

May 30, 2017

To: Main and Branch Campus Faculty Administrators
From: Carol Parker, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
cc: Distribution List
Re: Guidelines for Implementing and Reviewing Shortened Faculty Probationary Periods

Appointment Presumptions

Assistant Professor is an appropriate rank for someone at the beginning of their career and at the beginning of a probationary service to UNM. Normally a new Assistant Professor is hired on the assumption of a six-year probationary period with a mid-probationary review in the third year.

Individuals who have acquired significant experience beyond earning their terminal degree may be considered for shorter probationary periods and/or higher rank and/or tenured status at the time of their initial appointment to UNM, e.g., Associate Professor or full Professor. Hiring officials may also choose to offer a candidate tenured status. If initial appointments are made at the rank of Associate Professor, the maximum probationary period possible before a final tenure review is four years; for an initial rank of Professor, the maximum probationary period is two years.

Candidates should not determine how long their probationary period and incoming rank and status will be. Setting an appropriate probationary period and determining an appropriate rank and status at the time of hire are assessments made in consultation with the senior faculty of the department, at a minimum, and will ideally include a faculty vote on the question(s). These determinations are incorporated into the written appointment letter and become part of the initial employment contract.

The Provost's Office does not encourage shortened probationary periods. The decisions to set a probationary period of less than six years must be justified concurrently with submitting the candidate's hiring justification in UNMJobs, in a separate memo detailing the candidate's record review process and the circumstances which led the faculty to approve a shortened probationary period.

Appointment offer letters must clearly convey information about the timing of mid-probationary and final tenure reviews.

Appointment Exceptions

Occasionally, probationary faculty members request to have their probationary period either extended or shortened. A minimum period of one-semester's worth of extended sick leave, parental leave or leave without pay will extend a probationary period by one year. An FTE reduction, e.g., switching to a 0.5 FTE part-time appointment, will also extend a probationary period.

A probationary period may be shorted upon request of the probationary faculty member, but only if the chair, dean and provost approve. Granting such a request has the effect of amending the terms of the employment contract.

A template for amending an employment contract in this manner is available on the OFAS [web page](#) in the Appointment Letter collection. It requires the faculty member to explicitly acknowledge:

- that they understand a probationary faculty member shall be reviewed for tenure only once;
- that they have requested the modification;
- in granting the request, neither the chair, dean or provost indicate that an early review is certain to have a successful outcome;
- that the outcome will be determined by the standard review processes and criteria currently in place for the department, college and provost;
- that if the result of my early review is negative, the candidate will receive a notice of contract discontinuation and be offered a one-year terminal contract.

Review of Candidates with Atypical Probationary Appointments

Regardless of whether a candidate's probationary period has been shortened or extended, some general principles apply when reviewing the candidate at mid-probation or at the final tenure review.

Only the body of work amassed while at UNM should be considered during the review. The rationale for this is the fact that the faculty will already have assessed work prior to the initial appointment at UNM as part of their determination of how long the probationary period should be. Therefore, the dossier should include only work produced while at UNM (the CV, of course, will reflect accomplishments throughout the entire academic career).

Candidates whose probationary period was extended through an approved leave should be assessed as if the dossier was produced during a probationary period of typical length, i.e., the body of work produced during a seven-year probationary period should be assessed as if it was produced during a typical six-year probationary period. All internal and external reviewers should be given clear instructions about which works to consider. For example, if a probationary period is only four years, reviewers should know that the candidate has only three years' worth of material in the dossier by the fall semester of their final review year, as opposed to the five years' worth of material seen in the dossier for a typical candidate. Their assessment should

account for the time differential, noting that the record prior to the time of appointment was already reviewed in setting the initial rank and probationary period.

Faculty Handbook References

B2.2.1 Assistant Professor
B2.2.2 Associate Professor
B2.2.3 Professor
B3.2.1 Probationary Appointments – Full-time Faculty
B3.2.2 Probationary Appointments – Part-time Faculty
C210 Sick Leave
C215 Parental Leave
C280 Leave Without Pay

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