## *Guidance on COVID-19 disruptions relating to Evaluations of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty and, as applicable, Unclassified Academic Staff: Progress Toward Tenure Review, Promotion and Tenure, and Post-Tenure Review.*

### Guidance

*The following guidance applies to all faculty evaluations listed here, beginning with the corresponding periods: Progress Toward Tenure Review (2022-2023 Academic Year), Promotion and Tenure (2022-2023 Academic Year), and Post-Tenure Review (2021-2022 Academic Year).*

Dear faculty, chairs/directors, and deans,

We recognize that faculty work has been affected since Spring, 2020 by COVID-19 disruptions:

* As individuals, we experienced the impacts in different ways.
* These impacts are not distributed evenly.
* We can't assume we know the impacts across our faculty.

As we move into upcoming cycles for all our faculty evaluation processes, it is important that we enable our faculty to document any impacts arising from the pandemic and have review committee members document how they took those impacts into account in their evaluations.

Thus, all faculty have the option to address the impact of COVID-19 disruptions on their teaching, research, scholarship, creative or artistic work (hereafter, scholarship), service, and professional performance in their candidate statements and/or other materials normally provided in various evaluation processes. If a current evaluation process does not provide an opportunity for any narrative or statement, faculty may choose to write such a narrative or statement addressing COVID-19 impacts and add it to their materials as a separate document. While not required, the Office of Faculty Affairs encourages faculty to supplement any materials required in their dossiers/reports as applicable, given the challenges raised by COVID-19 disruptions, specifically:

* It may be that some normally expected activities were simply not possible to accomplish or were significantly curtailed during the pandemic, especially, but not exclusively, in the area of scholarship.
* The conditions of the pandemic may be directly related to a change in the pattern or types of activity faculty pursued in the face of the challenges.

For privacy reasons, candidates should not share any personal circumstances in their statements, but rather focus on the impact to outcomes that they want to address. The inclusion of this supplemental information about the impacts of COVID-19 disruptions will allow chairs, deans, and promotion and tenure committee members and other review committees to carefully review faculty records and conduct fair and contextual evaluations of whether, except for COVID-19 disruptions, faculty are meeting the criteria used in all evaluation processes.

The Promotion and Tenure Dossier (that formerly constituted the “Blue Form” pages) will be submitted electronically to the Office of the Provost for consideration by the University Committee on Promotions and Tenure.

*Instructions on the forms provided by the Provost Office for P&T will be updated to reflect this option for candidates, and when completing the evaluation forms, chairs/directors/deans/review committee members will be required to indicate how they considered the stated effects of COVID-19 disruptions in their written evaluations.*

*For Post-Tenure Review, units are expected to allow faculty the option to address the impact of COVID-19 disruptions in either existing narratives or statements, or in the absence of those, to provide an option to address disruptions in a separate narrative or statement.*

### What Candidates May Choose to Do

Faculty should prepare their materials for all types of evaluation as normal, recognizing they may, at their choosing, also incorporate the impact of COVID-19 into their candidate statements or other narratives on teaching, scholarship, service, and professional performance. For PTR, if there is currently no space to provide any narrative or statement on unit-level forms, faculty may choose to write a separate statement and submit it along with other materials normally submitted.

**Below is a non-exclusive list of some of the types of impacts faculty may want to address in the materials they submit for all types of evaluations.** These examples come from the literature on the impacts of COVID-19 on faculty work and efforts at other institutions to develop evaluation processes that take COVID-19 disruptions into account[1](#_bookmark0):

# **Teaching**

* Pivot to remote instruction in March 2020
* Technology challenges altered traditional methods of assigning and assessing student work
* Remote or hybrid instruction continuing into the 2020-2021 academic year required many faculty members to spend a significant amount of time learning new pedagogical methods and technological approaches, and revising existing courses for new teaching approaches
* Additional work needed to support students experiencing health, economic, and social consequences of COVID-19, including special circumstances of international students
* Cancellations of all kinds related to teaching: field courses, community-engaged work, service learning, performances and exhibitions, professional development conferences, study abroad

# **Scholarship**

* Lab closures, capacity reductions, relocations, and/or loss of research material
* Impacts on grant funding, including changes in the priorities of granting agencies, cutbacks in funding available, new grant funding opportunities, and the fact that faculty were encouraged to continue to pay students, postdocs, and technicians even if not advancing projects.
* Cancellations of all types: book contracts due to the closure of or cutbacks at university or other presses; performances and exhibitions; conferences; invited talks; fellowships; artist/scholar-in-residence appointments, travel
* Other workload priorities intruded on time dedicated to research
* Inaccessibility of field work sites, human subjects, libraries, stacks, archives, and other research collections
* Delays in journal review process and publication schedules
* Impacts on recruiting, hiring, supporting, retaining, and replacing research personnel and graduate students
* Delay in arrival or inability to hire (e.g., due to travel issues) international students/postdocs
* Collaborators/research team members impacted

# **Service**

* Time spent on COVID-19 response teams and committees
* Pandemic response suspended or curtailed traditional and ad hoc service assignments
* Pandemic response greatly increased service responsibilities for some faculty
* Pandemic complicated external service responsibilities such as journal editorships, chairing of academic conference sessions, professional organization service, and other integrated scholarly service
* Service to community-based institutions was halted/altered in significant ways
* Other workload priorities intruded on service

# **Professional performance**

* Impacts on productivity due to changes in on-site shift scheduling
* Added work adapting activities to new instructional and communication modes and approaches
* Limited access and contact with colleagues, compounding existing challenges of interdisciplinary work
* Additional time and coordination required to serve and attend to varied needs of students, faculty, and staff.
* Disruptions to public education efforts, hands-on experiential learning activities
* Impacts on all kinds of community outreach efforts, including tours at facilities

**What Chairs/Directors, Deans, and Review Committees Need to Do:**

# **Promotion and Tenure**

Review the instructions provided on the forms for P&T. If you have questions, please contact the Office of Faculty Affairs ([facultyaffairs@ku.edu](mailto:facultyaffairs@ku.edu)).

If a faculty member does NOT mention impacts from COVID-19, evaluate following regular criteria and procedures for the respective area of faculty work.

If impacts are mentioned, respond in each evaluation section of the form (teaching, scholarship, service, professional performance). In the case of PTR, ensure that any mention of COVID-19 disruptions is addressed in written PTR evaluations. Use the following to guide discussion and ensure consistent documentation in the evaluations:

1. Comment on whether the candidate still meets the established specific criteria (rating of good or higher) in unit promotion and tenure guidelines, regardless of the impact of COVID-19.
2. If the candidate's record does not meet unit criteria sufficient for recommending promotion and tenure, provide a preliminary rating in the evaluation (i.e., any poor or marginal rating in any area) and indicate whether the stated COVID-19 disruptions have any relevance at all to the work assessed by the preliminary rating.
   1. If the preliminary rating is completely unrelated to the stated COVID-19 disruptions, provide the reasoning to support the marginal or poor preliminary rating. The preliminary rating becomes the final rating.
   2. If the preliminary rating is due to work impacted by COVID-19 disruptions, consider the record of accomplishments in light of the general university criteria for promotion and tenure for that area (FSRR 6.2). Explain whether, given the stated impacts:
      1. It is reasonable to adjust specific unit-level criteria in such a way to produce an adjusted rating that is higher than the preliminary rating. Describe the adjustment(s) to the criteria and explain whether the resulting adjusted ratings supports promotion and tenure based on both the adjusted criteria and the general university criteria for promotion and tenure. The adjusted rating becomes the final rating; or
      2. It is not reasonable to adjust specific unit-level criteria. In this case, provide an explanation of this decision. The preliminary rating becomes the final rating

# **Progress Toward Tenure Review**

Review the instructions provided on the forms for PTTR. If you have questions, please contact the Office of Faculty Affairs ([facultyaffairs@ku.edu](mailto:facultyaffairs@ku.edu)).

If a faculty member does NOT mention impacts from COVID-19, evaluate following regular criteria and procedures for the respective area of faculty work.

If impacts are mentioned, respond in each evaluation section of the form (teaching, scholarship, service, professional performance). Use the following to guide discussion and ensure consistent documentation in the evaluations:

1. Comment on whether the candidate still meets the established specific criteria for “demonstrating progress toward tenure” based on unit promotion and tenure guidelines, regardless of the impact of COVID-19.
2. If the candidate's record does not meet unit criteria sufficient for “demonstrating progress toward tenure,” provide a preliminary rating/evaluation (i.e., either “improvement required for continued progress toward tenure” or “record not sufficient for progress toward tenure”) and indicate whether the stated COVID-19 disruptions have any relevance at all to the work assessed by the preliminary evaluation.
   1. If the preliminary evaluation is completely unrelated to the stated COVID-19 disruptions, provide the reasoning to support the preliminary evaluation. The preliminary evaluation becomes the final evaluation.
   2. If the preliminary evaluation is due to work impacted by COVID-19 disruptions, consider the record of accomplishments in light of the general university criteria for promotion and tenure for that area of work (FSRR 6.2). Explain whether, given the stated impacts:
      1. It is reasonable to adjust specific unit-level criteria in such a way to produce an adjusted evaluation that is higher than the preliminary evaluation. Describe the adjustment(s) to the criteria and explain whether the resulting adjusted evaluation supports either “demonstrates progress toward tenure” or “improvement required for continued progress toward tenure”, based on both the adjusted criteria and the general university criteria for promotion and tenure. The adjusted evaluation becomes the final evaluation; or
      2. It is not reasonable to adjust specific unit-level criteria. In this case, provide an explanation of this decision. The preliminary evaluation becomes the final evaluation.

# **Post-Tenure Review**

If a faculty member does NOT mention impacts from COVID-19, evaluate following regular criteria and procedures for the respective area of faculty work.

If impacts are mentioned, respond in each evaluation area (teaching, scholarship, service, professional performance). Use the following to guide discussion and ensure consistent documentation in the evaluations:

1. Comment on whether the candidate still meets the established specific criteria (rating of meets or exceeds expectations) in unit post-tenure criteria and procedures documents for each area of work, regardless of the impact of COVID-19.
2. If the candidate's record fails to meet expectations, provide that as a preliminary rating in the evaluation and indicate whether the stated COVID-19 disruptions have any relevance at all to the work assessed by the preliminary rating:
   1. If the preliminary rating is completely unrelated to the stated COVID-19 disruptions, provide the reasoning to support the “fails to meet expectations” rating. The preliminary rating becomes the final rating.
   2. If the preliminary rating is due to work impacted by COVID-19 disruptions, explain whether, given the stated impacts:
      1. It is reasonable to adjust specific unit-level criteria in such a way to produce an adjusted rating that is either meets or exceeds expectations. The adjusted rating becomes the final rating; or
      2. It is not reasonable to adjust specific unit-level criteria. In this case, provide an explanation of this decision. The preliminary rating becomes the final rating.

### General Reminders

**Teaching:** Recall that Spring 2020 student surveys of teaching are not to be used for evaluation purposes, and after that, and through Summer 2021, faculty have the option to include them in their evaluation materials.

Candidates will not be penalized for having opted to exclude the student survey reports, but our university standard in FSRR 6.2.2.2 does require of candidates for promotion and tenure: ***". . . a demonstrated commitment to student learning, efforts to improve teaching skills over time . . .". Reflecting on information gained from student surveys and demonstrating how subsequent changes were made to improve student learning is an important way to achieving the standard.***

The Office of Faculty Affairs recommends review of CTE guidance on ways to use multiple sources of information to document and assess their teaching effectiveness.

### Tenure Clock Reminders

# **KBOR extension:**

All tenure-track faculty who were in their probationary period during the Spring 2020, or who began their probationary periods in Fall 2020, had their tenure clocks automatically extended by one year. At their choosing, faculty can go through the P&T process on their original schedule. This extension does not count as one of the two extensions allowed under KBOR policy for birth/adoption of a child or other extenuating circumstances.

# **Other extensions to the tenure clock:**

Untenured faculty members in tenure-track appointments who have not yet entered the mandatory review may interrupt the tenure clock under [the interruption of the tenure clock policy.](https://policy.ku.edu/provost/interruption-of-tenure-clock#interruption)

**Questions**

Please contact the Office of Faculty Affairs at [facultyaffairs@ku.edu](mailto:facultyaffairs@ku.edu)