



Guidance for Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Evaluators: Impact of Covid-19

Office of the Vice Provost
for Graduate Education
and Faculty Development

Overarching Principle

We need to evaluate candidates in light of the effects that the pandemic may have had on their careers. We also need to protect the integrity of the Institute and our standards of excellence. This balance may mean being flexible and recognizing the unevenness of impacts that Covid may have had on different people. This may also mean considering the trajectory of the candidate before Covid, the actions that they took, and their accomplishments in this context.

Summary of Covid Impacts

- **Research** (loss of resources or access such as labs, archives, field studies, and research students; loss of funding; difficulties collaborating; pivot in directions; difficulty getting external references; cancelled talks, etc.)
- **Teaching** (move to remote and hybrid teaching; differing levels of impact on experiential classes such as studios, labs, project courses; student evaluations, etc.)
- **Service** (taking on extra roles and campus duties due to Covid, such as serving on campus task forces, etc.)
- **Personal** (changing household circumstances due to school and daycare closures; physical and mental health issues for the candidate or family members, etc.)

More details are in the [Covid FAQ](#).

Procedural Guidance for Committees and School Chairs

- Review this Covid guidance material with committee before deliberations.
- Have a Covid advocate on each committee; this advocate can be the committee chair who reminds the committee of the Covid-related advice as needed during deliberations.
- Each committee and school chair writes a statement/section on the impact of Covid for an individual on their work activities, including the context (if any) of that discipline.
 - The candidate is not required to submit a *Covid Impact Statement* for AY2021-2022 cycle. No assumptions should be made in the absence of this statement.
 - If the candidate does not provide any information about Covid, then the statement should read: “No statement about Covid was included in the candidate’s package.”
- Look in the Additional Documents section of the PROMOTE package; there may be additional Covid background material submitted.
- Good practice: Have mentors, who are not in the decision chain, to help candidates with Covid-related issues in the packages.

Advice for Candidates

- **Covid Impact Statement:** You have the opportunity to discuss Covid impacts in your package but are not required/expected to do so in the AY2021-2022 cycle.
 - Placement is in your narrative or as an addendum uploaded in the Additional Documents section – limited to 2 pages in standard format. The narrative goes to external reviewers; the addendum is viewable to all internal reviewers but no external ones.
 - If you add a *Covid Impact Statement*, please include what changes, if any, you made to your research, teaching, service activities and the impact on your work.
 - Example: Lab closed and had to abandon experiments in progress. You pivoted to simulations, but it took a long time to make that change and simulation results are not as well accepted in publications as are experimental results.
 - Are there adaptations that you made that may show resilience?
- **CV:** Mark cancelled seminars or conference talks, loss in funded awards, graduate students who discontinued their studies, etc., with a notation, “Cancelled due to Covid-19” or “Returned to home country due to Covid-19.”

Advice for Candidates

Teaching

- Teaching narratives are most impactful when they are reflections: Things the faculty member tried, difficulties/successes, how they adapted to feedback – indications that they are thinking deeply about it, using evidence-based methods, are trying to improve, and are getting results.
 - A good reference for reflection narratives is in [the Georgia Tech Lecturers Teaching Portfolio Guidelines](#).
- The Faculty Handbook describes the [evaluation of faculty members as teachers and educators](#) using many different criteria.
 - A faculty member who is concerned about the impact of Covid on teaching evaluations may choose to include additional evidence of good teaching as described in the Faculty Handbook (specific examples are in the Lecturers Teaching Portfolio) in the *Covid Impact Statement* in the Additional Documents section.

Advice on Personal/Family/Health Issues

- For candidates: You may be eligible to seek an extension to your Tenure Probationary Period (see slide on “Tenure Extensions”) or Critical Review (Lecturers).
- Candidates should be discouraged from disclosing personal/family/health information. It is private and should not be divulged. Instead, focus on the impact on your work and not the specific sources of the disruption.
 - Evaluators should not make assumptions or ask for any additional information regarding personal, family, or health information.

Advice on Personal/Family/Health Issues

- Use General Language in the *Covid Impact Statement* (what changed and not why).
 - “Because of Covid restrictions ... [discuss specific impact to your work]”
 - Example: It was very difficult for you to hold meetings, do research, or teach during the day. You compensated by working a disrupted day, including early mornings and late at night – times when it was hard to collaborate with graduate students or other faculty. It is difficult to conduct research without having long periods of uninterrupted time.

Advice from Candidates to Evaluators

- “Evaluators must not assume prematurely that they understand the breadth of the effects on a candidate. Everyone was affected, but while an evaluator might have just lost some funding, a candidate might have young children at home, a sick parent needing care, lack of access to research resources, etc. Evaluators are going to assume they understand what it was a candidate was dealing with and they need to be VERY open-minded. Many people are coping with depression and distractions right now that others might not appreciate, even if it is reported.”
- “That they consider that Covid impacted faculty of the same rank very differently. Some were able to be more productive while others much less productive. So, comparing packages against each other should be discouraged/prohibited “
- “Please keep in mind different family and financial situations, especially with small children, parents and family abroad, spouses in other countries, difficulties to get work visa for spouses, reduced childcare options etc.”
- “Please also consider the impact of Covid on our students in our lab and classes and how that may impact our ability to make research progress. 1) Students in our lab had family/personal impact that limited their productivity, impacting our ability to complete research projects. 2) There was substantial extra emotional labor asked of faculty to handle students in our classes and labs. 3) There was extra effort needed for teaching to facilitate extra accommodations (make up tests, keeping track of special case due dates, helping students who fell behind, etc). This impacted both our time for research as well as our PhD students (who were TAs) who had less time for research than under normal circumstances.”

Teaching Evaluation Advice

- **Standard Situation** (this information is given to both external and internal reviewers; no need for candidate to explain):
 - All residential courses moved quickly to an online format mid-term in spring 2020.
 - All summer 2020 courses were delivered remotely. Fall 2020, spring 2021, and summer 2021 courses were delivered as residential, remote, or hybrid with the majority being hybrid.
 - Collection of CIOS was suspended in spring 2020. An option was created in Canvas for faculty to collect their own feedback.
- **Unusual Situations** (candidates and reviewers may choose to describe/consider this context):
 - Some courses may have been more difficult to convert to online (lab or courses with physical hands-on components, studio, etc.).
- **Evidence of good teaching:**
 - CIOS: Committee can look at past CIOS scores of the instructor for the same course to give an idea of the Covid effects.
 - Some colleges require peer evaluation of teaching, that may consider teaching in the context of Covid.
 - Teaching narratives (see comments on Advice for Candidates).
 - Other Evidence: Look in Additional Documents section (see comments on Advice for Candidates).

Research Evaluation Advice

If the candidate included Covid impact in the narrative, background section, or CV:

- Use the framing of, “accomplishments within context (resources, discipline, type of work)”
 - Calibration? Contextualize rather than compare directly to previous cohorts or to other candidates.
- Examine the research trajectory before and after Covid.
- Look at the reasonableness of faculty actions due to Covid and the impact in context of the discipline.
 - Examples:
 - If funding was lost due directly to Covid, you might count the funding as if it was fully granted.
 - If the publication of a book or paper was delayed, you might accept results that are earlier in the process.
 - Did they demonstrate innovation/creativity in their activities?

Additional Advice for Evaluators

- Recognize and consider productivity in areas often weighted lower for TT faculty (teaching and service) during the Covid period (AY2019-2020 and AY2020-2021).
 - Reviewers should explain any changes in weighting in their evaluation from their normal evaluation plans.
 - Example: “We weighted teaching higher this year because of the difficulties of transitioning to remote instruction.”
- Recognize contributions due to Covid done in addition to normal duties, such as additional administrative or service work.
- Treat the 3rd year critical review as more advisory than in the past.

Tenure Extensions

Tenure extensions (aka “extensions to 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. **If an extension is used, no additional requirements for tenure can be imposed upon the candidate by virtue of the extension. Thus, the candidate continues to be subject to the requirements to which he or she would have been subject without the extension.** ([Section 3.3.5 of the Faculty Handbook](#))

- Candidates who have a compelling reasons under the Faculty Handbook guidelines in Section 3.3.5 may [request a tenure extension](#).
- If a faculty member receives a tenure extension for a compelling event, no additional accommodations are given for that event.
- The extension extends the window in which you can go up for tenure. A candidate may go up for tenure in any year in this window.

Covid Automatic Extension:

- In the case of Covid, the impact may extend beyond the time period of the extension, and additional considerations for Covid impacts may be reasonable.
- Faculty whose first year in service was AY2020-2021 received an automatic extension for that year.
- Other pre-tenure faculty received the automatic extension for AY2019-2020 but received no additional automatic extension due to Covid in AY2020-2021 (so, additional Covid considerations in evaluations may be warranted for AY2020-2021, or faculty may be eligible to request another extension under the normal Faculty Handbook guidelines).



Questions?