

TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES: Milestones/Timing Considerations

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This document provides a listing of “milestones” for tenure-track faculty, along with timing considerations for tenured associate professors and term instructional faculty.

Milestones

For tenure-track assistant and associate professors

Tenure-track faculty are hired on a 3-year contract that is renewable for an additional 3 years (assuming a favorable contract renewal decision in the 3rd year of employment on the tenure clock). Although this 6-year journey may be shortened for those with prior experience (and appropriate accomplishments) in a tenure-track (or similar) position, the standard expectations are as follows:

- YEAR 1: Initiate Mason research program; begin to establish Mason teaching record; engage in appropriate Mason and professional service activities; plan for timing of tenure-track study leave (best if taken in Year 2, 3, or 4).
- YEAR 2: Construct first iteration of the developmental portfolio and receive initial feedback from the Tenure-Track Annual Review Committee (Fall semester); continue engagement and progress in teaching, research, and service activities.
- YEAR 3: Submit second iteration of the development portfolio to TTARC (early Fall); submit contract renewal portfolio (very similar to the developmental portfolio) to the P&T Committee (Spring); identify and target any identified vulnerabilities in teaching, research, and service.
- YEAR 4: Submit third iteration of the developmental portfolio to TTARC (early Fall); continue to address any areas identified as “off track” or less than optimal with respect to Mason and CEHD tenure criteria; take tenure-track study leave no later than Spring of this year; make specific plans for publication efforts throughout the remainder of the tenure-track period.
- YEAR 5: Submit fourth iteration of the developmental portfolio to TTARC (early Fall); plan and prioritize “final push” agenda in anticipation of the tenure portfolio submission deadline the following year; seek targeted mentoring for any and all areas of potential vulnerability; read online guidelines and suggestions and then meet with the CEHD

Faculty Evaluation and Workload Coordinator and the CEHD Senior Associate Dean to ensure that there is no uncertainty or confusion about tenure-related criteria, procedures, expectations, or timelines.

YEAR 6: Submit names of proposed external reviewers, along with materials to be sent to the external reviewers, to the Faculty Evaluation and Workload Coordinator and Senior Associate Dean (August); submit fifth iteration of the developmental portfolio to TTARC (early Fall) and use that feedback to “polish and perfect” tenure-related materials; submit tenure portfolio (end of October).

For tenured associate professors

Eligibility to be considered for promotion to the full professor rank would typically require at least 5 full years in the associate rank (with the evaluation occurring in the following year), along with performance data that went well beyond the thresholds used in evaluations for tenure and promotion to the associate rank. Specifically, tenured candidates for full professor must provide evidence of significant impact beyond the boundaries of the university that is much more substantial than in such cases. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation in the primary field, based on consequential achievements in teaching, research and scholarship, or professional activities directly related to teaching and research and scholarship.

There is no time limit for seeking promotion to the full professor rank, nor are there specific milestones along the associate professor pathway as there are for tenure-track faculty. For that reason, it is especially important for tenured associate professors who aspire to be promoted to the full professor rank to proactively seek ongoing mentoring from senior faculty colleagues and from the CEHD Dean’s Office.

For term assistant and associate professors (instructional faculty)

Term assistant professors are hired and renewed on year-to-year contracts. The potential opportunity to move to a multi-year contract is contingent on earning the rank of associate professor (among other factors). For assistant professors the primary basis for year-to-year contract renewal is the assessment of teaching and service provided annually by the SOED, KINE, or SRTM Faculty Evaluation Team.

Eligibility for promotion to associate professor follows a timeline analogous to tenure-track faculty (i.e., consideration for promotion in rank would typically occur after 5 years of full-time Mason employment, with a shorter period possible for those with prior experience in an assistant professor or equivalent position).

Eligibility to be considered for promotion to the full professor rank would typically require at least 5 full years in the associate rank, along with performance data that went well beyond the High Competence threshold used for multi-year contract renewal and term promotion to associate evaluations. Specifically, term instructional faculty must reach the Genuine Excellence threshold in Teaching, which requires substantial evidence of significant impact beyond the boundaries of the university and an established external reputation in the primary field.

There is no time limit for seeking promotion to either the associate or full professor rank, nor are there specific milestones along the associate professor pathway as there are for tenure-track faculty. For that reason, it is especially important for term faculty who aspire to be promoted in rank to proactively seek ongoing mentoring from senior faculty colleagues and from the CEHD Dean's Office.