

BEST PRACTICES FOR DOCUMENTING THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON FACULTY WORKLOAD

COVID-19 Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has had short- and long-term impacts on faculty members' [workloads](#). Faculty members have worked [significantly more](#) as they respond to competing priorities and manage an unfolding global crisis. Others have written about the challenges brought on by moving courses online, mentoring students, reworking university programs, addressing COVID-19 risks, and helping communities manage current realities. Iowa State University's Office of Institutional Research conducted a [survey to learn more about how faculty navigated moving courses online](#) in spring 2020. Further, many faculty members have coped with significant impacts to their workload and productivity. For example, faculty who pursue research may have lost access to laboratory spaces and research facilities, research participants and collaborators, and outlets to disseminate scholarly work. The long-term impact of the pandemic on faculty and institutions is clear. For this reason, the American Association of University Professors issued Principles and Standards for the COVID-19 Crisis.

Growing Inequality

Scholars have highlighted inequalities among faculty (e.g., parenting, gender, race, class) in a growing literature on the pandemic's impact. For example, the pandemic has challenged academic parents and caregivers with dependent children and elder care responsibilities in countless ways. In addition, gender inequality is also evident in faculty productivity. Women faculty have submitted fewer journal articles for publication.

There has been a call for action to ensure gender equity. The pandemic is also disproportionately affecting communities of color.

Underrepresented faculty, including Black faculty, are more likely to experience a range of losses and setbacks (e.g., care for extended family members, financial costs). These impacts are magnified among faculty with intersectional identities (e.g., gender and race; parent and race; gender, race, and parent).

Documenting Impact

Each faculty member has their own set of specific working conditions and unique circumstances. Providing an opportunity for faculty to detail the pandemic's impact on their workload is critical in order to highlight the manifest and latent effects on faculty productivity. The influence may include unexpected disruptions in productivity or unusual contributions offered in response to the unfolding crisis. In alignment with the university's mission and strategic goals, faculty members pursuing promotion, tenure, and advancement should be invited to write a statement that incorporates the following:

- Outlines how their ability to create, share, and apply knowledge was changed
- Describes how their position responsibilities were modified
- Details how the pandemic shifted their pursuit of ISU's strategic goals
- Communicates ways in which pandemic conditions impacted their teaching
- Communicates ways in which pandemic conditions impacted their scholarly goals (e.g.,

- research, extension, outreach, clinical practice) and altered their career trajectory
- Contextualizes their scholarly productivity in light of their department's meaning of scholarship and other benchmarks for success to promote fair standards of evaluation

A list of questions for candidates for advancement to consider, as well as those who serve in a capacity to support and advance faculty careers (e.g., department chairs, deans, promotion and tenure committees) are available here. Other resources on this topic are available in Science, Inside Higher Ed, and Dora.

ISU ADVANCE offers relevant resources in the [Promotion and Tenure Committee Training course](#).

COVID-19 Extension

Pre-tenure faculty can request a tenure-clock extension due to COVID-19. Faculty who are unsure of whether they should submit this request should discuss the matter with the Department Chair. Consistent with the policy for other tenure clock extensions, faculty who receive an extension are not held to a higher standard of productivity and scholarly.

Additional Resources

[Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost](#)

Credit: UMass Amherst ADVANCE Program (2020). Documenting Pandemic Impacts: Best Practices. Available here.