COVID Tenure Extension
Frequently Asked Questions

How will this extension affect the assessment of productivity in the tenure review?

As with extensions for other reasons (e.g., birth of a child, serious illness of you or a family member, or catastrophic event), external reviewers will be informed of the extension. Per the revised template for external review letters, reviewers will be informed that:

In recognition of the many implications of COVID-19 for faculty life and work, in fall 2020 the University automatically extended the probationary period by one year for all faculty who are assistant professors and associate professors without tenure in the tenure, clinician-educator, and research tracks, including Dr. ______________. It is important to note that we evaluate the productivity of each candidate who has been granted an extension as if he or she had been in probationary status for the normal duration.

How does this extension influence the timing of a review?

Faculty may use the extension to delay their reappointment review, or proceed with the reappointment review as scheduled and apply the extension to the second appointment term. Department chairs, associate deans, and/or deans should work with faculty to determine an appropriate timeline for reappointment and tenure reviews.

Does this automatic extension prevent someone from receiving other extensions?

This automatic extension of the probationary period does not count against the total number of permitted extensions or total time in the probationary period. This extension also does not preclude faculty from receiving future extensions for reasons outlined in the Faculty Handbook §II.E.3, including a new child, caregiving, serious health conditions, catastrophic events, and military service.

What if this extension is not wanted?

Consistent with current policy for other extensions, faculty may waive this extension. Faculty who wish to waive this extension should notify their dean or department chair that they intend to seek to be reviewed on their original timeline. Per the Faculty Handbook §II.E.3.E, any faculty member approved for an extension may “waive an approved extension and revert to an earlier mandatory review year.”

What is the deadline for waiving the extension?

Per the Faculty Handbook §II.E.3.E:

A faculty member approved for an extension under this section, may waive an approved extension and revert to an earlier mandatory review year. The faculty member must make a
written request for reversion to their department chair or, if none, their dean, before July 1 of the desired mandatory review year.

Will waiving this extension be considered coming up for review early?

No. A faculty member who does not want to use this extension can be reviewed on their original timeline with no penalty. The Provost’s Staff Conference will not consider a waiving of this extension to be coming up early.

How many times may my file be reviewed for tenure?

Once. If a faculty member waives the extension and the tenure decision is negative at the department, School, or Provost level, the faculty member cannot then apply the extension. A waived extension should not be reinstated once a review has begun.

What other supports are available?

With the goal of helping to recognize the many different challenges faculty may be experiencing, make visible the implications of these issues for equity and inclusion, and identify strategies and resources for addressing these issues, we have prepared A Guide for Penn Faculty: Inclusion in the COVID Era. This Guide includes resources and guidance to support teaching and working online, managing caregiving responsibilities (including our new COVID-19 Childcare Grants), addressing racism, and assessing productivity. We encourage you to reach out to your department chair or dean for assistance in addressing your particular situation.