

Third-Year Review and Tenure-Clock Extension FAQ

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Questions on Third-Year Review

Who must do a third-year intensive review this year (spring 2021)?

In general, the pre-tenure process has not changed. Anyone who was originally scheduled for a third-year intensive review in spring 2021 is expected to do a third-year intensive review in the spring of 2021.

More specifically:

- All faculty who started a tenure-track position in 2018 are expected to do a third-year review in the spring of 2021.
- If a faculty member started a tenure-track position in 2017, previously received a non-COVID-related extension of the tenure clock, and did not have a third-year review last year, they must do one in the spring of 2021.
- If a faculty member started a tenure track position in 2017 and did not do their third-year review last year, they must do one in the spring of 2021.

What about early-career faculty who are planning to use the COVID-19 tenure-clock extension?

- The COVID-19 tenure clock extension does not affect the third-year review schedule this year or in future years.

Since there is a COVID-19 tenure-clock extension, why isn't there also an extension for the intensive third-year review like there was last year?

- Last year we allowed people to delay the third-year review because of the sudden switch to online learning. We thought we could carry that practice forward, but in discussion with faculty and administrators at WSU and at other universities, the benefits of holding the third-year review outweigh the downsides.
- The purpose of the intensive third-year review is to provide timely feedback to faculty on their progress toward tenure. We would like to provide this feedback to faculty sooner rather than later.
- Completing the third-year review also provides the candidate's mentoring committee and chair/director with a more detailed understanding of a candidate's work that will help them better advise faculty mentees.
- The results of this career-progress review can help to inform a faculty member's decision about whether to opt out of the tenure-clock extension.
- Faculty members with significant concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on their scheduled review should consult as soon as possible with their chair.

What if COVID-19 had a substantial negative impact on the faculty member's research and teaching and their third-year review indicates that they need improvement -- will that count against them?

- The third-year intensive review is designed to provide a holistic assessment for career development purposes, as opposed to an evaluation of annual performance. Identifying and then addressing concerns can thus be a positive contributor to the final tenure review.



- In cases where there has been a clear pattern of unsatisfactory work performance, above and beyond the COVID-related difficulties almost all faculty have experienced, performance reviews are evaluative as well as developmental.
- A determination that the progress toward tenure is “unsatisfactory” can lead to non-reappointment as described in Section III.E.1 of the *Faculty Manual*. In this event, the faculty member may, within thirty (30) calendar days after notification of non-reappointment, petition the Faculty Status Committee to review the decision upon allegations either of inadequate consideration, violation of academic freedom, or substantial procedural irregularity.

Some career-track and tenured faculty are also scheduled for intensive reviews this year. Can these be delayed?

- Except in cases of prior unsatisfactory performance, for individuals in these categories a decision to have an intensive review is at the discretion of the faculty member. Thus, faculty members may defer an intensive review even if they have previously requested one for AY2020-2021.
- All faculty who are scheduled for a comprehensive or intensive review due to unsatisfactory performance on a previous annual review, regardless of track or rank, must proceed with the comprehensive or intensive review as scheduled.

Questions on Tenure-Clock Extensions

At what point do faculty have to opt out of the COVID-19 tenure-clock extension?

- Faculty may opt out of the COVID tenure-clock extension up to April 15th of the spring before the academic year they would ordinarily be scheduled to be considered for tenure, as specified in the offer letter. For example, if a faculty member is in the fifth year of appointment and due to be considered for tenure and promotion in AY2021-2022, with tenure effective in July or August of 2022, they should declare their intention to opt out by April 15th 2021.

What is the process to opt out of the COVID-19 tenure-clock extension?

- Faculty who want to opt out of the COVID-19 extension should communicate that in writing to their chair or school director and additionally, for Spokane, Vancouver, Everett, and Tri-Cities, to the campus’s academic director.
- The chair/director should forward the candidate’s memo to the dean (and campus VCAA where relevant) documenting the faculty member’s desire to opt out and specifying the expected academic year of tenure review
- The dean should forward that memo to the Provost’s Chief of Staff, Kristina Peterson-Wilson, in the provost’s office.



Will there be another tenure-clock extension this year because of COVID-19?

- Some people have experienced major, ongoing disruptions to their work related to COVID-19. Tenure-track faculty members who feel they need an additional extension should discuss this request with their chair/director, who will share the request with the Dean, VCAA (where appropriate) and the Provost's office. As with conventional tenure-clock extension requests, cases will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- We strongly encourage faculty to talk first with their mentoring committees and chairs/directors if considering a request for another tenure-clock extension.

Why aren't additional extensions automatic?

- Delaying the tenure clock also delays career advancement. Thus, an automatic extension for those whose work has not been affected might be harmful. For this reason, we want to move from an automatic extension to an individualized determination.

What about faculty who already had a tenure-clock extension, unrelated to COVID-19? What about faculty who need an additional extension for medical reasons or parental leave?

- The COVID-19 tenure clock extension granted to all pre-tenured faculty in spring of 2019 is in addition to any extensions granted for other reasons.

