

**Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics
School of Medicine and Public Health
University of Wisconsin-Madison**

**Procedures for the Review and Evaluation of Probationary Faculty Members
(Adopted by the Department Executive Committee on 02/05/2021)**

I. Overview

This document describes the tenure process for Assistant Professors in the Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics (BMI). [Chapter 7](#) of *Faculty Policies and Procedures (FP&P)* and the Guidelines for Recommendations for Promotion or Appointment to Tenure established by the [Biological Sciences](#), [Physical Sciences](#) and [Social Sciences](#) Divisional Committees provide additional information on the tenure process.

II. Preparing a Case for Tenure and the Tenure Dossier

Assistant Professors should regularly document their scholarly activities using the format required for a tenure dossier within their Faculty Division. They should maintain files of supporting materials, including:

- published articles or book chapters,
- presentations,
- grant proposals,
- syllabi,
- assignments,
- teaching resources,
- formal and informal teaching evaluations,
- letters and emails assigning them to committees,
- white papers or memos documenting the results of shared governance work,
- letters from professional organizations, and
- honors and awards.

Collecting these materials proactively will greatly reduce the burden required to assemble the dossier in preparation for the tenure review.

III. Setting the Tenure Clock (Probationary Period)

The probationary period for an Assistant Professor is a maximum of 7 years and starts on the first day of the appointment. The mandatory review date, found in the appointment letter, is set for the end of the 6th year and marks when the entire tenure review process must be concluded. An Assistant Professor with previous experience may be hired on a shortened tenure clock (less than 7 years).

IV. Stopping the Tenure Clock (Extending the Probationary Period)

Stopping the tenure clock excludes a semester or a year from being counted in the probationary period. Upon approval, the mandatory review date moves forward by a semester or a year (as requested). Assistant Professors are not penalized for these extensions and are encouraged to request them, when appropriate, under the campus-approved guidelines.

Assistant Professors may stop the tenure clock for a variety of reasons, including:

- childbirth or adoption
- significant elder or dependent care obligations
- disability or chronic illness
- circumstances beyond the control of the faculty member
- substantial change in the duties of the appointment
- leave of absence
- COVID-19

Requests related to childbirth and adoption or COVID-19 have an expedited review process with presumed approval.

Annual reviews of an Assistant Professor who has received an extension are based on their progress towards a tenurable record given the time remaining on the adjusted tenure clock. Most, but not all, extensions also extend the contract date by the same amount of time.

Reasons for stopping the tenure clock are confidential.

V. Selecting a Faculty Division

In addition to the Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics and the School of Medicine and Public Health, faculty are members of one of the four faculty divisions: Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, or Social Sciences. The division is chosen by the probationary faculty member, in consultation with the Department Chair and the Guidance and Oversight Committee, prior to the end of the first semester of appointment in the Department. The choice of faculty division should be based on the nature of the Assistant Professor's research and teaching. Currently, faculty in the Department belong to either the Biological Sciences Division or the Physical Sciences Division.

VI. Guidance and Oversight Committee

Prior to the start of the Assistant Professor's appointment, the Department Chair, in consultation with the Assistant Professor and the Department Executive Committee, appoints a Guidance and Oversight Committee (GOC) for the Assistant Professor. The Guidance and Oversight Committee consists of a minimum of 3 tenured faculty at UW-Madison; the GOC Chair and at least one other member must be tenured faculty in the Department. The membership of the Guidance and Oversight Committee does not change during the course of the probationary period unless requested by the Assistant Professor.

VII. Mentoring (Guidance)

The Department of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics is committed to providing excellent mentoring (guidance) to all Assistant Professors. Although guidance of Assistant Professors in the collective responsibility of the Department Chair and the Department Executive Committee, the Guidance and Oversight Committee (GOC) is the primary resource for consultation, review, advice and suggestions on current progress and future endeavors. The GOC provides constructive advice on the core responsibilities of teaching, research and service with the goal of maximizing the chance for academic success and a positive tenure decision. Other tenured faculty members with appropriate research and/or teaching interests may also play a formal or informal role in mentoring the Assistant Professor.

Within the first six months of their appointment, the Assistant Professor will schedule their first Guidance and Oversight Committee meeting. At this initial meeting, topics of discussion should include:

- the choice of the faculty division,
- the anticipated areas of excellence (typically research) and significant accomplishment (typically teaching or service) for the tenure case,
- plans for developing a vigorous research program,
- teaching responsibilities and
- service commitments.

VIII. Annual Evaluation

Each Spring, the Guidance and Oversight Committee meets with the Assistant Professor to review their teaching, research and service activities over the past year and plans for the coming year(s). Prior to the meeting, the Assistant Professor provides the Guidance and Oversight Committee with a current CV and an Annual Activity Report documenting research, teaching and service activities over the past year. Following the meeting, the Guidance and Oversight Committee prepares a written annual evaluation of the Assistant Professor's progress towards tenure for discussion at an Executive Committee meeting. Following the discussion, the Department Chair meets with the Assistant Professor to discuss their status in terms of renewal and promotion and provide advice, if needed, for future endeavors and/or improvements, and the written evaluation, as approved by the Executive Committee, is given to the Assistant Professor. The Assistant Professor may provide a written response to the evaluation.

Annual reviews of an Assistant Professor who has received an extension are based on their progress towards a tenurable record given the time remaining on the adjusted tenure clock.

IX. Contract Renewal

Newly hired Assistant Professors receive an initial 3-year contract. As part of the annual evaluation during the 2nd year, the Department Executive Committee will evaluate progress towards tenure and vote on a 3-year contract extension. If there is a negative vote to renew, the Assistant Professor will be notified in writing. The Assistant Professor may request written reasons for nonrenewal and reconsideration by the Executive Committee of the nonrenewal decision.

X. Criteria for Promotion

a. Excellence or significant accomplishment in research

Excellence in research is demonstrated by the development of one or more independent, coherent and significant lines of statistical, computational or other data-scientific research motivated by and/or with applications to biomedical, biological, clinical or public health research as evidenced by:

- publication of peer-reviewed manuscripts in high-quality journals or conferences,
- invitation or selection for oral presentations at national (and international) professional meetings, and
- external funding sufficient to support their research program.

Collaborative interdisciplinary research as part of these independent lines of research is highly valued by the Department, and all faculty are expected to participate in methodological and collaborative research activities. Development of publicly available software is also valued by the Department.

The requirements for significant accomplishment in research are similar, but the body of work and/or the size of the research enterprise may be less extensive.

b. Significant Accomplishment in Teaching

Significant accomplishment in teaching is demonstrated by a substantial contribution to the educational mission of the department through teaching courses (defining curriculum and/or assessing students) regardless of modality (in-person, online or hybrid). Assistant Professors are typically expected to be the primary instructor for at least one 3-credit course per year. Peer reviews and, to a lesser extent, student reviews provide the best evidence for significant accomplishment in teaching. Mentoring of graduate students is expected at a reasonable and appropriate level throughout the probationary period. Guest lectures and other participation in team-taught courses is encouraged.

c. Significant Accomplishment in Service

Significant accomplishment in service requires engagement in substantial service activities that:

- demonstrate innovation and creativity,
- advance the mission of the department to support the generation and dissemination of knowledge and
- advance the mission of the department to serve the broader public good.

Types of service activities that would demonstrate significant accomplishment in service include:

- leadership in major campus, government or non-governmental organization initiatives or
- development, leadership and management of innovative educational or service programs.

While most cases will not be based on significant accomplishment in service, all probationary faculty are expected to perform service activities at a reasonable and appropriate level throughout the probationary period, including:

- serving on Department, School and University committees,
- participating in professional meetings and professional societies, and
- performing outreach to the broader community in Madison, Wisconsin or beyond.

d. Excellence in Teaching

Excellence in teaching requires a national or international reputation as an expert in teaching and learning as demonstrated by an impactful scholarly work in the advancement and development of teaching as an academic pursuit. Excellence in teaching requires more than a very high quantity or quality of teaching at UW-Madison or elsewhere. It is unlikely that a case based on excellence in teaching would be appropriate for a probationary faculty member in our Department.

e. Integrated Case

In an integrated case, excellence is demonstrated by impacts on the field of study that are enhanced by synergies created among the three areas of activity (research, teaching, service). These activities must be so closely integrated that it is not possible to clearly separate one area of excellence from the other with significant accomplishment. It is unlikely that an integrated case would be appropriate for a probationary faculty member in our Department.

XI. Departmental Tenure Review Process

The decision to initiate the formal review process for tenure consideration by the Department is made jointly by the Assistant Professor, the Guidance and Oversight Committee and the Department Chair.

In the typical case, as part of the annual evaluation during the 5th year, the Guidance and Oversight Committee will provide a written evaluation of the suitability of the Assistant Professor for tenure. The Department Executive Committee will then meet to consider the GOC evaluation along with supporting materials from the Assistant Professor (CV, teaching and research statements, external funding, teaching evaluations, etc.). The Executive Committee will vote to solicit external letters of evaluation and extend the appointment for 1 year.

If there is a negative vote, the Assistant Professor will be notified in writing. The Assistant Professor may request written reasons for decision and reconsideration by the Executive Committee.

If the Executive Committee votes to solicit external letters, the Department Chair and the Guidance and Oversight Committee assemble a list of potential letter writers. The letter writers are ultimately selected from this list by the Department Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee. The Department Chair emails the tenure dossier to the approved list of external reviewers, requesting a written evaluation of the suitability of the Assistant Professor for tenure at UW-Madison.

When the required materials (the tenure dossier including the external letters) are available, a meeting of the Department Executive Committee is scheduled to evaluate the tenure case. The Assistant Professor will be given notice of the meeting at least 20 days in advance. Discussion of the case will occur in closed session unless the Assistant Professor requests that it be held in open session. Using the written criteria and standards for tenure established by the Department and the appropriate Faculty Division, the Executive Committee votes on a recommendation for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. The Assistant Professor will be notified of the decision in writing.

If the Executive Committee votes in favor of promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, the tenure dossier is finalized and forwarded to the Office of the Dean of the School of Medicine and Public Health for transmission to the appropriate Divisional Committee. In the case of a joint appointment, an affirmative vote from the Executive Committee of the other department may be required.

If the Executive Committee does not vote in favor of promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, the Assistant Professor may request written reasons for the decision and reconsideration by the Executive Committee.