

NatSci RPT Workshop 2022

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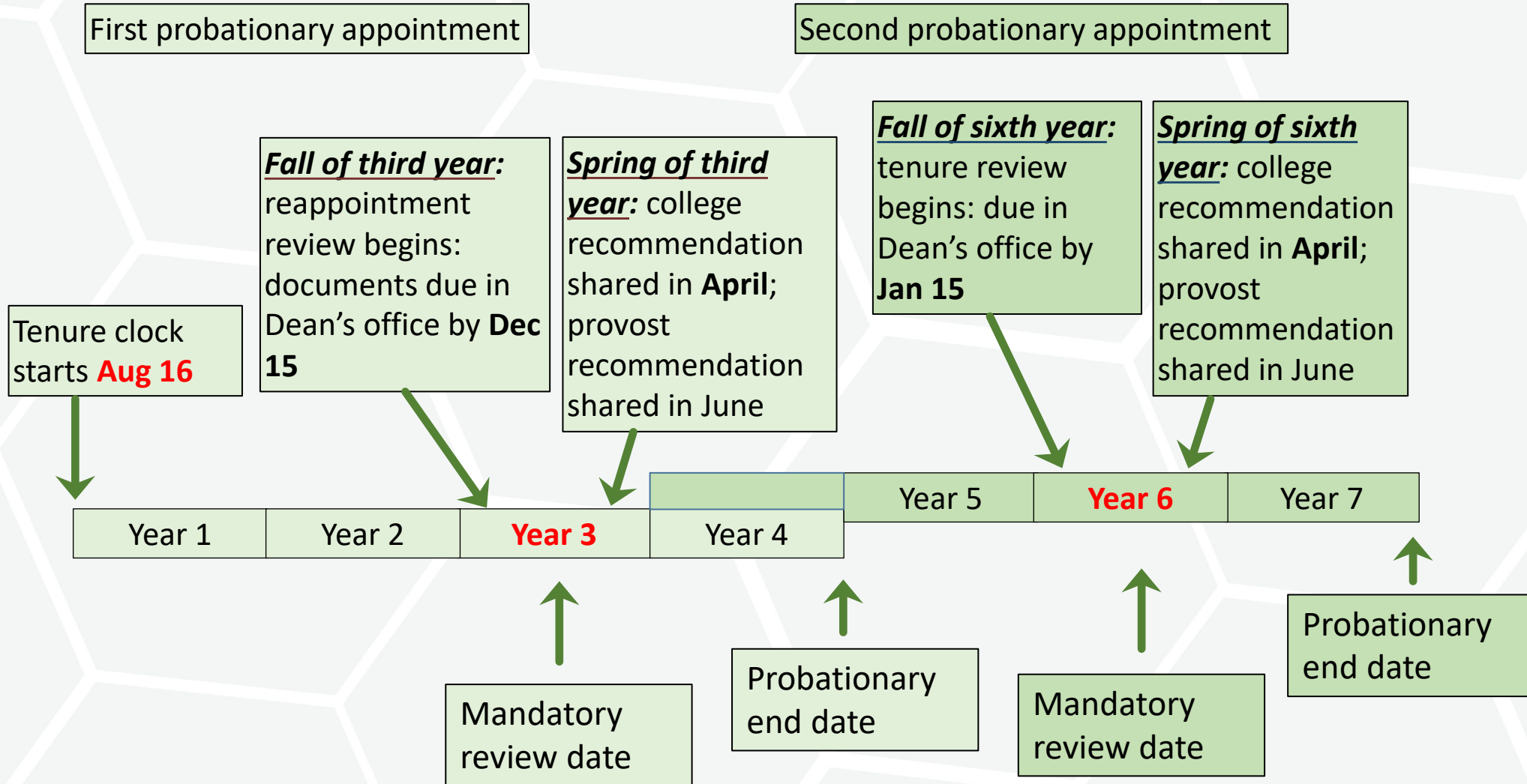
College of Natural Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Topics

- RPT process
- COVID-19 tenure clock extension
- Coming up “early”
- External letters
- Form on Progress and Excellence and reflective essay
- COVID-19 impact statement
- Expectations in the pandemic times



Summary of the tenure timeline for Assistant Professors



RPT Process – Department level

- Become informed
 - Talk with your chair and mentors about how things work in your department, what deadlines have to be met
 - If jointly appointed, talk with both chairs, ideally at the same time to make sure everyone is on the same page
 - [NatSci Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Guidelines](#)
- Make a plan, include a timetable of discrete goals and target dates
- Departmental review is in fall semester
 - Process may start in summer for some units (e.g., invitations to external references go out), so **know your department deadlines!**
 - RPT materials due in the Dean's Office by December 15 (reappointments) or January 15 (promotion and tenure, promotion to full)



RPT Process – College level

College review (January-February)

- 11 member RPT Committee (one rep from each tenure-granting department; your department rep is considered COI and will not be present during discussion of your case)
- Grant panel model of review
- Committee votes; vote must be reported on Form on Progress and Excellence
- Dean writes their recommendation, which is informed by the RPT committee discussion and vote, but may or may not be the same as the department's or college committee's recommendations
- Dean's recommendations due to Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs
Feb 28



RPT Process – Provost level

- Provost review (March-April)
 - Dossiers reviewed by Suzanne Lang, Assoc Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (FASA) and an ad hoc committee of University Distinguished Professors (promotion cases only)
 - AP for FASA meets with Dean and Associate Dean for Faculty Development to discuss each case
 - AP for FASA discusses with Provost cases that are not slam-dunk
 - Provost makes final recommendation
- Board of Trustee approval (June; typically pro forma)
 - Required for tenure and promotion, but not for reappointment
- Candidates must be informed of recommendation at each stage of review, including seeing the chair's and dean's letters, and given the opportunity to respond before the dossier moves to the next level of review.



Coming up “early”

- It is not considered coming up “early” if a faculty member decides not to use an extension (of any kind)
- The bar is not higher if someone wants to be considered for promotion and tenure before their mandatory review date
- The primary considerations for review before the mandatory review date are whether expectations for promotion and tenure have been met and a high probability that strong external letters can be obtained



COVID-19 tenure clock extension

- Granted to all tenure system faculty in 2020, and has been extended to all TS faculty hired since spring 2020
- COVID extension is in addition to any other previously approved extensions
- If you wish to be reviewed at your pre-COVID time (don't want to use the extension), inform your chair and the chair informs the college
 - Reappointment cases are bound by the outcome of the review
 - Promotion and tenure cases, if unsuccessful, can be reviewed the next year
- [COVID-19 Tenure Clock Extension FAQs](#)



External letters

- NatSci requires 4 **evaluative** letters
 - Candidate submits a list of potential referees to the department; no limits to the number of names on this list
 - Department may solicit letters from individuals not on the candidate's list, but must obtain a **minimum of 2 letters from the candidate's list**
 - Candidate should not communicate directly with potential letter writers
 - Candidate may also identify individuals who they would prefer not to review their case and indicate why
- NatSci allows up to 2 **explanatory** letters from colleagues who can explain the significance of the candidate's contributions to collaborations.



External letters: Recommended language to letter writers

- Do **not** directly compare with specific peers
- Do **not** speculate about whether candidate would be awarded tenure at writer's institution
- Do provide context for how the pandemic has affected the discipline
- From COVID-19 extension FAQs: In 2020, Michigan State University granted all pre-tenure faculty an automatic one-year extension in 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 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.



Form on Progress and Excellence (Formerly Form D)

- Other than the new name, this form is still the same as it ever was
- Use this opportunity to explain yourself!
 - Your audience = real people
 - Provide context and personalize
 - Tell folks what you want them to know—just because the form doesn't ask for something doesn't mean you can't put it in there



Form on Progress and Excellence (Formerly Form D)

- Teaching
 - Your role in courses that are team-taught
 - Evidence of seeking opportunities to develop teaching skills, including pivot to online instruction in 2020
 - Do not submit teaching portfolio; do submit unit evaluation of portfolio and peer observation evaluations
- Research
 - Annotate publications with prior mentors, trainees, collaborators
 - Separate refereed and un-refereed publications
 - Describe your contributions to and role in collaborative grants (PI vs co-PI vs Co-I)
 - Goal is to demonstrate scientific leadership
- DEI engagement
 - Report DEI activities in the context of your scholarship, teaching, mentoring, service, and outreach (wherever they show up), i.e., integrate
 - Examples at end of slide deck



Reflective essay

Write a **single reflective essay** (5 page max) on progress and goals for research, teaching, and service/outreach that **incorporates DEI engagement** in these areas

- Tell your story. Clearly indicate what direction you're headed. Faculty and academic staff who haven't been engaged in DEI activities should include future plans for engagement in the reflective essay.
- Write about your research in a way that is accessible to non-specialists in your field
- You may modify this essay for external letter writers, who are experts in your field



Reflective essay

- Teaching
 - Teaching philosophy/approach
 - Incorporation of evidence-based pedagogical approaches to enhancing student learning
 - Efforts to create inclusive classroom environment
 - Efforts to develop teaching skills
- Research
 - Tell a story; consider hourglass model (broad context at first, identify knowledge gap, why important and exciting → narrow to specifics → broaden back out to articulate broader impact/potential applications)
 - Balance your two audiences (external letter writers who are experts in your field and NatSci RPT committee who are non-specialists in your field)



What makes the NatSci RPT committee happy

A reflective essay that

- tells a story that gets them excited about the science
- answers the question, “why should I care?”
- clearly articulates the significance of the candidate’s contribution to collaborative projects (this could also be done in the list of publications and grants awarded)
- clearly indicates where the science is headed (forward thinking)

A publication list that

- is clearly annotated for easy identification of papers with former mentors and MSU trainees
- Describes the candidate’s contribution to the paper if the candidate is not the lead, senior, or corresponding author
- Includes a nice table listing all MSU trainees (undergrad, grad, postdoc) during the reporting period and their accomplishments (e.g., local, regional, national or international meeting presentations, publications, awards)



What makes the NatSci RPT committee cranky

A reflective essay that

- isn't understandable to someone outside the field
- doesn't articulate how the science has advanced the field
- leaves them wondering, "so what?"

A publication list that

- does not explain the disciplinary norms for order of authorship
- does not clearly indicate publications with MSU trainees



COVID-19 impact statement

- Entirely optional
- Could be a separate statement or woven throughout Form on Progress and Excellence or in reflective essay
- How did pandemic affect your ability to get your work done?
- What adjustments did you make?
 - Shifted priorities (e.g. focused on transition to online instruction)
 - Changed publication strategies (e.g. went for pubs in lower impact journals to help grad student make progress)
 - Helped others



Expectations - Reappointment

Evidence of a **good start** as an independent scholar, teacher, and leader

- Publications as lead or senior author
- Grants submitted as PI
- Successful teaching as evidenced by student and peer evaluations
- Starting to mentor graduate students and postdocs
- Engagement with disciplinary organizations and journals



Expectations – Promotion to Assoc Prof with Tenure

Evidence of an **established** scholar, teacher, and leader

- Track record of publications as lead or senior author
- Funded grants as PI or co-PI with demonstrated contributions
- Trained PhD students and postdocs with successful outcomes
- Disciplinary leadership and college/university service
- National/international reputation as a leader in the discipline



Expectations – Promotion to Full Professor

Evidence of **outstanding performance** in research, teaching and leadership/service and to be demonstrably **prepared to take on intellectual and organizational leadership**

- Sustained 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
- Strong letters of evaluation from leading researchers
- Continuing and substantial number of invitations to speak at national and international conferences and leading universities and research organizations
- Effective mentoring of graduate students and post docs as demonstrated by supervision and strong placement
- Demonstration of effective leadership within the academic sphere of the university and at the national/international level



Considerations - pandemic and beyond

- Trajectory: was candidate on track prior to pandemic?
- More holistic evaluation: acknowledge and reward the added academic mentorship and service commitments of faculty and academic staff from underrepresented groups and the impact of this often-invisible work on professional advancement.
- Provost supports above; is well aware of the danger of losing talent



DEI engagement - Research/scholarship examples

- Nurtures/promotes **research opportunities** with individuals historically excluded from their disciplines
- Promotes a **climate** that values DEI in research settings
- Mentors and incorporates **early career researchers** from underrepresented groups into their laboratories
- Facilitates a **safe and accessible work environment** that reduces barriers to conducting research
- Presents DEI-focused **seminars, lectures, papers, posters**
- Invites scholars from underrepresented groups to **present seminars**
- Attends **professional meetings** that center scholars from underrepresented groups in STEM
- Provides **research opportunities for underrepresented students** through participation in summer research programs



DEI Engagement - Teaching/mentoring examples

- Serves on minoritized graduate students' **guidance committees**
- Ensures that all undergraduate students receive **equitable mentoring** that is respectful and culturally responsive
- Includes **curricular resources** that amplify the voices of minoritized scholars
- Employs **inclusive pedagogical techniques** that meet the needs of students of all backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities
- Participates in **DEI-focused professional development** (e.g., inclusive pedagogy, inclusive course content)
- Includes a **DEI statement** in their syllabus
- Encourages students to **practice cultural respectfulness** (e.g., expose students to new perspectives on cultures, beliefs, and practices) while engaging in all scholarly activities, including rigorous debate
- Provide **accessible course materials** (e.g., understands the expense and accessibility of required course materials)



DEI Engagement – Service/outreach examples

- Engages in **inclusive outreach practices**
- **Disseminates DEI-focused research** to the broader public
- Serves as a **reviewer** for journals or other publications that have a DEI focus
- Promotes DEI values throughout activities of **professional societies**
- Serves as a **consultant** for off-campus DEI-focused organizations
- Participates in **programs designed to increase entry** of underrepresented groups into STEM fields



Questions?

Contact us

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