

Information regarding Internal Tenure Merit Evaluation of Junior Professors in the Department of Economics at the University of Mannheim

Sept 30, 2021

Note: This document does not apply to junior professors on tenure-track positions in the sense of § 51 b LHG. It has been created for informational purpose only, and no legal rights can be derived from it.

1. Point of departure

Following recent state-level reforms, the state of Baden-Württemberg formally distinguishes between “tenure-track” and “non-tenure-track” junior professorships. “Tenure-track junior professorships” are defined by state law (§ 51 b LHG) and come with a guaranteed promotion to a fixed and pre-specified tenured position after a probationary period in case of strong academic performance. The details are regulated by the University through its “Tenure-Track-Satzung” (tenure track regulation, or TTS). For “non-tenure-track junior professors” there is no guaranteed promotion to a tenured position, irrespective of academic performance. Nevertheless, such junior faculty can be tenured through a process that is akin to the one for hiring senior external faculty (§ 48 (1) LHG). The university explicitly recognizes this possibility in § 1 TTS and gives details in § 18 TTS.

The Department currently does not use the legal structure of § 51 b LHG in principle but has decided to rather hire all junior faculty on equal terms, with possible promotion under § 48 (1) LHG. The Department has also decided to support and evaluate the professional academic progress of its junior professors in a manner that is analogous to the one that applies to “tenure-track” (in the sense of § 51 b LHG) junior professors. In particular, the Department conducts internal tenure merit evaluations towards the end of a “non-tenure-track” junior professor’s appointment. The goal of these evaluations is to determine whether a junior professor is sufficiently qualified for a tenured position in the Department. The evaluations follow the procedures and criteria that also apply to the evaluations of “tenure-track” (in the sense of § 51 b LHG) junior professors.

The internal tenure merit evaluation serves first and foremost as a feedback mechanism for the junior professor. It is conducted by the Department on a voluntary basis. It is not subject to any kind of legal review, and no legal rights can be derived from its outcome. The Department will seek to implement positive internal tenure merit evaluations through promotion under § 48 (1) LHG, using the procedures laid out in § 18 TTS. However, a positive evaluation does not guarantee that a candidate will eventually obtain a permanent position in the Department. Depending on the circumstances, the department can also decide to implement positive internal tenure merit evaluations through other appropriate means.

2. Individuals and Committees involved in the internal tenure merit evaluation

The Mentor. During the period of employment, the junior professor will be mentored by a tenured W3 professor in the Department. The aim of the mentoring is to improve the junior professor’s career trajectory towards a full professorship. The mentor should be a professor

working in a similar field as the junior professor. The mentor helps with decisions concerning research focus, career planning, and teaching. The mentor also leads the mid-term review.

The Senior Convent. The Senior Convent is the group of all tenured W3 professors in the Department.

The Tenure Merit Committee. The composition of the Tenure Merit Committee is formally defined in § 11 (1) 1. TTS. In summary, it has at least three members, which are elected among tenured W3 professors of the Department by the Senior Convent.

3. Mid-term review

The performance of the junior professor is typically reviewed towards the end of the first three-year period of employment. The exact timing is determined by the mentor, who takes the leading role in the review process. The junior professor submits a CV, a list of publications and working papers with abstracts, and an overview of the teaching and service record as a basis for the review and discusses them with the mentor and at least one other senior faculty member. The Senior Convent hears reports from the mentor and other senior faculty that are familiar with the junior professor's record, and discusses the submitted materials, to evaluate the junior professor's performance. The result of the review is communicated to the junior professor by the mentor.

The Department has decided to offer newly hired junior faculty contracts of maximum duration, which is usually six years. In this case, the mid-term review is purely indicative. If the initial contract has been for less than the maximum duration and the junior professor's continued employment in the Department is contingent on a positive mid-term evaluation, timing is adjusted accordingly, and the Senior Convent issues a formal recommendation for or against continuation of the junior professorship after hearing the reports. The final decision is then made at the University level. Termination at this early point in the junior professor's career should occur only in exceptional circumstances.

4. Initiation of the internal tenure merit evaluation

Subject to timeline changes outlined in Section 5 of this document, the internal tenure merit evaluation takes place at the start of the sixth year of the junior professor's employment, which is usually the last year of the contract. Junior professors are informed about the timeline of the internal tenure merit evaluation, and in particular the deadline for submitting a tenure dossier, by the head of the department around the start of their fifth year of employment.

Junior professors must initiate the internal tenure merit evaluation by submitting a tenure dossier containing the documents listed in § 7 (1) TTS to the head of the department.

The latest possible date for submitting a tenure dossier is generally the date five years after the starting date of the junior professor's contract. The head of the department can make slight alterations to this deadline to facilitate the review process. For example, if the day five years after the starting date of the junior professor's contract is within the spring or summer break, a

date at the beginning of the next semester can be chosen. If the junior professor does not submit a tenure dossier before the deadline, no internal tenure merit evaluation takes place.

Untenured junior researchers not employed as junior professors at the Department can also request to be evaluated for internal tenure merit if they have been nominated by either the standing Tenure Merit Committee or the group of tenured professors (either one with a majority vote). The internal tenure merit evaluation of such researchers follows procedures analogous to those used for junior professors.

5. Timeline changes

If junior professors take leaves of absence for family reasons during their employment that extend the formal end date of their contract beyond the usual six years after the starting date, the timeline of the internal tenure merit evaluation can be extended up to the duration of the leave at the request of the junior professor.

If junior professors take leaves of absence for scientific reasons during their employment that extend the formal end date of their contract beyond the usual six years after the starting date, the timeline of the internal tenure merit evaluation can be extended by the duration of the leave, but not by more than one year, at the request of the junior professor.

Requests to extend the timeline of the internal tenure merit evaluation have to be made in writing to the head of the department and must be submitted before the original deadline for submitting a tenure dossier.

If the timeline of the internal tenure merit evaluation is extended due to a leave, the head of the department sets a new deadline by which the junior professor must initiate the internal tenure merit review. The difference between the new and the old deadline can differ slightly from the duration of the leave that led to the extension to facilitate the review process.

Junior professors with truly exceptional records may request to be evaluated for internal tenure merit ahead of the regular schedule with the permission of the head of the department. If such an early review is unsuccessful, the candidate can request to be evaluated again at the normal time with the permission of the head of the department. Such permission shall only be given if the candidate's work performance has changed substantially since the end of the early evaluation. To avoid the potential awkwardness following a negative early internal tenure merit decision, it is prudent to initiate early reviews only in rare instances.

6. Tenure merit evaluation process

If the junior professor submits the complete tenure dossier before the deadline, the head of the department instructs the Tenure Merit Committee to begin the evaluation. The Tenure Merit Committee follows the procedures laid out in § 13 (2) 1. a-b TTS, and uses the criteria laid out in §§ 9-10 TTS, for the evaluation. The regulations of § 12 TTS regarding conflicts of interest are observed as well. The aim is to complete the evaluation within three months after the deadline for submitting the tenure dossier.

Based on the report and recommendation of the Tenure Merit Committee, the Senior Convent decides on the internal tenure merit of the candidate. A positive evaluation requires approval by the majority of all cast votes. Members of the Senior Convent who are unable to attend the meeting may vote by absentee ballot.