



COVID-19 Accommodations and Resources

The COVID-19 pandemic has [significantly impacted the way faculty members do their work](#), from teaching and research/scholarship to the ways they navigate work-life tensions. Universities, including the University of Maryland, have put in place a range of accommodations or supports for faculty members, though these efforts may vary by college and department.

In an effort to understand the range of COVID-19-related accommodations, this brief summarizes the responses from each UMD academic college or school regarding changes to faculty-related policy and practice. Initiated by the ADVANCE Program and the ADVANCE Professors, each dean and associate dean for faculty affairs completed a brief inventory (see Appendix) regarding their unit's response to COVID-19. This brief **is not** intended to be comprehensive, but rather, offer a snapshot of some of the practices and policies being implemented across campus. This brief also summarizes emerging policies and practices from other colleges and universities across the country in different areas of faculty work (e.g., promotion and tenure, teaching, and scholarship).

Key Takeaways

1. Colleges are largely relying upon campus level policies, guidelines, and reporting structures for documenting, contextualizing, and flexibly evaluating the impact of COVID-19 in promotion and tenure decisions, annual reviews, and other evaluative contexts.
2. Relatively few colleges or units have put in place pandemic-related emergency funding (e.g., for emergency care, research funding, TAs).
3. Many/most workload accommodations have been made on an ad-hoc basis as a result of negotiations with individual faculty members, their units, and sometimes the college.
4. Almost all colleges have created new platforms for engagement/communication with faculty, department chairs, and college administration, with good success.

Reformulating Tenure and Promotion Criteria or Guidelines

Emerging Policies and Practices

- COVID Impact Statements (Examples: [Michigan State University](#), [Purdue University](#), [University of Michigan](#), [UMass Amherst](#), [UT Austin](#)), including statements by candidates and statements to external reviewers.
- Training for department chairs and promotion and tenure committee members on strategies for equitable evaluation during COVID, including clarification/guidance of what units will do if a candidate does not present a COVID impact statement (Examples: Clemson University, [UMass Amherst](#), [UT Austin](#))
- Adjustments in tenure and promotion criteria or annual evaluation guidelines (e.g., assigning greater weight to conference papers, shifting the expectations from three to two papers) (Examples: [University of Oklahoma](#), [University of Wyoming](#), [West Virginia University](#)).
- Retroactive adjustments to pay for faculty members who take tenure delay (Examples: [UMass Amherst](#))



UMD Policies and Practices

- 3 colleges reported revisions to promotion and tenure criteria and/or guidelines in tandem with campus-level policies ([tenure delay](#), [modification of promotion and tenure](#)) and practices (incorporation of the [COVID-19 Impact statement](#) into dossiers or annual reporting).
- 6 colleges reported modifications to promotion and tenure criteria and/or guidelines were in process (COVID-19 spurred revisions in some colleges but in others, these revisions were already underway). 3 colleges specifically mentioned addressing appointment, evaluation, and promotion guidelines for PTK faculty members.
- 9 colleges indicated they encouraged faculty members to document COVID impacts on their teaching, scholarship, and service. The primary mechanism mentioned was the [optional COVID impact statement](#); some colleges mentioned giving specific instruction to document in teaching portfolios, faculty activities reporting. Several colleges mentioned that the ADVANCE Professor had held sessions on documenting the impact of COVID and/or they had encouraged their faculty to attend the Office of Faculty Affairs workshop.
- 8 colleges reported existing appointment, promotion, and tenure guidelines did **not** include candidate comparison; 3 colleges reported such revisions were under discussion/in process. One associate dean noted that external letter writers often make comparisons between candidates and requested that the invitation explicitly ask external reviewers not to include this comparison in their evaluation.

Modifying Workloads and Easing Non-Essential Activities

Emerging Policies and Practices

- Workload redistribution, including future service sabbaticals or teaching credits (Examples: [UMass Amherst](#), [West Virginia University](#))

UMD Policies and Practices

- Consistent [OFA/ADVANCE guidance](#), all colleges reported that units had delayed non-essential activities (e.g., curriculum development), but there were no strong themes in terms of the kinds of activities delayed or the extent to which college formally encouraged/required the delay of certain activities.
- Many/most workload accommodations were made on an ad-hoc basis as a result of individual negotiations with faculty members; 2 colleges reported using workload credits.
- 3 colleges reported extending course and/or service releases to individual faculty members, but all indicated that these were made on an ad-hoc basis. Several colleges noted that these kinds of accommodations likely occurred within units but were not centrally monitored.

Mitigating or Addressing Impacts on Scholarship and Teaching

Emerging Policies and Practices



- Research funding for faculty members whose research has been disrupted by the pandemic (Examples: [University of Wisconsin-Madison](#))
- Shifting policies related to use of start-up funds (Examples: [University of Michigan](#))
- Childcare and eldercare grants and funding (Examples: [UMass Amherst](#), [UPenn](#))
- Holistic teaching evaluations and/or suspension of teaching evaluations in faculty review (Examples: [University of Georgia](#), [UT Austin](#))

UMD Policies and Practices

- 12 colleges reported holistic teaching evaluation techniques (e.g., peer evaluations) were already in place prior to COVID-19. 4 colleges noted that this was only in place for TTK faculty members.
- 1 college reported that one unit had created a fund accessible to faculty members for work-life emergencies. 4 colleges noted that they had worked with units to provide resources/funding to accommodate individual faculty members on an ad-hoc basis related to work-life issues.
- 2 colleges reported pandemic-related research funding; 4 colleges reported ad hoc arrangements for fund reallocation if requested by individual faculty members. 4 colleges noted that emergency funding arrangements had been made for graduate students (which could have ostensibly supported faculty research). 4 colleges reported adding teaching assistants on an ad-hoc basis when requested and a handful of colleges indicated they had put in place different kinds of teaching supports (e.g., technology assistance).

Other General Supports

- 12 colleges reported opportunities for communication between faculty, department chairs, and college administration (e.g., virtual forums, town halls with college leadership and faculty, staff, and students). The colleges indicated that these sessions had been well-attended.
- ADVANCE Professors often cited for making social connections and providing resources to women faculty in the college.
- Other supports mentioned by colleges including reaching out to institutional peers to learn about best practices and a happiness and wellness initiative).



**Appendix: Policy and Practice Inventory
UMD COVID-Related Policies and Practices
Unit Level Policies and Practices**

Directions: The ADVANCE Office is hoping to capture and share new and innovative practices UMD academic units have used to support faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please complete this document to the best of your knowledge regarding any college or department level policies or practices that have been put in place.

Policy/Practice	Yes	No	I don't know	Please provide any details related to the policy/practice and note the extent to which policies apply to PTK and TTK faculty members.
<i>Tenure and Promotion</i>				
Developed new or modified tenure and promotion criteria to recognize productivity slowdowns that may have occurred during the pandemic.				
Incorporated holistic teaching evaluation techniques (e.g., peer observation), rather than relying upon student evaluations as a sole indicator of teaching effectiveness.				
Removed language related to comparing candidates' productivity in promotion and tenure guidance.				
<i>Mitigating or Addressing Impacts on Scholarship/Teaching</i>				
Created emergency grants for work-life (e.g., funds for childcare)				
Created emergency research grants (e.g., funds for graduate assistance)				
Created emergency grants for teaching (e.g., funds for TAs)				
<i>Workload Modifications</i>				
Encouraged faculty to document the impact of COVID on their teaching, scholarship, and service (including advising and mentoring).				
Delayed curriculum reform, department evaluations, or other non-essential department efforts.				
Given workload credits (e.g., teaching or service sabbaticals, additional research funds) for faculty going above and beyond related to COVID.				
Provided funds for course releases or service releases for faculty in caregiving roles or who have been impacted by COVID.				
<i>General Support</i>				
Encouraged open communication between faculty, department chairs, and college administration (E.g., faculty town hall, open office hours)				
Opportunities for social networking and/or building community				
Other (Please write in)				