and tenure in the college increases with time, and the characteristics of prior reappointments and promotions are not components of the evaluation.

In all cases, a candidate will be recommended for renewal or promotion only when in the judgment of the dean of the college, in consultation with the college Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee, it is in the best interest of the university, when the totality of the record is consistent with renewal or promotion, and when there is a high level of performance in all three areas of evaluation.

## **NatSci Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee Policies and Procedures**

### **Committee Membership**

As outlined in the NatSci Bylaws, committee membership consists of a full professor from each tenure-granting unit (currently 11) in the college. Departments select representatives using a process approved by the department faculty or advisory committee. Diversity should be part of the department's conversations/process surrounding the selection of a representative. RPT Committee members act as agents of the college and make decisions representing the best interests of the college and university.

### **Training**

New members will have the following training.

- Unconscious Bias
- Understanding diversity of excellence in department cultures/disciplines.

### **Meeting Logistics**

- Meetings to review and vote on reappointment packets occur mid-January.
- Meetings to review and vote on tenure and promotion packets occur early/mid-February.
- Committee members will be assigned cases proportionally based on the number to be reviewed.
- Committee members in the same department as the candidate will leave the room during discussion of the candidate.
- Chairs and/or directors may be called to meet with the committee to provide clarification on a particular case.

## University-Level Standards (from [Provost 2022 Statement on Faculty Tenure and Promotion](#), maintained in [Provost 2023 memo](#))

- 1. Reappointment to a Second Probationary Appointment** – Each reappointment recommendation should be based on clear evidence that a record is being established of progress toward becoming an expert of national and/or international stature, a solid teacher, and a contributing member of the unit, college, University, and/or discipline.
- 2. Reappointment with Award of Tenure** – Each tenure recommendation should be based on a clear record of sustained, outstanding achievements in scholarship, teaching, and service across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected at peer universities. The record should provide a basis in actual performance for predicting capacity to become an expert of national and/or international stature and long-term, high-quality professional achievement and University service.
- 3. Extensions to the Tenure Clock** – Some candidates for reappointment, promotion, and tenure will have received an extension of the tenure clock by virtue of University policy. Under these circumstances, the criteria for reappointment, promotion, and tenure are the same as is true for the faculty member who has not received a tenure clock extension.
- 4. Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with the Award of Tenure** – A recommendation for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor includes the award of tenure, and should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in scholarship, teaching, and service across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected for promotion to associate professor at peer universities. A reasonably long period in rank before promotion is usually necessary to provide a basis in actual performance for predicting capacity to become an expert of national and/or international stature and long-term, high-quality professional achievement and University service.
- 5. Promotion to Professor** – In as much as the University invests in an individual at the time of tenure, the measure of promotion to “full” is the investment the individual has made in the University. As such, a recommendation for promotion from associate professor to professor in the tenure system should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in scholarship and education across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected at peer universities. Moreover, it is expected that individuals should provide leadership within the department, mentorship to junior faculty and graduate students, teaching of undergraduates, service on committees, and contribute to a flourishing intellectual life for those in the broader discipline, unit, college, and Institution. A reasonably long period in rank before promotion is usually necessary to provide a basis in actual performance to permit endorsement of the individual as an expert of national and international stature and to predict continuous, long-term, high-quality professional achievement and University service. As a tenured faculty member, a professor must not only demonstrate disciplinary excellence, but also demonstrate commitment and effectiveness in larger institutional missions such as improving culture, inclusiveness, and equity both in the academy but also more broadly in society. Innovation brought to teaching and interdisciplinary team building that enables broader groups of people from the widest possible disciplinary or college perspective are also part of a move from individual work to being a university professor. Such a responsibility is even greater for those who earn promotion to full professor.

**6. The Reflective Essay:** Each candidate for reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion must include a maximum five-page reflective essay about accomplishments over the reporting period as a part of the dossier. This essay should highlight how accomplishments in research/creative activities, teaching, and service are significant and impactful and have contributed to the mission of Michigan State University. The Reflective Essay should not be a narrative of the individual's CV, but rather provide information on how previous and current accomplishments represent excellence.

**7. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts Related to Research/Scholarship/Creative/Performative Activities, Teaching Outreach, and Service:** Because DEI are core values of Michigan State University, candidates should detail their DEI efforts, providing evidence of their activities and accomplishments in the context of research/creative activities, teaching, service, outreach, and engagement. Faculty should include evidence of their activities and accomplishments in DEI, as appropriate, when detailing information on relevant research/creative activities, teaching, and service in appropriate sections of their dossier. Faculty should describe how these efforts are interwoven and enhance all other areas of faculty accomplishment. Whenever applicable, faculty commitment to learning and engaging in DEI efforts will be recognized and considered in the RPT process. Certainly, scholars across campus engage in a myriad of research and teaching efforts, not all of which can incorporate DEI activities. Significant involvement in DEI efforts can be viewed as a metric for advancement.

**8. Core Values Related to Conduct:** Accomplishments that advance the effectiveness, climate, and culture of the unit, college, and University, consistent with University core values, must be considered in these decisions, as must significant or repeated behaviors that are inconsistent with these values.

## College-level Standards

### Reappointment to a second probationary appointment

Each reappointment recommendation should be based on clear evidence that a record is being established of progress toward becoming a scholar of national and/or international stature, a solid teacher, and a contributing member of the unit, college, university, and/or discipline.

#### Research

Successful candidates for reappointment will demonstrate excellent progress toward establishing a productive, sustainable, high-quality program of research at MSU.

The candidate's laboratory or other needed research facilities and infrastructure should be established and functioning. If this has been delayed by circumstances beyond the candidate's control, the department should document the delay. If the delay is substantial, the candidate should request an extension of the tenure clock as soon as the duration of the delay is known.

The candidate's research program should be established with well-defined research directions. In most fields, Ph.D. students, post-doctoral fellows, and/or other research staff should be working with the candidate. In fields in which supervision of Ph.D. students by assistant professors is not the disciplinary norm, the candidate should demonstrate successful research interaction with graduate students in other ways.

Competitive, external research funding is available in most of the disciplines in the College of Natural Science and is usually necessary to support a research program of the quality and impact expected at MSU. External research funding at a level appropriate for the candidate's discipline should be in place. In most fields the candidate should have submitted proposals for competitive, external research funding within the first two years and have continued to aggressively pursue such funding. If such funding is not in place at the time of reappointment, proposals for funding beginning the 4<sup>th</sup> year should have been submitted. In these cases, the department should submit a funding update to the college in January of the candidate's 4<sup>th</sup> year. In a few fields, obtaining independent external funding is not expected of assistant professors, either because funding is not available or is awarded to large research collaborations. In these cases, this must be clarified and understood by the candidate, department, and college at the time the candidate is hired and should be documented in the reappointment materials.

New publications from work completed in previous positions, including graduate school and post-doctoral positions, that are published or in press should be reported.

Strong papers based on research done at MSU should have been published or submitted to leading journals. Development of a leading, independent research program is a very important criterion for reappointment. Demonstrated independence from previous mentors, such as Ph.D. and post-doctoral advisors, is essential, although collaborations can continue. In most fields, a substantial proportion of the publications originating from MSU should be based on research for which the candidate is the intellectual leader. In fields in which research is done primarily in large national and international teams, the department must document the candidate's leadership in the collaboration and the significance and impact of the candidate's contributions.

Collaborative research is highly valued at MSU. If results from collaborative projects of any type are a substantial component of the case for reappointment, the candidate and department should document the candidate's leadership role in them.

National visibility is critical, and the candidate should have a growing number of invitations to speak at professional meetings or leading universities and research organizations as well as contributed conference presentations based on research done at MSU.

## Teaching/Student Engagement

The candidate should demonstrate success in classroom teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The candidate should maintain a teaching portfolio, and the department or program should effectively advance the candidate's teaching skills through evaluation of the teaching portfolio, classroom visits by peer evaluators, assignment of a teaching mentor, and annual review by the chair or director.

The candidate's teaching portfolio should include<sup>1</sup> a syllabus and a representative assessment tool (e.g. quiz or homework assignment) from three separate courses (fewer, if less than three courses have been taught), up to three one-page summaries of examples of teaching excellence, and a summary list of contributions to the teaching culture. Contributions to teaching culture should include evidence of efforts at enhancement of classroom teaching (such as attendance at college and university programs related to instruction and results of mentoring interactions), and demonstration of effective engagement with undergraduate or graduate students on an individual basis such as undergraduate advising, supervision of undergraduate research, advising of student organizations, or participation on graduate committees.

Departments should keep records of SIRS scores (or equivalent) for all courses, and of peer evaluation by members of the candidate's unit.

## Service/Leadership

Beginning assistant professors should not be overly burdened with internal service activities, but should demonstrate growing contributions to departmental, college or university committees.

The candidate should provide evidence of developing disciplinary leadership and service as demonstrated by, for instance, reviewing of papers and research proposals, significant roles in professional societies, session or conference organization, or other professional service and leadership activities.

## Timing of Review for Reappointment to a second probationary appointment

Review for reappointment normally takes place in the candidate's third year as a tenure track assistant professor at MSU or in rank in a comparable position at another university. It is

---

<sup>1</sup> A detailed description of the NatSci RPT Teaching Portfolio may be found in the "[Guidelines for Implementation of Teaching Evaluation in NatSci](#)".

Revised: November 2023

important that the University have as complete a picture of a candidate's record as possible at the time of reappointment review, and therefore reappointment review prior to the third year in rank is discouraged. If a candidate does want to be reviewed for reappointment prior to their third year in rank, they must abide by the decision that is made (i.e., they can not be reviewed again the next year if reappointment is not successful).



## Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

The standard for promotion to associate professor is demonstrated excellence in research, teaching, and leadership/service and convincing evidence that a comparable level of performance will continue after promotion.

### Research

An essential criterion for promotion to associate professor with tenure in the college is demonstrated stature as one of the leading researchers nationally and internationally in the candidate's field and career cohort. This stature must be demonstrated by outstanding research publications, on-going competitive external research funding, and strong letters of review from leading senior researchers who are independent of the candidate.

The record of publication must constitute a body of research of high quality and of sufficient quantity to demonstrate a leading and highly productive research program with strong and growing national/international impact. These publications should be based on work at Michigan State University or at other institutions where the candidate previously held a comparable position. They should be published or accepted for publication in leading peer-reviewed scientific journals and comparable outlets. Demonstrated independence from previous mentors such as Ph.D. and post-doctoral advisors is essential, and independent scientific leadership must be demonstrated. In most fields a substantial majority of the publications based on work done after appointment at MSU or at other institutions where the candidate previously held a position of comparable rank, should be from the candidate's research program with the candidate as the intellectual leader. Exceptions to these criteria, such as in fields where very large teams are needed for important progress to be made, must be agreed to at the time the candidate is hired and documented in the promotion materials.

Competitive, external research funding is available in most of the disciplines in the College of Natural Science and is usually necessary to support a research program of the quality and impact expected at MSU. External funding must be at a level sufficient to support an on-going research program and in keeping with disciplinary norms for excellent research programs in the candidate's field. Funding should be in place to support continuing research after promotion, or the candidate should have a track record of significant external funding, with applications pending at the time of review. Independent scientific leadership is expected, and in most fields the candidate should have obtained on-going funding as principal investigator. In a few fields, obtaining independent external funding is not the disciplinary norm. In these cases, this must be clarified and understood by the candidate, department, and college at the time the candidate is hired and documented in the promotion materials.

Collaborative research is also highly valued. Each candidate should clearly identify their role in any collaborative projects, provide evidence of a substantial role in each major collaboration and describe their unique contribution to it, such as technical expertise or intellectual leadership. If collaborative funded research is a substantial component of the justification for promotion, the candidate's role in obtaining the funding and undertaking the research should be described.

The candidate must show a clearly defined direction for leading research after promotion as demonstrated by, for instance, on-going research projects, publications in preparation, on-going

external funding, statements in letters of evaluation, and discussion in the candidate's research narrative in the promotion documents.

National visibility is critical. The candidate should have a substantial number of invitations to speak at professional meetings or leading universities and research organizations and a growing number of submitted conference presentations based on research done at MSU.

### Teaching/Student Engagement

An essential criterion for promotion with tenure is demonstrated effectiveness at successfully engaging undergraduate and graduate students in the classroom, through individual research supervision, or in less formal settings.

Generally, the candidate should demonstrate success at classroom teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The candidate should maintain a teaching portfolio (see footnote 1 above), and the teaching portfolio should include evidence of efforts at enhancement of classroom teaching such as attendance at college and university programs related to instruction and results of mentoring interactions, and demonstration of success in engaging undergraduate and graduate students on an individual basis.

The department or program should effectively promote the candidate's teaching skills through evaluation of the teaching portfolio, classroom visits by a peer evaluator, assignment of a teaching mentor, and annual review by the chair or director. The teaching portfolio, peer evaluations, and SIRS scores should provide evidence that effective action was taken to improve teaching, if warranted, including correcting any significant deficiencies noted in departmental evaluations during the first years of a candidate's appointment.

In most fields, the candidate should show effective mentoring of graduate students as demonstrated by supervision of students who have completed a Ph.D. or are well advanced toward completion of their dissertation. Comparable supervision and placement of post-doctoral fellows is equivalent.

The candidate should also provide evidence of successful student engagement in less formal ways. These may include but are not limited to undergraduate advising, supervision of undergraduate research, advising of student organizations, and participation on graduate committees.

### Service/Leadership

All tenured faculty members must be able to effectively support the internal academic functions of the University and significantly impact the national/international scientific environment. Candidates for this promotion must demonstrate leadership abilities in these areas.

Assistant professors should not be overly burdened by internal service responsibilities, but candidates should demonstrate effectiveness in this area by an increasing level of successful service at the department level over the probationary period. The candidate must be

demonstrably prepared to effectively take on the service and leadership responsibilities of a tenured faculty member.

Candidates should be demonstrably prepared to take on disciplinary leadership as shown, for instance, by leadership in scientific societies and other organizations, substantial engagement with funding organizations such as proposal reviewing and panel participation, reviewing of research papers, and organization of symposia or meetings.

### **Timing of Review for Promotion to Associate Professor**

Review for promotion to associate professor with tenure normally takes place in the candidate's 6<sup>th</sup> year as a tenure track assistant professor at MSU or in rank in a comparable position at another university. It is important that the University have as complete a picture of a candidate's record as possible at the time of promotion review. Thus, reviews prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> year will be undertaken only for compelling reasons. Departments should contact the college before beginning a review prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> year.

### **Extension of the Tenure Clock**

Extensions of the tenure clock may be granted under the procedures and criteria of the university. Extensions should be requested as soon as the triggering reason is known (for instance, birth of a child, family emergency, or delay in preparation of adequate laboratory space). Extensions will not be granted within two years of the promotion review unless the triggering event occurs within that time period.

## Promotion to Full Professor

Promotion to the rank of professor requires the candidate to have demonstrated outstanding performance in research, teaching, and leadership/service and to be demonstrably prepared to take on the intellectual and organizational leadership expected at this rank.

### Research

An essential criterion for this promotion is demonstrated stature as one of the leading researchers nationally and internationally in the candidate's field.

This must be demonstrated by continued publication of outstanding research in leading peer reviewed scientific journals and other high-impact outlets, on-going competitive external research funding sufficient to support a leading research program, and strong letters of review from leading researchers.

Since the previous promotion, the candidate should have published a body of high-impact research of sufficient quality and quantity to demonstrate national/international scientific leadership.

The candidate should have obtained continuing, competitive external funding at a level sufficient to support a strong, on-going research program at a level commensurate with disciplinary norms for leading research programs. Funding should be in place to support continuing research after promotion. In most disciplines, the candidate should have a demonstrated record of external competitive funding as principal investigator. In a few fields, obtaining independent external funding is not the disciplinary norm. In these cases, this must be clarified and understood by the candidate, department, and college early in the candidate's career and documented in the promotion materials.

Collaborative research is also highly valued. Candidates should clearly identify their role in any collaborative project, and evidence of a substantial role in each major collaboration and the candidate's unique contribution to it (such as technical expertise or intellectual leadership) should be clearly described and recognizable. If collaborative funded research is a substantial component of the justification for promotion, the candidate should have demonstrated strong leadership in obtaining the funding.

The candidate must show a clearly defined direction for leading research after promotion as demonstrated by, for instance, on-going research projects, publications in preparation, on-going external funding, statements in letters of evaluation, and discussion in the candidate's narrative in the promotion documents.

There should be a continuing and substantial number of invitations to speak at national and international conferences and leading universities and research organizations, as well as invited contributions to meetings and other venues.

## Teaching/Student Engagement

An essential criterion for this promotion is demonstrated, continuing effectiveness in engaging undergraduate and graduate students in the classroom, through research supervision and in less formal settings.

The candidate should demonstrate success at classroom teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The candidate should maintain a teaching portfolio (see footnote 1 above), and the teaching portfolio should include evidence of efforts at enhancement of classroom teaching (such as attendance at college and university programs related to instruction and results of mentoring interactions), and a demonstration of success in engaging undergraduate and graduate students on an individual basis.

The department or program should effectively promote the candidate's teaching skills through evaluation of the teaching portfolio, classroom visits by peer evaluators, assignment of a teaching mentor, and/or annual review by the chair or director. The teaching portfolio, peer evaluations, and SIRS scores should provide evidence of effective, continuous efforts to improve teaching.

The candidate should show effective mentoring of graduate students as demonstrated by supervision and strong placement of students who have completed a Ph.D. Comparable supervision and placement of post-doctoral fellows is equivalent. In some fields, Ph.D. supervision by associate professors is not the national norm. In these cases, this should be clarified and understood by the candidate, department, and college at the time the candidate is hired, documented in the promotion materials, and there should be strong evidence of effective engagement with undergraduate or graduate students on an individual basis.

The candidate should also provide evidence of continuing successful student engagement in less formal ways. These may include but are not limited to undergraduate advising, supervision of undergraduate research, advising of student organizations, and participation on graduate committees.

## Service/Leadership

This promotion requires demonstration of effective leadership within the academic sphere of the university and at the national/international level. Within the university, the candidate must show successful, continuing leadership and service contributions at the department level and the capacity to play a leadership role within the university. The candidate should show continuing national/international leadership through, for instance, significant roles in scientific societies and other organizations, substantial engagement with funding organizations such as proposal reviewing and panel participation, and organization of scientific meetings.

## Timing of Promotion to Professor

The timing of the review for promotion to professor is less well defined than that for promotion to associate professor. Under normal circumstances, several years are needed to develop the necessary record. Promotions soon after promotion to associate professor require compelling

Revised: November 2023

justification. Evaluations undertaken prior to the end of the candidate's fifth year as tenured associate professor should be discussed with the college prior to being initiated.

## External Evaluators

External evaluations by highly qualified researchers are a critical component of the reviews for promotion to associate professor and professor. They may be obtained but are not required for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year reappointment. The purpose of the external letters is to help evaluate the quality, significance, and impact of candidate's research regarding both the specific research area and the discipline overall, and to help the review committees in evaluation of the candidate's national/international stature. Thus, letters should be obtained from a range of knowledgeable individuals with the objective of evaluating both the specifics of the candidate's research and its broader disciplinary impact. At least **four evaluative** letters should be obtained from individuals who are demonstrably disciplinary leaders at peer institutions or comparable research organizations such as national laboratories or leading corporate research laboratories. While there can be no definitive list of peer institutions, research-intensive universities of international scope such as the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA)<sup>2</sup> institutions normally constitute our peers. At most two letters may be from people holding the rank of associate professor, and these must be strongly justified. For promotion to professor, letters should not be solicited from individuals at the associate professor level. Reviews from individuals who are independent of the candidate are essential and carry the most weight. Thus, letters from previous mentors (e.g., graduate or post-doctoral advisors) should not be solicited. In a few fields that involve very large national or international collaborations, the best reviewers are often members of the collaboration team, and evaluative letters from such individuals are acceptable. The relationship of each reviewer to the candidate, if any, must be clearly detailed in the description of the referees' credentials.

For individuals who work in smaller interdisciplinary research groups funded by shared external grants, **explanatory** letters from colleagues who can describe the significance of the candidate's contribution to the program may also be included. Such letters are not meant to supplant evaluative letters from non-conflicted reviewers, but to clarify the contributions or independence of individuals working in highly collaborative programs. No more than two explanatory letters from research collaborators within the past three years should be solicited.

To solicit letters, the candidate should submit a list of at least six potential evaluative referees who meet the criteria outlined above; there is no limit to the number of names on the candidate's list. The candidate should be told of the criteria for selection of referees prior to developing the recommendation list but should not contact the referees nor be aware of the identities of those chosen. The candidate may also designate a few referees they would prefer not to review their case, indicating why. The department may solicit letters from individuals who are not on the candidate's list, provided they meet the criteria described above. **The department should obtain a minimum of two letters from the candidate's list** but all can be from the candidate's lists.

---

<sup>2</sup> University of Chicago; University of Illinois; Indiana University; University of Iowa; University of Maryland; University of Michigan; Michigan State University; University of Minnesota; University of Nebraska/Lincoln; Northwestern University; Ohio State University; Pennsylvania State University; Purdue University; Rutgers University; University of Wisconsin-Madison.

To the extent possible, strive for gender and racial/ethnic diversity in obtaining external letters. If gender diversity is a problem in the field, or if women were invited to write a letter and they declined, say so in the External Letters Summary table in the Form on Excellence and Progress.

To ensure that evaluations are as useful as possible, the letters requesting the evaluation must contain the following:

- **MSU confidentiality statement:** “Your letter of evaluation, as part of an official review file, will be held in confidence and will not be disclosed to the faculty member under consideration or to the public except as required by law or University policy. In all such instances, the information made available will be provided in a form that seeks to protect the identity, privacy, and confidentiality of evaluators.”
- A request to disclose any potential **conflicts of interest**.
- A description of the **candidate’s assignment**, including, for example, the percentage of the appointment devoted to research/creative activities, teaching, service, etc.
- Statement regarding **peer institutions:** “Your evaluation will be most helpful if it explains the candidate’s contributions to advancing their discipline and evidence of leadership in their scholarly and professional endeavors, consistent with expectations for tenure and promotion at MSU and those of our peer institutions.”
- The **candidate’s evaluation materials:** CV, reflective essay<sup>3</sup>, and a representative sample of the candidate’s scholarly work.

#### **COVID-19-related modifications for letter invitations in AY 2023-24**

- MSU requirement—see <https://hr.msu.edu/ua/promotion/faculty-academic-staff/coronavirus-tenure-clock-faqs.html>). ***This sentence would be included only for candidates who have used the COVID-19 tenure clock extension:*** “In 2020, Michigan State University granted all pre-tenure faculty members an automatic one-year extension on the tenure clock because of the impact on scholarly productivity caused by adjustments to COVID-19. The extra time provided by this extension should not in any way be viewed as harmful to the faculty candidate. As with other extensions granted under this policy, it should not lead to an expectation that “more should have been accomplished” by the faculty member given the extra year in the probationary appointment.”
- Include this statement: “It would be helpful for your evaluation to provide context for how the pandemic has impacted scholarly productivity in the candidate’s discipline. Please do not make any specific comparisons to peers, as the impacts of the pandemic have varied widely by institutions and states.”

**External letters of reference must be submitted on institutional letterhead and carry the evaluator signature.** Scanned letters with electronic signatures are acceptable. All letters solicited and received through all media must be included in the promotion materials. Unsolicited letters will not be included in the review materials.

#### **Suggested template for invitations to letter writers in AY23-24**

Dear Dr. [X],

---

<sup>3</sup> The candidate may submit either the 5-page reflective essay required in the Form on Progress and Excellence or a different reflective essay that is written for experts in the disciplinary field of research.



The **[department]** at Michigan State University is considering **[candidate]** for promotion to **[associate professor with tenure / full professor]**. We would like to obtain your candid and confidential evaluation of [candidate's] scholarship and contributions to the advancement of their discipline. **[Candidate's]** appointment is **[x]**% research, **[y]**% teaching, and **[z]**% service. **[Unit/college expectations for promotion with tenure]**

Attached are **[candidate's]** CV, reflective essay, and a sample of [the candidate's] scholarly work. Your evaluation will be most helpful if it explains the candidate's contributions to advancing their discipline and evidence of leadership in their scholarly and professional endeavors, consistent with expectations for tenure and promotion at MSU and those of our peer institutions. It would also be helpful for your evaluation to provide context for how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted scholarly productivity in the candidate's discipline. Please do not make any specific comparisons to peers, as the impacts of the pandemic have varied widely by institutions and states. In addition, beginning in AY22-23, MSU will consider faculty engagement in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) activities in the RPT process, and significant involvement in DEI efforts can be viewed as a metric for advancement. You may comment on DEI efforts but are not required to.

**[MSU language on COVID-19 automatic tenure clock extension above, if applicable].**

To maintain the schedule of the review, it would be helpful to receive your letter by **[date]**, and we will gladly accept a reply sent earlier if that is possible for you. We welcome electronic responses. If you plan to email your review, please send it on your letterhead, signed (PDF preferred but Word document also acceptable with electronic signature). Please address it to **[person]** and email it to **[email address]**.

**[MSU confidentiality statement].** Please also describe your prior interactions with the candidate and disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

I recognize the time and effort it takes to prepare recommendations for promotion and tenure, and on behalf of the University, I would like to express our deep appreciation for your assistance.

Sincerely,

## Promotion Package Checklist

For the College of Natural Science, the promotion package consists of [Form on Progress and Excellence](#) (form PE, formerly form D) plus additional items described below. It should consist of the following items in the order specified.

- The **RPT candidate** is responsible for providing the Department/Unit with PDF files for part IV of the Form PE (as indicated by the asterisks\* and highlighted in red shade below) and their CV.  
*(Candidate's are also expected to submit a teaching portfolio for review by the Chair but this portfolio is NOT to be included in the promotion dossier – see section #5)*
- The **Department/Unit** is responsible for reviewing the information provided by the candidate, and for combining this file with those for parts I-III of the Form PE (highlighted in green shade below) – thereby creating a **single, searchable** PDF file.

1. Form PE-I: The completed cover sheet.

2. Form PE-Ia: Additional Information.

- A summary of committee votes must be recorded.
- Complete the External Review Letters summary table.
- List all referees from whom letters were requested, whether or not they provided an evaluation.
- Include a brief assessment of relationship to candidate, including potential conflicts of interest.
- If the reviewer did not provide a letter, describe the reasons if known. Do not include full vitas, web pages, or other bulky information about the referees.

3. Form PE-II: Summary Information.

- For the summary ratings, the comparison group is faculty at AAU Research 1 universities at the same career stage.
- Assignment of time should accurately reflect the candidate's situation.
- *The letter from the chair or director (see #4) and the letter from the dean **substitute** for the summary statements in this section. Type "See attached letter" in PE-II, part 1.*

4. Letter from the chair or director: Description and detailed analysis of the candidate's case.

- This letter should not simply list factual information but should provide a **reasoned discussion** explaining why the candidate meets the criteria for promotion or reappointment and why it is in the best interests of the university to make the reappointment or promotion.
- *It should fully address all significant weaknesses in the case as well as strengths, and should not be a reprise of the material in other sections.*
- The letter will be shared with the candidate at the same time the dossier is submitted to the college. Hence, **the evaluation of research should not contain quotes from the external letters** nor report sensitive and potentially identifiable information about faculty votes.

- Use a **one-page addendum** to the letter to include confidential/sensitive information and report the vote of the faculty on the issue of the candidate's reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure (in addition to being reported on Form PE-Ia, see #2). The addendum should describe the composition and size of the faculty body which voted on this issue and specify the number of faculty who voted for, against, abstained, or were absent in this vote. In addition, if some faculty members voted against or abstained in this vote, the addendum should explain the concerns raised during the discussion.
- For candidates with joint appointments, this letter should be prepared and signed by the chairs and directors of all units in which the candidate holds a more than 0% time appointment, and the addendum should report the votes of all relevant faculty committees.

□ 5. Form PE-III A: Evaluation of Instruction.

- A 1-2 page narrative describing the **nature and quantity** of the candidate's formal teaching responsibilities and evaluating the **quality of instruction**.
- The description of teaching responsibilities needs to consider:
  - i. which courses did the candidate teach?
  - ii. at which time(s)?
  - iii. what was the nature of the course (e.g. lecture, seminar discussion, or lab)?
  - iv. and what was their level of responsibility (e.g. were they solely responsible or did they share responsibility with others)?
  - v. Include here an explanation of any *shared* teaching responsibilities.
- The [NatSci guidelines for teaching evaluation](#) explain that the summary evaluation must cover each of the following aspects of teaching quality, based on the department's review of 1) student evaluations, 2) peer evaluations, and 3) the candidate's teaching portfolio:
  - i. Clear and Appropriate Objectives.
  - ii. Competence in the Classroom.
  - iii. Evidence of Excellence.
  - iv. Contributions to Teaching Culture
- The evaluation of the SIRS scores (or equivalent) must include an analysis of student comments, and a comparison to scores submitted for (the same or comparable) courses taught by others. Numerical SIRS (or equivalent) data should be compiled by the Unit/Department and appended to the candidate's contribution in Form PE-IVA, "*Instructional Data*" (section #11 below).
- The evaluation must also include a summary analysis of peer classroom observations with a description of the process by which the teaching evaluation was performed, including who did the evaluations and when.
- The evaluation will also summarize the quality of the **candidate's \*Teaching Portfolio**. There is no specific format for the teaching portfolio. However, all faculty are expected "to maintain a teaching portfolio consisting of three sets of materials provided by the faculty members themselves":
  - i. Syllabi & Representative Assessments (e.g. quiz or homework assignments) from 3 separate courses (fewer, if less than three courses have been taught).
  - ii. Examples of Excellence (up to 3 one-page summaries of examples of teaching excellence).

- iii. Summary of Contributions to the Teaching Culture.
    - The teaching portfolio is NOT to be included in the NatSci dossier. It should be retained by the department and be made available upon request by the NatSci RPT committee.
6. Form PE-IIIB: Evaluation of Research and Creative Activities.
- This should both describe and evaluate the **impact** of the candidate's research.
  - It should address all aspects of research described in the criteria above and should **cite evidence** to justify the evaluation provided.
  - **It should not contain quotes from the external letters.**
7. Form PE-IIIC: Evaluation of Service.
- This should address all aspects of service and leadership described in the criteria above.
8. Form PE-IIID: Additional Reporting (If any).
9. \*Form PE-IV: Reporting of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts.
- Candidates should include evidence of their activities and accomplishments in DEI, as appropriate, and describe how these efforts were interwoven with and enhance all other areas of faculty accomplishment.
  - Whenever applicable, the candidate's commitment to learning and engaging in DEI efforts will be recognized and considered in the RPT process.
  - Significant involvement in DEI efforts can be viewed as a metric for advancement.
10. \*Form PE-IVA item 1: Instructional Data Table.
- Under "Number of Sections Taught", list the number of classroom, discussion, or laboratory hours that the candidate was personally responsible for based on a standard 15-week semester.
  - For example, for a course that meets 3 hours per week and for which the candidate was solely responsible, list 45, whereas if responsibility was shared equally with two other colleagues, list 15, etc.
  - *Do not* report classroom, discussion, or laboratory hours taught independently by teaching assistants, even if the candidate is the class coordinator.
  - Under "*Number of Students*", list only the students registered in the classroom, discussion, or laboratory section(s) taught personally by the candidate.
  - *Do not list reading or research, or guest lectures in courses in this table.* Reading or research course supervision should be included and described in item 3, "Academic Advising", and guest lectures should be listed in item 2, along with other "Non-Credit Instruction".
11. RPT Numerical Student Evaluation Summaries worksheet:
- Numerical SIRS data should be compiled in this worksheet by the Unit/Department and appended here.
  - Copies of the SIRS summary forms for individual courses should be kept on file in the Department and should **not** be included in this packet.

□ 12. \*Form PE-IVB: Research and Creative Activities<sup>4</sup>.

- For all publications and presentations, the complete authorship in published order, the title, journal or venue of publication, date, and pages should be included.
- Note that an asterisk (\*) should be used to indicate peer-reviewed activity, and the lead author of a multi-authored work should be underlined.
- Indicate work done in collaboration with the candidate's PhD or postdoctoral advisors by placing the title in *italics*.
- Highlight in **boldface** the titles of those publications arising from “the reporting period”, i.e., **work conducted at MSU since the last RPT action** (or, in the case of reappointment cases, since hire at MSU).
- **\*\*NOTE\*\*** Members of the NatSci RPT committee represent the full range of disciplines within the college, and appreciate a brief explanation by the candidate about **disciplinary norms for order of authorship** on publications (e.g., lead PI typically last author, authors are in alphabetical order, conference proceedings are peer reviewed, etc). Candidates are also encouraged to highlight most (3-5) significant publications and their **contributions to the published work** and **significance to the field**. This can be done as an annotation in the list of publications and/or in the research reflective essay.
- It is also important to highlight publications with MSU undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral trainees. This can be done as an annotation in the list of publications, in a table describing presentations, publications, and awards received by the candidate's trainees, or any other format that clearly indicates publications with MSU trainees.
- All conference presentations (whether they correspond to a published contribution to proceedings or not), as well as seminars and colloquia presented at universities, should be included under “*Other Evidence of Research/Creative Activity*” (part 4 of Form PE-IVB). Any work reported that does not clearly fit one of the categories described above should be identified, and the nature of the scholarship and the extent of peer review explained.

□ 13. \*NatSci Funded grants Only worksheet:

- A worksheet listing all the candidate's funded grants.
- Report the following in order: title, principal investigator, all co-principal investigators (unless prohibitively many), awarding agency, effective dates, total amount awarded, total **amount awarded to the candidate**, whether these amounts include indirect costs or not, and the nature of the **candidate's participation** in the grant *if not P.I.*

---

<sup>4</sup> In NatSci, Research/Creative works (part 1 of Form PE-IVB) would normally include only the following:

- “Books”
- “Articles”, which includes all journal publications reporting original research.
- “Book Chapters”, which includes any published contributions to edited volumes, other than conference proceedings (see “e” below).
- “Reviews”, which include reviews, commentary, or perspective articles appearing in a serial publication. Note that peer reviews provided for journals or other publications are not to be listed here but should be included in service (Form PE-IVC).
- “Papers and Presentations from Learned Professional Organizations and Societies”, which includes *published* conference proceedings.

14. \*Form PE-IVC: Service.

- Include information related to disciplinary and institutional leadership and service.

15. \*Form PE-IVD: Additional Reporting (if any).

16. \*Form PE-IVE: Grant Proposals.

- List ALL grant proposals submitted during the reporting period, whether they were funded, not funded or are pending.

17. \*Reflective essay: A five-page maximum essay on accomplishments over the reporting period.

- This essay should highlight how **accomplishments** in research/creative activities, teaching, and service are significant and impactful and have contributed to the mission of MSU.
- The essay must also describe how **DEI was interwoven** in their scholarly work (research, teaching and/or service).
- The Reflective Essay should not be a narrative of the individual's CV, but rather provide information on how previous and current accomplishments represent excellence and how the candidate will build on the achievement to further develop their scholarship.

18. \*Curriculum Vitae: A CV containing a full record of scholarship.

- List educational background, employment history, and honors; funded grants (with total \$\$ amounts and those awarded to the candidate); publications; contributed and invited presentations; DEI, service and leadership activities; (under)graduate students and post-docs supervised including placement, and external funding; etc.

19. External Review Letters: (must be on letterhead and signed).

20. Annual performance reviews: Copies of the candidate's annual performance evaluations **since the last promotion.**

- For assistant professors in their first appointment or associate professors appointed without tenure, include evaluations since the initial tenure system appointment.
- For assistant professors being considered for tenure, include evaluations since reappointment.
- For associate professors being considered for promotion to (full) professor, include evaluations for the years since promoted to professor.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** The package should **NOT** contain copies of papers, abstracts, grant proposals, course descriptions, or other lengthy items not explicitly requested.

---

Approved: College of Natural Science Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee, March 15, 2013. Changes made to reflect revisions to Form D by the Office of the Associate

Revised: November 2023

Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Human Resources, November 21, 2013. Changes to require a copy of the teaching portfolio and evaluation, April 11, 2014. Changes to the number of external letters required discussed at the Chairs and Directors meeting, April 2018 and formally approved by the Faculty Advisory Council on May 10, 2018. Updates on RPT committee and instructions for annotating publications made in June, 2019. Revisions on number of required external letters, reporting DEI engagement, and single reflective essay made in July, 2022. Updates to clarify the process and simplify the instructions made in November, 2023.

# COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

## Funded Grants Only

Title	Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigators	Awarding Agency	Effective Dates	Total Amount Awarded Including Indirect Costs	Total Amount Awarded to Candidate Including Indirect Costs	Indirect Cost Rate	Nature of Candidate's Participation (if not P.I.)*

[To add another row to the table, push the tab key in the very last cell.]

\*Add context or describe unusual circumstances as needed

List of all the candidate's funded grants including the following in order: title, principal investigator, all co-principal investigators (unless prohibitively many), awarding agency, effective dates, total amount awarded, total amount awarded to the candidate, whether these amounts include indirect costs or not, and the nature of the candidate's participation in the grant if not P.I.



# COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

## NatSci RPT Numerical Student Evaluation Summaries

Semester and Year	Course Number	Number of student responses	Instructor Involvement (average of SIRS items 1-4)	Student Interest (average of SIRS items 5-8)	Student-Instructor Interaction (average of SIRS items 9-12)	Course Demands (average of SIRS items 13-16)	Course Organization (average of SIRS items 17-20)
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						
	COMP						

For each course taught, list semester and year, course number, number of student responses, and average SIRS (or equivalent) scores (1.0-5.0, with lower numbers better) in each of the categories listed, along with corresponding average scores in comparable (“COMP”, either same course taught by other instructors, or courses at same level and with a comparable audience) courses immediately below. **If department-specific evaluations are used, provide appropriate average scores corresponding to categories listed above and rescale to SIRS 1.0-5.0 scale.**



## COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

# Guidelines for Extending or Delaying Assistant Professor RPT Review

Under normal circumstances tenure system assistant professors must be reviewed for reappointment in year three and for tenure and promotion to associate professor in year six of their appointment. In each case, reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) review materials are due in the NatSci Dean's Office by mid-January<sup>1</sup> of the candidate's review year. There are two separate procedures by which the RPT review of a faculty member can be postponed with respect to this standard schedule: "Stopping the Tenure Clock" and a "Delay in Reappointment/Tenure Decision".

**I. Stopping the Tenure Clock**<sup>2</sup> entails an **extension** of the usual assistant professor probationary period, beyond the traditional six years. The extension postpones reappointment review or tenure and promotion review, as appropriate in the extended probationary period of the candidate.

- Stopping the tenure clock is automatic ***if an extension is requested when a child under the age of six enters the household*** (either through birth or through adoption, for either or both parents who are MSU tenure system faculty members<sup>3</sup>), or in cases in which a faculty member has taken a leave of absence with or without pay (for at least one semester), has a change of appointment to 50% time or less (for one year), has immigration/visa status that does not permit the award of tenure, or when an extension is recommended as an outcome of a hearing and/or appeal conducted pursuant to the Faculty Grievance Policy.
  - In cases where the request for an automatic one-year extension is related to the birth or adoption of a child, the request must be submitted within two years of the birth/adoption but no later than the due date for submission to the department/school of the dossier for the next reappointment/promotion/tenure review. The request should be relayed by the department chair to the dean's office, which will forward it to the Office of the Provost. [Template for memo is provided on ***Reappointment, Promotion & Tenure Guidelines*** webpage.]

---

<sup>1</sup> See [NatSci Guidelines for Tenure-system Faculty Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [Implementation Practices \(Stopping the Tenure Clock\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> See [Faculty Handbook - Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs Policies Section \(msu.edu\)](#).

- Extensions of the tenure clock for other reasons are **rare** and are generally granted only if serious constraints *outside the control of the candidate*<sup>1</sup> prevent a fair and appropriate tenure review on the usual schedule. It is also expected that the request for an extension will be made as soon as possible after the constraint arises and, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Extensions requested after the January of the year **preceding** the tenure review year will not be approved.
  - In cases where the extension is not automatic, the request needs to be made by the faculty member, reviewed by the appropriate departmental peer review committee, and endorsed by the department chair. If the request is endorsed by the chair, the material described in the policy [Implementation Practices \(Stopping the Tenure Clock\)](#) should be submitted to the Dean's office. If the Dean endorses the request, it will be submitted to the Office of the Provost for review. [Templates for the Departmental Peer Review Committee Memo and Summary of Prior Assignments are provided on **Reappointment, Promotion & Tenure Guidelines** webpage.]

**II. A Delay**<sup>2</sup> postpones the reappointment, promotion, or tenure decision approximately 8 months, until the fall of year 4 (for reappointment) or of year 7 (in the case of tenure and promotion) **without extending the probationary period**. A delay is intended for a situation in which extra information – e.g. publication of manuscripts or a decision on grant funding – would have a large impact on the review decision. Note that while the delay allows for additional information to be considered by external referees, the department, and the college, **the final RPT decision by the University will not be made until December of the candidate's terminal appointment year, and the time of the termination of the appointment is not extended**. Therefore, if the decision is not favorable, the candidate will have only one semester left of MSU employment.

To request a delay, the candidate must submit a letter to the chair by Sept. 1 of their normally scheduled review year (*i.e.* typically year 3 in the case of reappointment and year 6 in the case of tenure and promotion), asking for the delay and providing a justification for it. The request should detail how the added time would allow for the inclusion of additional important evidence in the consideration of their case.

If the chair agrees with the request to delay, they must assemble by Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> of the normally scheduled review year a packet including the following components to be submitted to the Dean of the College of Natural Science:

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g., illness of the candidate or a family member.

<sup>2</sup> See appropriate section of [Faculty Guide for Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Review](#).

Appendix: Guidelines for Extending or Delaying Assistant Professor RPT Review

1. A statement explaining why the additional published papers and/or funded grants would be sufficient for tenure, if the current record is not. The statement should address the following questions:
  - a. How does the new work connect to the overall directions of the candidate's program?
  - b. What are the scientific significance and the status of the additional publications or grants? Why do these additional items position the candidate among the leaders in his/her field and career cohort?
  - c. Why is additional time required? How would a 6-9 month delay solve the problem?
  - d. Will the candidate succeed, scientifically, if tenure is granted?

The statement must also describe precisely what the candidate needs to accomplish during the delay to achieve tenure and promotion and explain why they are likely to accomplish it.

2. A description and analysis of the importance of prior publications. In particular, if there have been any publication gaps, the statement should address them.
3. A description and analysis of the candidate's external funding record, addressing any funding deficiencies that are present.
4. A description of the candidate's teaching assignments and performance while at MSU, including a description of the candidate's projected teaching contributions both during the delay and beyond.
5. The candidate's curriculum vitae.

If the Dean endorses the delay this material will be forwarded to the Office of the Provost, which makes the final decision. If a delay is granted, the department must submit Form on Progress and Excellence (and supporting documentation) to the dean's office by the following Sept. 1, at the beginning of the candidate's terminal probationary appointment year.

10/8/2015