

## Policy on Tenure Clock Extension

### ACADEMIC AND FACULTY AFFAIRS

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**Supersedes:** N/A

**Related Policies:**  
Faculty Handbook

**Responsible Office/Department:**  
Office of the Provost

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tenure clock;  
probationary period;  
leave

### I. Purpose and Scope

The Office of the Provost recognizes that there may be compelling circumstances that may result in the practical impossibility of the faculty member to carry out the professional development required during the normal probationary (pre-tenure) period.

This policy provides for extending the probationary period of tenure-track faculty members under compelling circumstances that may interrupt the faculty member's expected professional development during the probationary period. The policy applies to tenure-track faculty members in good standing, prior to one year before the scheduled beginning of their tenure consideration.

### II. Definitions

"Tenure clock" refers to the probationary period during which a tenure-track faculty member is appointed on one-year contracts prior to tenure consideration, which consideration normally occurs not later than the sixth year of the probationary appointment. "Tenure consideration" is understood to begin when the department or equivalent local unit has received the external evaluations solicited for the candidate and begins its review of the candidate's dossier.

### III. Policy

The Provost will consider tenure clock extension requests that meet the following criteria:

#### 1. Requests for Extension to be Granted with Satisfactory Documentation

A. Upon written request and submission of satisfactory documentation, a one-year extension of the tenure clock will be granted by the Office of the Provost to a faculty member *either*

- because of a birth or adoption; or
- because the faculty member has taken an approved medical leave of 12 consecutive weeks or more.

B. Any request for a tenure clock extension due to a leave based on a medical condition must be supported by medical documentation submitted to HRM/Benefits at the same time as the written request for tenure clock extension is submitted, through the academic unit head and college dean, to the Office of the Provost. Medical documentation will be maintained confidentially in HRM/Benefits. The Office of the Provost will evaluate the tenure clock extension request and will confirm with HRM/Benefits that HRM/Benefits has received proper medical documentation to support the request.

## **2. Requests to be Considered for Extension**

Requests for tenure clock extension, except for the reasons provided in Section I of this policy, require submission of satisfactory documentation and may be granted on review and consideration by the academic unit head, dean, and Provost. Under this Section 2, a faculty member who takes a leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for reasons other than birth, adoption, or his/her own medical reasons (for example, to care for a family member), or who has other family-related responsibilities, may request an extension of the tenure clock. Requests for extensions must include an explanation and documentation of the family-related responsibility.

The university's Policy on Leaves of Absence requires that medical documentation must accompany any request for a leave based on a family member's medical condition. Supporting medical documentation will be maintained confidentially in HRM/Benefits. The Office of the Provost will evaluate the basis for the request only, and will confirm with HRM/Benefits that HRM/Benefits has received proper documentation to support the request.

Additionally, a request for a tenure clock extension may be made for other reasons (e.g., substantial delay in lab set up, extenuating circumstances not covered by FMLA). Such

requests must follow the same procedures as above and are subject to review and approval by the Office of the Provost.

### **3. Procedures Applicable to all Requests**

A. With the exception of medical emergencies, all requests for tenure clock extension as described above in Sections 1 and 2 are subject to the following two conditions, both of which must be met: (1) the request for extension must be made in writing within one (1) year of the commencement of the situation that gives rise to the request; and (2) the request for extension must be submitted no later than one year before tenure evaluation begins. Please see examples:

- Faculty member has a baby on January 1, 2007 and seeks an extension of the tenure clock due to the birth of the child. Faculty member's tenure review is scheduled to begin on September 1, 2008. Therefore, faculty member's application for tenure clock extension must be submitted no later than September 1, 2007.
- Faculty member takes a medical leave beginning on July 1, 2007 and seeks an extension of the tenure clock. Faculty member's tenure review is scheduled to begin on September 1, 2008. Therefore, faculty member's application for tenure clock extension must be submitted by September 1, 2007.
- Faculty member seeks an extension of the tenure clock due to responsibilities for caring for an ill family member beginning on October 1, 2007. Faculty member's tenure review is scheduled to begin on September 1, 2009. Therefore, faculty member's application for tenure clock extension must be submitted by September 1, 2008.

B. For any additional subsequent extension sought, a faculty member must apply for and gain approval using the process described above.

C. Faculty members who receive an extension of the date of their tenure consideration will not be subject to any additional expectations of scholarly productivity due to the granting of that extension period. The scholarly productivity of a faculty member who is granted a tenure clock extension will be evaluated according to the same expectations as for a faculty member being considered for tenure during the sixth full-time year at Northeastern whose tenure consideration was not delayed.

## **IV. Additional Information**

All requests must first be submitted to the academic unit head. The unit head then submits the request to the dean who will forward the request to the Provost via the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. The Provost makes a recommendation within ten university business days of receipt of the request. Leaves approved by HRM do not independently result in a tenure clock extension. A faculty member must still submit a written request for an extension, as described in this Policy.

Births or adoption of more than one child at a time will result in a single year of tenure clock extension under this policy. A faculty member may receive no more than two extensions of the tenure clock during his or her probationary period. The Provost will consider other compelling circumstances such as military service.

#### **V. Contact Information**

Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (617) 373-2170