**FAQs for Tenure-Track Faculty**

**About Promotion and Tenure and Increasing the Impact of Your Work**

**Q: How long is the tenure clock at Columbia?**

A: The tenure clock at Columbia is eight years long. Faculty members at Columbia University are normally considered “up for tenure” in their seventh year of “counted service.” Sometimes faculty members are considered early.

**Q. What is “Counted Service”?**

A: The University limits the number of years that a faculty member can remain on the tenure track, but in some instances allows some time to be excluded from the limit. The University refers to the time that is included when calculating the limit as “counted service.” Normally “counted service” is equal to the years of employment in a faculty position at Columbia after receiving the Ph.D., however the University allows faculty members to have a limited number of breaks in their counted service (also known as “stopping your tenure clock”) for parental workload and other types of leaves. More details are available in the [faculty handbook](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/handbook/instruction.html) and below.

**Q: Under what conditions does my tenure clock stop?**

A: The tenure clock is often stopped when a faculty member takes a leave of absence.

Normally:

* The University will stop the tenure clock for up to one year for research, service, or medical leaves of six months or more.
* The University will stop the tenure clock for up to one year each for a maximum of two parental leaves.

Details of types of leaves and process for requesting them are explained in detail in the faculty handbook and on the faculty governance website at: [Leaves of Absence - Guide to Understanding and Applying for Leaves (2015)](http://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/system/files/governance/Faculty%20Leaves%20-%20Description%20and%20Process%20for%20Application%285-2015%29.docx). All changes in the tenure clock require paperwork and approval at the Dean and Provost level. Please consult the Dean’s Office if you have questions.

**Q: When are faculty members considered for promotion to un-tenured associate?**

A: Assistant professors must be considered for promotion to un-tenured associate professor before the end of their 5th year of counted service. The nomination would typically come after three to four years, but a Division could elect a shorter time depending on the circumstances. See promotion policy at: [Untenured Assistant to Untenured Associate](http://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/system/files/tenure/Standards%20for%20Promotion-12-2009%20revised-6-2013.docx).

**Q: How do annual evaluations work?**

A: Each January, all faculty members are asked to submit a “Faculty Activity Report” (FAR) form and CV to the Dean’s Office. A past version of the FAR form is available at: [Faculty Activity Report Template (2014)](http://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/system/files/FAR-2014%20%28Template%20For%20Reference%20Only%29.docx). The FAR and CVs of junior faculty members are sent to the Divisional Chairs. Each Division assigns tenured faculty members to write a formal review of their junior colleagues. Reviews are drafted for each junior faculty member and agreed to and signed off on by the entire tenured faculty of the division, and shared with the junior faculty member and the Dean’s Office.

**Q: What are the criteria to be awarded tenure at Columbia University?**

A: The University’s Tenure Review guidelines indicate that to receive tenure:

* The nominee must be an outstanding scholar, a person who has demonstrated the capacity for imaginative, original work and who shows promise of continuing to make significant contributions to research.
* Excellence as a teacher is also necessary, and service to the University and discipline is important. Neither, however, individually or taken together, is a sufficient basis for tenure.
* The essential requirement for the appointment of any nominee is scholarly achievement testifying to an unusually original and creative mind.

**Q: How does the University evaluate candidates against these criteria for tenure?**

A: From a practical point of view, the University evaluates candidates against these criteria by soliciting external letters of evaluation from non-Columbia faculty members with an expertise in the candidate’s field. Letters are normally solicited from 15 to 20 individuals split between peers and senior academics in the field. The University asks the writers to rank the candidate’s research contributions against those of a list of peer scholars in the field.

In addition, the University looks at other information and data such as:

* Candidate’s CV
* Candidates publications and/or working papers
* Candidate’s personal statement
* Citation counts
* Course evaluations
* Divisional statement
* Evaluation votes

**Q: What are the steps of a tenure review?**

A: The tenure review process for internal candidates proceeds as follows. More details are available at the following link: http://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-governance/promotion-tenure

1. The candidate submits required documents to the division.
2. The division evaluates the candidate (including establishing a reading committee to review the work) and votes upon whether to solicit external letters and if so recommends from whom.
3. The Promotion and Tenure Committee evaluates the candidate and votes upon whether to solicit external letters. and if so recommends from whom.
4. The tenured faculty of the School evaluates the candidate and votes upon whether to solicit external letters and if so from whom.
5. The dean evaluates the candidate and the recommendation vote of the tenured faculty and solicits letters.
6. The division evaluates the case and the external letters and votes upon whether to recommend tenure.
7. The Promotion and Tenure Committee evaluates the case and the external letters and votes upon whether to recommend tenure.
8. The tenured faculty of the School evaluates the case and the external letters and votes upon whether to recommend tenure.
9. The dean considers the merits of the case and the advisory vote of the tenured faculty, and decides whether or not to recommend tenure and forward the case to the University’s standing Tenure Review Advisory Committee (TRAC).
10. The case is reviewed by the Tenure Review Advisory Committee.
11. The Provost makes a recommendation to the President.
12. The President makes a decision, and it is communicated by the dean to the candidate.
13. If the decisions are positive, the appointment is forwarded to the trustees for approval.

The candidate will be advised of status after key votes according to Business School [procedures](http://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty-staff/system/files/tenure/Internal%20Tenure%20Process%20Timeline%284-16-2014%29.docx), and will be asked if they want the process to proceed. In addition, they may request that the process be stopped at any point along the way.

**Q: What do you need to submit for your tenure case to be considered?**

1. A current curriculum vitae (c.v.)
2. Copies of 3 to 5 of your most important research papers or publications
3. A personal statement that describes both past research and future research plans.
4. The division may also ask for additional information as they evaluate and build your case, such as course materials and teaching evaluations, etc.

**Q: When do you need to submit your tenure materials ?**

A: For faculty being considered in their seventh year, materials will be due to the division in the spring of your sixth year, although they may be updated during the seventh year to reflect changes in the CV during that time.

**Q: How can you increase the impact of your research?**

A: There are many strategies that junior faculty members can use to increase the impact of their research. A non-exhaustive list of ideas is below. Discussing these ideas with your colleagues and pursuing the most efficient of them for you and your work, is the best way to proceed.

* Conduct and publish thought provoking research in top academic journals.
* Present your work at conferences and seminars at other universities.
* Submit working papers to SSRN.
* Send copies of or links to your published research to colleagues at other universities.
* Collaborate with faculty at other universities.
* Organize conferences or conference sessions on topics central to your research.
* Serve as a reviewer for top journals.

**Q: What are best practices to bring your working papers to publication?**

A: Clearly there are many parts of the journal publication process that are beyond your control. The best strategy is to focus on the parts of the process that are in your control:

* Seek more information from journal editors: If you get a “rejection” or a “revise and resubmit” it is OK to ask for additional feedback or clarification. This can help you to make an informed decision about how to approach potential revisions.
* Seek advice from multiple colleagues (both internal and external) if you get a “rejection” or a “revise and resubmit.” This can also help you to make an informed decision about how to approach potential revisions or appeals.
* Use the feedback you receive from all of these sources to make a decision about whether to resubmit to the same journal or submit to a different journal.
* Use the feedback you receive from all of these sources to confer with your co-authors to seek the best path to publication.
* Take deliberate and timely action on a “rejection” or a “revise and resubmit” response from a journal. It is up to you how long an article sits on your desk, and minimizing that time may be one of the biggest levers you have to moving articles more quickly toward publication.
* Understand the typical review process and expected time for specific journals and use that information to be strategic about the submission path you take.