

Work Impact FAQs (created March 17, 2025)

The Vice Provost for Faculty's Memo dated March 17, 2025, provided details on how a faculty member may record impacts to their productivity as a result of external forces. This FAQ provides additional information on the Work Impact statement as well as continuing guidance relative to Covid-19.

1. How do I reflect the impact of external, personal, professional, or health events (including Covid-19) on my work in my critical review, tenure, or promotion package?

If desired, faculty can address work impacts in the (1) five-page narrative, (2) in their CV, (3) in their teaching portfolio (for lecturers), and/or (4) in a Work Impact statement (limited to two pages in standard formatting). The statement would be uploaded into PROMOTE in the Additional Documents section and would be viewable to internal reviewers only, and not to external reviewers.

2. I would like to document the impact of a disruptive event in my annual review or PTR. What do you suggest that I do?

Faculty should make their chair (or direct supervisor) aware of these impacts on their performance in their annual review materials using one or more of the mechanisms outlined in question 1 above. Faculty undergoing PTR should also document these impacts in a similar manner.

3. Is there a mechanism to get an extension on my critical review or tenure review beyond the automatic Covid-19 extension that some faculty received?

Tenure clock extensions (aka "extensions of the probationary period") are for the purpose of accounting for compelling circumstances which impair the ability of an individual to establish the stature expected of faculty members at Georgia Tech within the normal time frame. Candidates who have compelling reasons under Section 3.3.5 of the Faculty Handbook may request a tenure extension. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If a faculty member would like to request an extension, they should discuss their situation with their school chair or supervisor.

The probationary period may not be interrupted for more than one (1) year per event with a maximum extension of two (2) years. Requests for an extension of the probationary period must be made in writing and submitted to the appropriate unit head (dean/chair) who will consider the request. All requests must be made within twelve (12) months of the event related to the extension request. Any supporting documentation should be attached to the request. Requests for extension to the probationary period for tenure are not granted automatically and are at the discretion of the president. The request needs to be routed through GT-TRACS and receive approval by the unit head (usually the school chair), dean, vice provost for faculty, provost, and president.

4. I have already received two extensions of the probationary period. Am I still eligible?

The USG will only allow two extensions of the probationary period, but we did receive permission to allow exceptions for people experiencing challenges specifically because of Covid. If you wish to pursue this avenue, please submit a request that indicates the specifics of how the pandemic impacted your work. Similar to standard requests to extend the probationary period toward tenure or critical review, the request needs to be routed through GT-TRACS and receive the appropriate approvals. Other disruptive events would not qualify a faculty member for a third extension.

5. Is there a mechanism to get an extension on my PTR review?

Normally, PTR for tenured faculty occurs on a five-year cycle with possible extensions to account for approved leaves of absence. A personnel transaction, such as promotion, award of Regents Professor/Researcher, or appointment to/return from an administrative appointment, resets the starts of the five-year period. If there is a major personal, health, or other external event that significantly impacts the performance of a faculty member, that faculty member can request an extension that would delay the time of the next review. The request would be submitted through GT-TRACS and must be approved by the unit head (or school chair), the dean, and vice provost for faculty.

6. As a reviewer, either on a committee or as an administrator, how do I account for the impact of significant personal, professional, or health events on a candidate's package, including the impact of Covid-19?

For reviews on a timed basis (such as critical review and tenure), the candidate may be approved for an extension to the probationary period based on the terms outlined in the provost's memo from April 20, 2020, as well as the vice provost for faculty's memo from March 12, 2025. In extension cases, the review is typically done without regard to the circumstance of the disruptive event, since that event has been accounted for in the extension. The additional time should not factor into the evaluation. It should be recognized that the effects of the disruptive event may be prolonged and not fully mitigated with a one-year extension. Reflecting on circumstances seems critical to a fair review process.

For cases that are not on a timed basis, such as promotion to full professor or promotion in non-tenure track ranks, the review can take into consideration the circumstances of the disruption in the candidate's performance.

Faculty committees should consider the many dimensions by which a candidate's progress, particularly related to research, may have been affected by a disruptive event, including but not limited to:

- Loss of access to labs (both Georgia Tech facilities and national labs), archives, library materials, and fieldwork sites.
- Long-term disruption of research involving human subjects or fieldwork due to required stoppages.
- Shift in intellectual focus of scholarship.
- Loss of previous funding and a lack of new funding.
- Impacts of changing to less familiar instructional modes.
- Being enlisted to teach less familiar or new courses due to program needs.
- Slowed student progress toward a degree.
- Cancelled opportunities to present at conferences, which diminishes opportunities for networking, visibility, and professional service.
- Lost opportunities for seminar visits.
- Diminished research outcomes due to budgetary problems affecting publication venues (e.g., journals and presses).
- Changing household circumstances, including the care of sick family members.

Some of these effects can be quantified, and faculty have been allowed to footnote events and opportunities that would have occurred (e.g., seminar visits and conference talks) or which were impacted (e.g., grant budget reductions or stoppages) with a notation in their CV.