

Understanding and Creating a COVID-19 Impact Statement

Since it was declared a pandemic in March 2020, COVID-19 has had widespread and deep impacts on faculty, although these impacts vary by individual, discipline, and other factors. Peer-reviewed publications suggest that women, faculty of color, and caregivers are disproportionately harmed (National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2021; Goodwin & Mitchneck, 2020; Myers et al., 2020). Grant funders, disciplinary and academic associations, and individual faculty have advocated for changes in practices and policies surrounding reviews (annual, promotion, and tenure) to mitigate the harm (Gonzales & Griffin, 2020).

To this end, Provost Clark has implemented policies such a tenure and/or promotion [clock extension](#), and on April 9, 2021 the DU Faculty Senate passed [three motions](#) based on recommendations from a [report](#) submitted by DU's Faculty Senate Committee on COVID-19 Accommodations. This first of these motions establishes “[a]t their sole discretion, a faculty member may include a COVID-19 Impact Statement” in their 2020-2021 annual, pre-tenure, reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure, reviews, as well as any appeals. This document offers context and framing questions for these statements; for more assistance, please plan to attend an Impact Statement workshop, visit the [Writing Center](#), or use this “[How to Write a Covid Impact Statement in 1-hour](#)” as a guide. Activity Insight includes a tab for adding a COVID-19 Impact Statement to annual review materials and, for units with use Activity Insight, to consequential reviews such as tenure and/or promotion. Faculty in units that do not use Activity Insight for Tenure and/or Promotion procedures should touch base with their Department Chair or Dean's Office to learn how best to include a COVID-19 Impact Statement.

In general, an Impact Statement documents how the work of faculty was disrupted or changed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, faculty are not required, or encouraged, to disclose any health or other private information; instead, the statement focuses on effects (impact) to broader structures and disciplines, as well as faculty workload. At their sole discretion, faculty may choose to discuss invisible, emotional, or other labor related to the pandemic. If you choose, include it as part of your review materials, either as a separate statement or as part of the narrative. Please note that this guidance document is intended as a resource and is not policy. Some colleges and schools at DU have created their own guides for impact statements, and we encourage you to start from these unit-specific resources.

This guidance document draws on the work of the UMass ADVANCE team, which visited DU to discuss “[Equity in Institutional Pandemic Responses](#),” as part of the [Provost's Speaker Series](#) on the Post-Pandemic Professoriate. We also drew on similar guidance and workshops from other institutions. Campuses that have adopted voluntary or required statements include: University of Texas, University of Connecticut, Clemson, University of California(s), Purdue, New York University, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Pennsylvania and many more.

Tips

References

- Goodwin, S., & Mitchneck, B. (2020, August 15). STEM equity and inclusion (un)interrupted? Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/05/13/ensuring-pandemic-doesnt-negatively-impactwomen-stem-especially-those-color>.
- Gonzales, L., & Griffin, K. A. (2020). *Supporting faculty during & after COVID-19: Don't let go of equity*. Washington, DC: Aspire Alliance.
- Myers, K., Tham, W. Y., Yin, Y., Cohodes, N., Thursby, J. G., Thursby, M. C., Schiffer, P., Walsh, J. T., Lakhani, K. R., & Wang, D. (2020). Unequal effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on scientists. *Nature Human Behavior*, 4, 880-883. doi:10.1038/s41562-020-0921-y
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. *Impact of COVID-19 on the Careers of Women in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26061>.

- It can be overwhelming to document every possible impact; **focus on disruptions which have the potential to alter career trajectories** and/or may be invisible to others.
- Even if you are unsure what the impacts of COVID-19 will ultimately be on your career trajectory, documenting them in your annual review will help provide context for future consequential reviews. It also will mean that the differentiated but large effects of the pandemic are recorded. If a wide range of faculty compose such statements, they will be a normal aspect of annual reviews and less likely to produce bias.
- Approach a covid impact statement from a structural and institutional, rather than private perspective. If your lab was closed due to the pandemic, you were unable to travel to do field research, or your exhibit was cancelled, these would be examples of institutional or structural impacts. Think also about the pedagogical work of shifting to emergency online teaching and supporting students or colleagues during this transition. If your professional association, college, or department has written a COVID-19 impact statement for the group, consider including it to provide context.
- Consider taking an assets-based perspective in your covid impact statement; along with what is missing, what was made possible? What new ways of thinking, researching, or teaching emerged for you during this pandemic?
- This process is hard; honor that pandemic disruptions and delays are part of your professional history and give yourself credit for your flexibility, growth, and commitment.

Prompting questions

Teaching:

- What teaching challenges emerged because of shifting modalities, if any, and how did you concretely address these challenges?
- What effects did these changes have on student learning this term, and what longer term effects might there be on your teaching or the experience of DU students?

Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity:

- Was your research, performance(s), or other creative activity delayed or altered by the pandemic?
- What challenges emerged and how did you respond to them?

Service:

- How, if applicable, did your service-load or your ability to effectively meet service observations change due to the pandemic? If you experienced increased workload or decreased opportunities for service (either at the university, in the profession, or the community) please explain. This may include increased mentoring of other faculty, staff, and students who have needed additional emotional and other support.

Professional Development:

- What additional trainings, workshops, or other preparations did you undertake to respond to the pandemic, including the shift to emergency online teaching?