

Policies of the UNT Dallas College of Law	Chapter 07  Faculty Affairs
<b>07.205 Probationary Periods</b>	

**Policy Statement.** The UNT Dallas College of Law strives to recruit and retain faculty members who will best contribute to its goals and excellence in achieving these goals. In recruiting faculty members, the institution has the responsibility to determine the contributions each faculty member will make towards achieving goals of excellence and high academic quality. The probationary period allows an assessment of a faculty member’s potential contributions to institutional goals prior to the award of tenure.

The institution recognizes the inherent challenges in balancing work and life away from work. Excluding time from the probationary period allows balance between work and life away from work for tenure-track faculty members who experience significant personal obligations (e.g., medical, family or other circumstances that interfere with academic work) during the probationary period. An extension of the probationary period is never automatic and will be granted only when it is in the best interests of the College of Law and its faculty following the criteria below.

**Application of Policy.** This policy applies to all tenure-track faculty members.

**Definitions.**

**Probationary Period.** “Probationary Period” is the maximum amount of time a faculty member may be appointed in a tenure-track position prior to a determination being reached on granting or denial of tenure.

**Procedures and Responsibilities.**

The probationary period shall be specified for each individual at the time of his or her initial appointment. Except as provided by probationary time period exclusions identified below, the maximum probationary period is the equivalent of six years of full-time faculty service in the College of Law. Faculty members would typically be evaluated over their first five years of the probationary period and apply for tenure in the sixth year. This probationary period is counted in one year increments beginning each fall semester. The probationary period for faculty members whose appointment starts in January of an academic year shall begin in the following September. Each year of service for which the faculty member is employed full time shall be counted as a full year of probationary service once the probationary period begins. Time spent on an approved leave of absence without pay is not counted toward time spent in probationary service.

These provisions do not preclude an early application for the granting of tenure or promotion; however, such an application should only be considered in rare and extraordinary circumstances and tenure and/or promotion should be granted only when the case exhibits extraordinary merit across all areas of responsibility, with particular emphasis on work accomplished while at the College of Law. Denial of early tenure will not preclude an opportunity to later re-apply for tenure within the probationary period.

#### Notice of Termination.

In cases of terminations during the probationary period, notification will be given no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> during the first year of probationary service, December 15<sup>th</sup> during the second year of probationary service and by May 31<sup>st</sup> for years three through six of probationary service. In the latter case, the faculty member will be given a full terminal year of employment after notification to find other employment. Therefore, the next academic year will be the last year of appointment.

#### Exclusions from the Probationary Period.

A tenure-track faculty member, under certain circumstances, may request that up to one year be excluded from the probationary period. Such circumstances may include, among others, the birth or adoption of a child, responsibility for managing the illness or disability of a family member, serious persistent personal health issues, and/or death of a parent, spouse, or child. For purposes of this policy, a family member is the employee's spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild.

The faculty member should submit his or her request for time exclusions in writing to the Dean. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to provide appropriate documentation to adequately demonstrate why the request should be granted. Faculty members should make a request as soon as they believe circumstances warrant approval of the request. When feasible, the faculty member should submit his\her request in advance of the academic year or semester in which the exclusion is necessary. In any case, a request for exclusion may not be submitted after the end of the spring semester of the faculty member's sixth year of full-time probationary service. A maximum of two, one-year periods may be excluded from the probationary period.

#### Review Process.

Upon receipt of a faculty member's request to exclude time from the probationary period, the Dean will review the request and make a decision. In addition to the faculty member's written request, the Dean may review the faculty member's annual evaluations and progress toward eligibility of award of tenure prior to the event leading to the request for time exclusion. The approval of a request for exclusion of time from the probationary period will be put in writing and include the reasons for the exclusion, the period of the exclusion, its effect upon the date of tenure review, and the plan for the faculty member to meet his or her instructional or other academic responsibilities during the excluded period. The faculty

member must sign the approval document prior to implementation of the exclusion. A denial will also be documented in writing and include the reason(s) or basis for the denial. The Dean's decision to approve or deny the request is final.

**References and Cross-references.**

UNT System Board of Regents Rules 06.200, 06.1000

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Revised: