

COVID Impact Statement FAQs

For Faculty

Q1: Are COVID Impact Statements required for Annual Review, Reappointment, Promotion or Tenure reviews?

A1: No, COVID Impact Statements are optional.

Q2: Do I need a COVID Impact Statement?

A2: In considering whether to submit a COVID Impact Statement, you may want to ask yourself the following questions: Whether positive or negative, did the pandemic alter your work products or approach to your realms of responsibility? Did the pandemic affect the type or mix of evidence you can provide to show that you meet performance standards? Has the pandemic shifted your effort in one or more ways different from the expectations set in your appointment letter? If so, you may want to consider documenting this context for peer evaluators in a COVID Impact Statement.

Q3: What should I do if I am not sure I will need a COVID Impact Statement?

A3: If you are not sure you will need one, go ahead and start documenting items now, and keep a running list of thoughts that might be relevant in a COVID Impact Statement. Then, when the time comes for your next evaluative process, your content is ready and does not have to be recalled from memory.

Q4: What should my COVID Impact Statement include?

A4: There's no set format to a COVID Impact Statement. In general, you should summarize any changes in practice that affected your productivity in all areas of your position including, but not limited to:

- Opportunities to demonstrate innovation and creativity;
- Modifications or increases to workload, activities, or approaches;
- Canceled or delayed events, activities, or work products;
- Reduced access to facilities, locations, personnel, or partners;
- Opportunities to address emergent issues related to the pandemic and/or
- "Invisible" service to sustain departmental or other operations or to support students.

Make sure to connect these changes in practice to specific impacts in your work, connecting the changes to opportunities and the challenges within the different areas of your position.

In addition to documenting adjustments to your professional responsibilities, at your discretion, you may elect to address personal circumstances that impacted overall productivity (i.e., increased caregiving demands).

Q5: May I update my COVID Impact Statement for different processes?

A5: Yes. You may create and submit separate and distinct COVID Impact Statements for annual review, reappointment, promotion, or tenure reviews, as appropriate.

Q6: How do I include a COVID Impact Statement in my tenure and promotion dossier?

A6: Starting in the 2021-2022 RPT cycle, the two-page optional candidate statement will be expanded to a three-page statement to allow for this. You may choose to present a COVID Impact Statement as a discrete one-two page addition to your candidate statement, or you may choose to integrate information about the impact of COVID throughout a three-page candidate statement. If integrating information across a three-page statement, be sure to do so in such a way that your points regarding COVID impacts are clear and explicit for the reviewer.

Q9: How do I include a COVID Impact Statement in my annual review materials?

A9: A COVID Impact Statement should be included in the Faculty Annual Review. Talk with your department head for any departmental preferences or procedures on including such a statement for annual review.

Q10: If I received a tenure clock extension for COVID-19, may I still include a COVID Impact Statement in my dossier?

A10: Yes, you may. Faculty who have received a tenure clock extension for any reason, including COVID, may also include a COVID Impact Statement in their materials if they choose to do so.

For College Committees

Q1: What is the purpose of the COVID Impact Statement in evaluation?

A1: COVID Impact statements are an opportunity for faculty to provide you with important context about the effects of the pandemic on their professional responsibilities and achievements that you should then consider during faculty evaluation processes.

Q2: What is the relationship between a COVID Impact Statement and departmental or college standards?

A2: A COVID Impact Statement provides context regarding why faculty approaches or outcomes in meeting the standards may look different than might be expected in non-pandemic times. The COVID Impact Statement does not substitute or change the standards, nor is it meant to be an explanation for not meeting such standards.

Q3: What if our review committees believe the pandemic has changed faculty work and/or our discipline or field to the extent that we want to modify the departmental or school/college standards?

A3: The departmental standards are set by the departmental or school/college faculty and can be changed when the departmental faculty deem it appropriate to do so. Such changes require departmental and college review and approval, as well as review by the Provost and by the Office of General Counsel.

Q4: When can we expect to start seeing COVID Impact Statements?

A4: COVID Impact Statements can be included in annual reviews beginning in the 2021-2022 cycle, and in promotion and tenure candidate statements beginning in the 2021-2022 review cycle.

Q5: When will COVID Impact Statements no longer be accepted?

A5: Since our evaluation processes require faculty to discuss their achievements over the span of several years, we anticipate the option for COVID Impact Statements in our evaluation processes for the foreseeable future, likely 5-7 years. The University community will have no less than two academic years' notice before phasing out these statements.

Q6: Is there a standard format for COVID Impact Statements?

A6: No. There is not a standard format for these statements though they are limited to 1000 words (roughly two pages) in length.

Q7: How should evaluators prepare to consider COVID Impact Statements?

A7: Departments and/or schools and colleges can do several things to help prepare themselves to review and consider COVID Impact Statements.

- **Communicate that statements are welcome.** Review Committees, Deans and Department Heads should help assure all faculty that the creation and submission of a COVID Impact Statement is welcome and will provide the evaluators with helpful context.
- **Continue to focus on your standards.** Is the faculty member meeting standards for their rank? This key question has not changed.
- **Proactively identify some expected differences.** Knowing we cannot imagine all of the possibilities, what less typical patterns and/or mixes of evidence that meet our departmental standards might we expect to see during this period of disruption? What funders, publication outlets, meetings or juried shows have been affected, and how will that affect faculty outputs? What new opportunities has the pandemic created in our field/discipline?
- **Acknowledge that effort and expectations may not match.** How did increased teaching demands and the shift to remote instruction in Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 affect faculty and their balance of effort in different areas of responsibility? How did lack of access to research facilities or resources do the same? How will evaluators take these kinds of challenges into account?
- **Acknowledge that the pandemic affects people differently.** How will we take into account in our deliberations the documented differential effects of the pandemic on faculty with more caregiving (childcare, elder care, educational coordination) responsibilities? How will we be prepared to recognize the individualized impacts of COVID and avoid universalizing these impact statements? For example, the same factor that presented an opportunity for one candidate may have presented a hardship for another.
- **Share insights with the entire department.** How can we share this thinking to help faculty craft their impact statements in the future? How can we spur additional departmental and school/college conversations about the range of effects we are seeing the pandemic have on faculty work?

For Deans and Department Heads

Q1: Is there a required format for COVID Impact Statements in annual reviews?

A1: No. There is not a standard format for these statements though they are limited to 1000 words (roughly two pages) in length.

Q2: How can I support faculty in creating COVID Impact Statements?

A2: Departments Heads and Deans can do several things to support faculty in creating COVID Impact Statements, such as:

- Talking regularly with faculty during annual review or other regular meetings about the pandemic's impact on their work and the adjustments they are making. This will help them decide what issues may be important to highlight in future impact statements.
- Engaging faculty members in discussions about these statements and what information would be especially useful or relevant during the review process. This will encourage department-level transparency and shared decision-making about the statements and their use.
- *For departments with mentoring programs.* Working with mentors to develop department-specific suggestions to help ensure that COVID Impact Statements address some of the more common issues faced by your department's faculty or key aspects of departmental standards.

Q3: As department head, how should I consider these statements during annual reviews of faculty?

A3: You may want to consider your procedures for annual review, how annual reviews are used by the department, and whether any adjustments are needed. For example, if your current practice is to provide a *meets expectation* or *does not meet expectations* outcome at the end of an annual review, what are the implications of continuing, suspending, or adjusting that practice in light of the pandemic? A COVID Impact Statement should provide you with helpful context for understanding the effects of the pandemic on each faculty member's responsibilities and outcomes.

The annual review process is an important touchpoint, providing faculty with useful guidance ahead of their next major evaluative milestone. Consider using it as an opportunity to help faculty refine their COVID Impact Statements ahead of those processes or to coach them regarding tenure clock extensions, adjusting their timeline for a non-mandatory review, or other approaches.