

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCE



RPT guidelines and timeline for Fixed Term (FT) and Tenure System (TS) faculty in the College of Natural Science

By: Gemma Reguera
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Development
College of Natural Sciences

General guidelines

Recommendations for Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) are made in the department according to unit, college and university bylaws, policies and procedures. Recommendations are then forwarded to the College (NatSci.RPT@msu.edu) for their independent review by the RPT committee and the Dean, who then sends it to the provost and the president for a final decision (non-tenure cases) or the provost, the president, and the Board of Trustees for action (tenure decisions).

The College of Natural Science (NatSci) keeps updated [guidelines for reappointment, promotion and tenure](#) and due dates on its website. A [guide \(PDF\)](#) is also available that describes the criteria for promotion and tenure in the College and provides guidelines for the evaluation process. It adds to and is consistent with [MSU policy and timetable](#).

- **TS faculty – Reappointment to second probationary appointment:** Mandatory review on the 3rd year in rank (unless an extension has been granted).
Successful reappointment adds 3 more years to the probationary appointment.
- **TS faculty – Promotion to associate professor with tenure:** Mandatory review on the 5th year in rank (unless an extension has been granted).
- **TS faculty – Promotion to Full Professor:** Typically, on the 5th year in rank.
Optional [mid-career review](#) at the college recommended for associate professors during their 3rd year in rank.
- **FT faculty – Promotion to Associate Professor and Full Professor:** Typically follows timeline for promotion of TS faculty are each rank.
See university policy for [Promotion of Fixed Term Faculty](#).

University and HR updates

FASA typically emails updated Provost's RPT guidelines on or before April 29¹ every year. Human Resources then emails the memo to the College along with **1)** updated University RPT Timetables, and **2)** a list of Probationary End Dates for TS faculty. *The College encourages departments to identify faculty candidates eligible for RPT review as early as possible.*

Departmental review timeline

On or before:

Jan-May Identification of faculty candidates

¹ MSU HR [Time Table for 2022-23](#)

- Department identifies candidates with mandatory review dates in the next academic year or meriting promotion and provides guidance for the multi-step review process.
Annual reviews provide opportunities to track faculty performance and discuss progress towards RPT. The [Faculty Review](#) policy provides principles and guidelines for implementing these reviews.
- Faculty candidates prepare for their Chair a list of external evaluators and materials that are to be made available to external reviewers.
[University policy](#) minimally requires that external reviewers receive an updated C.V., a reflective essay, and a representative sample of the candidate's scholarly work.

May-Jun External peer evaluation starts

Per policy, a minimum of 4 (maximum of 6) external letters of reference are required for decisions involving the award of tenure and promotion to full professor.

- Departments are encouraged to solicit external letters of reference early on in the process (at least 2 of the letters must be from the faculty list)
The statement on [external letters of reference](#) provides principles and procedures that must be applied uniformly to all faculty in the unit for soliciting external letters of reference. A [Confidentiality statement](#) is required when soliciting the letters: "Letters of reference, as part of an official review file, are held in confidence and will not be disclosed to a faculty member under consideration or to the public except as required by law or university policy. In all such instances, the information made available will be provided in a form that seeks to protect the identity, privacy, and confidentiality of the evaluator."

Sep 1 Suggested due date for external evaluators to submit their letters

Sep-Oct Candidate's promotion seminar (if required by their department's bylaws, policies, and procedures)

Oct-Nov Candidate's packet completion and internal departmental review

- Faculty candidates complete the required Form PE sections and review materials.
See the College's [Promotion Package Checklist](#) for information.
- Departments review the faculty's materials and make a recommendation to the Chair, following their internal bylaws, policies, and procedures.
Departments are required to establish procedures to provide peer advice and recommendations for RPT. University guidelines for the composition of peer review committees are included in the statement on Academic Unit [Peer Review Committee Composition](#).

Nov Evaluation by the Chair

- Chairperson independently reviews the RPT packet and writes an evaluative letter.

Dec 1 *RPT packets due to the College*

- Chairperson forwards recommendation and completed "Form on Progress and Excellence in Reappointment, Promotion or Tenure Action" (formerly Form D) to the college (NatSci.RPT@msu.edu).
- Chairperson forwards their evaluative letter to the faculty applicant.

Dec 7 Faculty candidate's response to the Chair's letter (*optional and confidential*)

- Faculty applicants may send to the college (NatSci.RPT@msu.edu) a *confidential* response to the Chair's letter *within 5 business days*. The response may contain clarifications, corrections, updates, and/or any other information relevant to the RPT review process.

College review timeline

The College receives the packets by Dec 1, checks them for completion, and solicits their independent review by the NatSci RPT committee. The Dean then conducts an independent review and makes a recommendation to the Provost.

On or before

Dec 1 **Packets received by the College and checked for completion**

Jan-Feb NatSci RPT committee review

Feb 17 Dean's decision

- Dean shares evaluative letter and recommendation with the faculty candidates and their Chairs.

Feb 24 Candidate's response to the Dean's letter (*optional and confidential*)

- Faculty applicants may send to the college (NatSci.RPT@msu.edu) a *confidential* response to the Dean's letter *within 5 business days*. The response may contain clarifications, corrections, updates, and/or any other information relevant to the RPT review process.

Feb 28² **College sends packets and recommendations to the Provost's Office**

University review timeline

Mar-Apr University review

Dean meets with the Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs and the Provost's Distinguished Faculty Representatives.

May Provost's decision

- Provost notifies Deans of Promotion and Tenure Action decisions and recommendations to the President and the Board of Trustees.
- Dean sends notices of action by the Office of the Provost to Chairpersons, Directors, and faculty members.
- President receives the final list of reappointments and promotions with tenure and adds the information to the Board of Trustees agenda.

Jun Board of Trustees tenure decisions

Jul Notifications to Deans of final approval of tenure decisions

Oct 15 Delayed actions due

Per [University policy](#): "On an individual case basis, there may be justification to delay the final reappointment, promotion, or tenure decision until the fall (final recommendations are due on or before October 15). Upon the request of or after consultation with the faculty member, the department/school chairperson/school director and dean may concur that another review will be held early in the fall for the purpose of reviewing additional information and making a final recommendation. The request for a delay must be approved by the Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs."

² 2023 due date

Per [NatSci guidelines](#): “A Delay postpones the reappointment, promotion, or tenure decision approximately 8 months, until the fall of year 4 (for reappointment) or of year 7 (in the case of tenure and promotion) without extending the probationary period. A delay is intended for a situation in which extra information – e.g. publication of manuscripts or a decision on grant funding – would have an impact on the review decision. Note that while the delay allows for additional information to be considered by external referees, the department, and the college, the final RPT decision by the University will not be made until December of the candidate’s terminal appointment year, and the time of the termination of the appointment is not extended. Therefore, if the decision is not favorable, the candidate would have only one semester left of MSU employment.”

Dec 15² Notification to faculty of delayed action decisions