

Appendix R

Standards for Extending the Probationary Period of Tenure-Track Faculty

I. Overview

It is in the best interest of IIT to promote and to tenure faculty of the highest quality in ways that are fair and humane. To ensure fairness and equity in administering the system of academic tenure, IIT must provide consistent conditions and standards. For these reasons, extensions of the probationary period are reserved for unusual and compelling circumstances. IIT's ability to attract and retain a faculty of the highest quality is enhanced by supporting faculty members in balancing personal and family obligations with professional and scholarly achievement.

Under the Standards and Procedures for Promotion and Tenure the maximum probationary period before the awarding of tenure is seven years. (IIT Faculty Handbook, Appendix C, Section 3.) This policy sets forth the conditions and procedures for extending the probationary period where compelling circumstances have arisen that interfere substantially with a candidate's ability to pursue his or her teaching, scholarly activities, and/or service.

The Faculty Family Policy, included in the Supplement to the Faculty Handbook, provides that eligible faculty members are entitled to a one-semester paid leave following the birth or adoption of a child. Under that policy, non-tenured faculty members eligible for the leave are entitled to an extension of their probationary periods, whether or not they elect to take the leave.

II. Conditions

A. Length and Frequency of Extension of Probationary Period

An extension of the probationary period may be granted for one year upon request when a compelling event or compelling circumstance causes substantial impairment of a candidate's ability to pursue his or her teaching, scholarly activities, and/or service. No more than two such extensions will be granted. Such extensions of the tenure period may be granted independent of a faculty member taking a leave of absence (as defined in Section VII of this Faculty Handbook). Such leaves of absence also may extend the probationary period.

B. Grounds for an Extension

There are four grounds for granting an extension: (1) the birth or adoption of a child (in addition to the rights conferred under the Faculty Family Policy); (2) disability or extended and severe personal illness; (3) compelling obligations to a member of the family or household that require significant time away from university duties; and (4) other extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the faculty member.

C. Candidate's Eligibility

The candidate's record before the event or circumstance that gives rise to a request for a leave of absence must be consistent with the preservation of institutional quality. Thus, the candidate must be making appropriate, demonstrable progress toward attaining tenure.

III. Timing of Request

An extension of the probationary period should be requested when it becomes clear that circumstances consistent with this policy will substantially impede the faculty member's progress toward achieving tenure. A request during the last year of probation of a faculty member is strongly discouraged and will be granted only in rare and extraordinary circumstances.

An academic unit head who recognizes the need for a faculty member to request an extension of the probationary period is encouraged to discuss this policy with that individual and to do so in a timely manner. A faculty member should feel free to approach his or her academic unit head for information concerning this policy or with an individual request for an extension.

IV. Procedure for Request

The request for an extension of the probationary period must be initiated in writing by the faculty member and addressed to the head of his or her academic unit. The request must clearly state the special circumstances in the faculty member's situation that might justify an extended probationary period. The faculty member should attach any appropriate supporting documentation. The request also must state explicitly that the faculty member making the request understands that he or she will not enjoy an entitlement or stronger claim to tenure by virtue of continued membership on the faculty beyond the customary probationary period.

V. Approval of Request

In order to move forward the request must be approved by the academic unit head after consultation with, and approval by, the academic unit committee on tenure and promotion. If the academic unit head is a dean, the request - if approved - shall be forwarded to the Provost. If the academic unit head is a department chair, the request if approved shall be forwarded first to the dean and subsequently, if approved by the dean, to the Provost.

Upon approval of the request by the Provost, a special written agreement outlining the terms and conditions will be prepared. The agreement shall specify the reasons for the extension and shall clearly state the faculty member's new tenure period. The written agreement shall be circulated to obtain the signature of the faculty member and the signatures of the campus and university officials required for such agreements.