

**The Harvey Mudd College  
Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee**

**Recommended Practices**

**For RPT Committee Members,  
RPT Candidates,  
The Dean of Faculty,  
and Department Chairs**

*Updated December 2022*

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## **Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Calendar For the RPT Committee, RPT Candidates, the Dean of Faculty, and Department Chairs**

This document outlines the recommended calendar for RPT actions. Some cases may deviate from this calendar due to special circumstances.

The Faculty Notebook requires that in evaluating the teaching abilities of a candidate, student evaluations must be supplemented with alternative sources of information. To that end, the Dean of Faculty, the department chair, and the candidate are strongly encouraged to develop long-term teaching and assessment plans, and a tentative teaching portfolio during the first semester at Harvey Mudd. Typically, this will include systematic assessments from team teaching and/or class visits by faculty colleagues as well as other sources of evidence outlined in Section 4.4.2 of the Faculty Notebook. The RPT Committee is expected to discuss the assessment plan, its implementation, and its results with the department chair at each review of the candidate.

### **Dean Of Faculty Consults with Department Chairs about Impending Cases: April**

The Dean of Faculty consults with the department chairs about RPT cases for the next academic year. The Dean of Faculty creates a list of cases and gives a copy to the RPT Committee chair.

### **RPT Case Load Evaluation: Early June**

The Dean of Faculty, the outgoing RPT Committee chair, and the incoming RPT Committee chair meet to discuss the case load for the upcoming year. The meeting is convened by the outgoing RPT Committee chair.

### **Destroying RPT Materials for Tenured Full Professors: Between July 1 and First Day of Classes in Fall Semester**

The Faculty Notebook states that, “upon promotion of any faculty member to the rank of tenured full professor, their RPT files are to be destroyed.” The Dean of Faculty’s Office is responsible for performing this duty, but should first determine whether any of these materials should be transferred to the faculty member’s personnel file. The Dean of Faculty is responsible for removing all RPT files from the online RPT repository after the cases are complete.

### **Distributing the RPT Committee Recommended Practices Document: Between August 1 and First Day of Classes in Fall Semester**

After consulting with the Dean of Faculty, the RPT chair distributes the RPT Committee Recommended Practices document to any new department chairs. If the RPT Committee has made changes to the document in the previous year, or if Section 4.4 of the Faculty Notebook has been changed in a way that affects the document, the RPT chair distributes revised copies of the document to all department chairs and ensures that the revised document is available on the Dean of Faculty’s web site.

Normally, cases for promotion to associate professor with tenure come before the RPT Committee in the fall semester, while cases for reappointment and for promotion to full professor are considered in the spring semester.

## FALL SCHEDULE

### **Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor**

#### **Late June: Dean of Faculty Sends Letter to Candidate and Department Chair**

The Dean of Faculty sends letters to the candidate and the department chair advising them of the impending review.

The Dean of Faculty's letter to the candidate stipulates that the candidate's complete materials (as described in Section 4.4 of the Faculty Notebook), including the names of faculty members who can evaluate the candidate's teaching effectiveness, should be submitted to the department chair and to the Dean of Faculty's Office by the end of the second week of August. Wherever possible, the candidate's materials should be submitted as electronic documents, preferably in PDF format. In response to the Dean of Faculty's letter, the candidate makes a list of external colleagues who can evaluate the candidate's growth and achievement in professional engagement and discusses that list with the department chair.

The Dean of Faculty's letter to the department chair states that the department is strongly encouraged to find additional external reviewers beyond the list provided by the candidate. The Faculty Notebook indicates that when soliciting external letters, the department is encouraged to identify additional reviewers beyond those submitted by the candidate. *The RPT Committee would like to have at least four external letters and at least two of those letters should be submitted by expert reviewers who have at most a limited personal association with the candidate.* Excepting collaborators, ideally no external reviewers are asked to provide letters for multiple RPT reviews for the same candidate. When the RPT Committee and the department chair meet, the discussion should address the list of reviewers, their areas of expertise, and their relationships with the candidate. The dean's letter also notes that the full list of external reviewers from whom letters might be solicited must be shown by the department chair to the candidate before letters are solicited. (The department chair should submit all letters received from external reviewers as well as a representative solicitation letter to the Dean of Faculty's Office by the beginning of the sixth week of the fall semester.)

#### **Early July: Department Chairs Solicit Letters From External Reviewers**

After referring to the section on Model Letters to Outside Reviewers for RPT Actions (see pages 9-13 of this document) and consulting with the candidate about materials to distribute, the department chair sends out solicitation letters to

external reviewers, with copies to the Dean of Faculty's Office for inclusion in the candidate's RPT file.

**End of Second Week of August: Dean of Faculty's Office Creates Folder for Candidate**

The Dean of Faculty's Office creates an electronic folder for the candidate's materials, course evaluations, and letters.

**End of Second Week of August: Candidate Submits all Materials to Dean of Faculty's Office and to the Department Chair**

The candidate submits to both the Dean of Faculty's Office and to the department chair all materials specified in the Faculty Notebook and the names of faculty colleagues who can evaluate the candidate's teaching effectiveness.

**First day of Fall Semester: Dean of Faculty Distributes RPT Questionnaires to Selected Students**

The RPT chair assists the Dean of Faculty's Office to select a representative set of the candidate's former students (including alumni when appropriate) and requests that they complete a questionnaire regarding the candidate. The Dean of Faculty's Office typically issues a reminder to these students at the end of the second week of the semester.

**Mid-September: Dean of Faculty Solicits Evaluations From Faculty Members**

The department chair and the Dean of Faculty decide on a list of faculty members from whom letters regarding teaching should be solicited. This list may go beyond the list provided by the candidate. The Dean of Faculty's Office then solicits these letters. In addition, the Dean of Faculty sends a letter to all faculty members requesting input on the candidate's tenure case.

**Sixth Week of Classes: Department Submits Letter to Dean of Faculty**

By the end of the sixth week of the semester, the department provides its letter to the candidate and submits the letter to the Dean of Faculty's Office. This letter should indicate which members of the department were consulted in its preparation. The department chair also submits all letters solicited from external reviewers, as well as a representative solicitation letter sent to the external reviewers.

**Second Half of the Semester: RPT Deliberations**

During the latter part of the semester the RPT Committee reviews all materials collected for the case, discusses the case with the cognizant department chair, and reaches its preliminary recommendation. The RPT committee is encouraged to discuss the long-term teaching and assessment plan, its implementation, and its results with the department chair at each review of the candidate. The president is apprised of the committee's deliberations through a discussion with the RPT Committee or the Dean of Faculty.

### **Last Week of the Semester: RPT Letter Delivered**

The RPT Committee finalizes its letter and delivers it to the Dean of Faculty. The dean meets with the candidate to share and discuss the letter. After this discussion, the letter is transmitted to the president and the department chair. The RPT Committee recommends that the department chair also discuss the letter with the candidate.

## **SPRING SCHEDULE**

### **Reappointment (Third-Year Review)**

#### **Early November: Dean of Faculty Sends Letter to Candidate and Department Chair**

The Dean of Faculty sends letters to the candidate and department chair advising them of the impending review.

The Dean of Faculty's letter to the candidate stipulates that the candidate's complete materials (as described in Section 4.4 of the Faculty Notebook), including the names of faculty members who can evaluate the candidate's teaching effectiveness, should be submitted to the department chair and to the Dean of Faculty's Office by the end of the first week of January. Wherever possible, the candidate's materials should be submitted as electronic documents, preferably in PDF format. In response to the Dean of Faculty's letter, the candidate makes a list of external colleagues who can evaluate the candidate's growth and achievement in professional engagement and discusses that list with the department chair.

The Dean of Faculty's letter to the department chair states that the department is strongly encouraged to find additional external reviewers beyond the list provided by the candidate. The Faculty Notebook indicates that when soliciting external letters, the department is encouraged to identify additional reviewers beyond those submitted by the candidate. *The RPT Committee would like to have at least four external letters and at least two of those letters should be submitted by expert reviewers who have at most a limited personal association with the candidate.* Excepting collaborators, ideally no external reviewers are asked to provide letters for multiple RPT reviews for the same candidate. When the RPT Committee and the department chair meet, the discussion should address the list of reviewers, their areas of expertise, and their relationships with the candidate. The dean's letter also notes that the full list of external reviewers from whom letters might be solicited must be shown by the department chair to the candidate before letters are solicited. (The department chair should submit all letters received from external reviewers as well as a representative solicitation letter to the Dean of Faculty's Office by the beginning of the sixth week of the spring semester.)

**Mid November: Department Chairs Solicit Letters from External Reviewers**

After referring to the section on Model Letters to Outside Reviewers for RPT Actions (see pages 9-13 of this document) and consulting with the candidate about materials to distribute, the department chair sends out solicitation letters to external reviewers, with copies to the Dean of Faculty's Office for inclusion in the candidate's RPT file.

**End of First Week of January: Dean of Faculty's Office Creates Folder for Candidate**

The Dean of Faculty's Office creates an electronic folder for the candidate's materials, course evaluations, and letters.

**End of First Week of January: Candidate Submits all Materials to Dean of Faculty's Office and to the Department Chair**

The candidate submits to both the Dean of Faculty's Office and to the department chair all materials specified in the Faculty Notebook and the names of faculty colleagues who can evaluate the candidate's teaching effectiveness.

**First day of Spring Semester: Dean of Faculty Distributes RPT Questionnaires to Selected Students**

The RPT chair assists the Dean of Faculty's Office to select a representative set of the candidate's former students (including alumni when appropriate) and requests that they complete a questionnaire regarding the candidate. The Dean of Faculty's Office typically issues a reminder to these students at the end of the second week of the semester.

**End of January: Department Chair and Dean of Faculty Solicit Evaluations from Faculty Members**

The department chair and the Dean of Faculty decide on a list of faculty members from whom letters regarding teaching should be solicited. This list may go beyond the list provided by the candidate. The Dean of Faculty's Office then solicits these letters. In addition, the Dean of Faculty sends a letter to all faculty members inviting input on the candidate's case for reappointment.

**Sixth Week of Classes: Department Submits Letter to Dean of Faculty**

By the end of the sixth week of the semester, the department provides its letter to the candidate and submits the letter to the Dean of Faculty's Office. The department chair also submits all letters solicited from external reviewers, as well as a representative solicitation letter sent to the external reviewers.

**Second Half of the Semester: RPT Deliberations**

During the latter part of the semester the RPT Committee reviews all materials collected for the case, discusses the case with the cognizant department chair, and reaches its preliminary recommendation. The RPT committee is encouraged to discuss the long-term teaching and assessment plan, its implementation, and its results with the department chair at each review of the candidate. The president is

apprised of the committee's deliberations through a discussion with the RPT Committee or the Dean of the Faculty.

### **Last Week of the Semester: RPT Letter Delivered**

The RPT Committee finalizes its letter and delivers it to the Dean of Faculty. The dean meets with the candidate to share and discuss the letter. After this discussion, the letter is transmitted to the president and the department chair. The RPT Committee recommends that the department chair also discuss the letter with the candidate.

## **Promotion to Full Professor**

### **Early November: Department Chair and/or Candidate Notifies the Dean of Faculty of Intention to Seek Promotion**

### **Mid November: Dean of Faculty Sends Letter to the Candidate and the Department Chair**

The Dean of Faculty sends letters to the candidate and the department chair advising them of the impending review.

The Dean of Faculty's letter to the candidate stipulates that the candidate's complete materials (as described in Section 4.4 of the Faculty Notebook), including the names of faculty members who can evaluate the candidate's teaching effectiveness, should be submitted to the department chair and to the Dean of Faculty's Office by the end of the first week of January. Wherever possible, the candidate's materials should be submitted as electronic documents, preferably in PDF format. In response to the Dean of Faculty's letter, the candidate makes a list of external colleagues who can evaluate the candidate's growth and achievement in professional engagement and discusses that list with the department chair.

The Dean of Faculty's letter to the department chair states that the department is strongly encouraged to find additional external reviewers of the candidate's growth as a scholar and teacher beyond the list provided by the candidate. The Faculty Notebook indicates that when soliciting external letters, the department is encouraged to identify additional reviewers beyond those submitted by the candidate. *The RPT Committee would like to have at least four external letters and at least two of those letters should be submitted by expert reviewers who have at most a limited personal association with the candidate.* Excepting collaborators, ideally no external reviewers are asked to provide letters for multiple RPT reviews for the same candidate. When the RPT Committee and the department chair meet, the discussion should address the list of reviewers, their areas of expertise, and their relationships with the candidate. The dean's letter also notes that the full list of external reviewers from whom letters might be solicited must be shown by the department chair to the candidate before letters are solicited. (The department chair should submit all letters solicited from external

reviewers as well as a representative solicitation letter to the Dean of Faculty's Office by the beginning of the sixth week of the spring semester.)

**Early November to Early December: Department Chairs Solicit Letters from External Reviewers**

After referring to the section on Model Letters to Outside Reviewers for RPT Actions (see pages 9-13 of this document) and consulting with the candidate about materials to distribute, the department chair sends out solicitation letters to external reviewers, with copies to the Dean of Faculty's Office for inclusion in the candidate's RPT file.

**End of First Week of January: Dean of Faculty's Office Creates Folder for Candidate**

The Dean of Faculty's Office creates an electronic folder for the candidate's materials, course evaluations, and letters.

**End of First Week of January: Candidate Submits all Materials to Dean of Faculty's Office and to the Department Chair**

The candidate submits to both the Dean of Faculty's Office and to the department chair all materials specified in the Faculty Notebook and the names of faculty colleagues who can evaluate the candidate's teaching effectiveness.

**First Day of spring semester: Dean of Faculty Distributes RPT Questionnaires to Selected Students**

The RPT chair assists the Dean of Faculty's Office to select a representative set of the candidate's former students (including alumni when appropriate) and requests that they complete a questionnaire regarding the candidate. The Dean of Faculty's Office typically issues a reminder to these students at the end of the second week of the semester.

**End of January: Dean of Faculty Solicits Evaluations from Faculty Members**

The department chair and the Dean of Faculty decide on a list of faculty members from whom letters regarding teaching should be solicited. This list may go beyond the list provided by the candidate. The Dean of Faculty's Office then solicits these letters. In addition, the Dean of Faculty sends a letter to all faculty members inviting input on the candidate's case for promotion.

**Sixth Week of Classes: Department Submits Letter to Dean of Faculty**

By the end of the sixth week of the semester, the department provides its letter to the candidate and submits the letter to the Dean of Faculty's Office. This letter should indicate which members of the department were consulted in its preparation. The department chair also submits all letters solicited from external reviewers, as well as a representative solicitation letter sent to the external reviewers.

**Second Half of the Semester: RPT Deliberations**



During the latter part of the semester the RPT Committee reviews all materials collected for the case, discusses the case with the cognizant department chair, and reaches its preliminary recommendation. The RPT committee is encouraged to discuss the long-term teaching and assessment plan, its implementation, and its results with the department chair at each review of the candidate. The president is apprised of the committee's deliberations through a discussion with the RPT Committee or the Dean of Faculty.

**Last Week of the Semester: RPT Letter Delivered**

The RPT Committee finalizes its letter and delivers it to the Dean of Faculty. The dean meets with the candidate to share and discuss the letter. After this discussion, the letter is transmitted to the president and the department chair. The RPT Committee recommends that the department chair also discuss the letter with the candidate.

## Model Letters to Outside Reviewers for RPT Actions

In May 2022, the HMC faculty voted to change the pre-tenure review process to include a single reappointment after three years, and to solicit outside letters to inform that review, in addition to the tenure decision.

Because the department chairs solicit these letters on behalf of the college and the RPT Committee, and in order to ensure consistency of practice over time, the members of the committee have drafted two models for reference when writing to outside reviewers. These examples, based on actual letters, are meant to suggest, not prescribe, the kinds of information the RPT Committee believes is useful in helping outside reviewers contribute meaningfully to our review process. While the style, exact wording, and length of letters will vary from department to department (and as they do in the two models), the Committee strongly recommends that all letters include the second bulleted item, beginning “Regarding continuing growth as a scholar and teacher,” from section 4.4.3 of the Faculty Notebook, “Activities and Qualities Consistent with RPT Criteria.” This section articulates clearly the college’s expectations, which are distinct from those at many other institutions.

The chair of the RPT Committee is available to consult with or advise department chairs about their letters to outside reviewers. In composing those letters, chairs should take care not to ask for information incompatible with the current language in the Faculty Notebook. For instance, some letters in the past have encouraged evaluator comments on an RPT candidate’s teaching ability; the Notebook, however, requires that any comments from evaluators must be based on “first hand knowledge of the candidates’ teaching performance,” a criterion that most outside evaluators will be unable to meet.

It is important for the RPT Committee to understand the nature of the relationship between the outside evaluator and the candidate. To that end, *each solicitation letter should request that the evaluator briefly address his or her association with the candidate.* The models that follow are envisioned as postal correspondence, but actual letters may be sent either by post or by e-mail. Outside references may be given access to a candidate’s materials electronically.

**Model 1 (for a reappointment review)**

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

\_\_\_\_\_ is currently in her third year as an Assistant Professor of \_\_\_\_\_ here at Harvey Mudd College. This spring, she will go through her pre-tenure review in our reappointment and tenure process, with the decision for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor coming in the fall of \_\_\_\_\_. Professor \_\_\_\_\_ has indicated that you would be qualified to provide an assessment of her scholarship at this stage of her development. In your letter, please briefly indicate whether you know the candidate personally and, if so, please describe your association with the candidate.

As you may be aware, Harvey Mudd College is a small residential college specializing in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering while also requiring its students to have a strong grounding in the humanities, the social sciences and the arts [Insert language here that characterizes both the college and the department].

As an undergraduate institution, our expectations for faculty members are that they show promise and early demonstration of progress in both teaching and professional engagement. . The Harvey Mudd College Faculty Notebook indicates that “professional engagement as a scholar, artist, and/or consultant supports the teaching mission of the college by keeping the faculty current and connected to larger academic, artistic, community, and industrial developments” and should include:

[A]dvanced studies or professional activities in established or new areas of competence involving research, engineering design and development, artistic creation, consulting, or other original work; examination of diversity, equity, and inclusion through a disciplinary lens; contributions to the educational literature, or advancement of teaching or professional practices beyond the institution; efforts connecting one’s scholarship to pressing civic and social concerns, local communities and organizations, or governmental agencies; effective communication of any of the above activities to the profession or the public; editing and refereeing journals or conference proceedings, and reviewing grant proposals.

I would appreciate it if you could review the enclosed curriculum vitae and brief written materials and provide us with an assessment of Professor \_\_\_\_\_’s professional engagement. It is critical that during this review process we provide the candidate with a salient review of her work. It is our intention to provide her with the information necessary to ensure that she can be prepared for promotion and tenure in five semesters. Your letter will be read only by those involved in the review process and not by the candidate herself; the candidate will not be told that you have provided a letter.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to give us your frank assessment. The tenured members of the department will meet to discuss \_\_\_\_\_'s case in the third week of February. I would appreciate receiving your comments by February \_\_\_\_\_. In the event that you are unable to provide us with a review or meet that deadline, please advise me as soon as possible by mail, phone (555-555-5555), or e-mail (\_\_\_\_@hmc.edu). Thank you for your time and effort in this matter.

Sincerely,

Professor \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, \_\_\_\_\_ Department  
Harvey Mudd College  
301 Platt Boulevard  
Claremont, CA 91711

**Model 2 (for a tenure review)**

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing to request your assistance in evaluating Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ as part of his review for promotion to associate professor of \_\_\_\_\_ with continuous tenure at Harvey Mudd College. I hope that you will be able to assist us in this important part of our tenure and promotion process. In your letter, please briefly indicate whether you know the candidate personally and, if so, please describe your association with the candidate.

We are interested in your observations about Dr. \_\_\_\_\_'s professional engagement. I have attached an additional page with useful information for external reviewers, including an excerpt from our Faculty Notebook that describes the kinds of activities and qualities we look for when considering a colleague's professional engagement. In addition, I have included Dr. \_\_\_\_\_'s curriculum vitae, statement of professional work, and a few selected \_\_\_\_\_[work products]\_\_\_\_\_. You can find more information about Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ at his home page:

[http://www.hmc.edu/\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.hmc.edu/_____)

If you have questions about this process, I would be pleased to talk to or correspond with you about it.

My colleagues and I sincerely appreciate your time and effort in this matter. Your letter will be held in strict confidence and will be read only by those involved in the review process, and not by the candidate. Your letter should be sent to me at the address below. If at all possible, we would like to have your letter by September \_\_\_\_\_. If you cannot assist us, or if you cannot deliver a letter by that date, please let me know as soon as possible. I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_@hmc.edu and by phone at 555-555-5555.

All the best,

Professor \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, \_\_\_\_\_ Department  
Harvey Mudd College  
301 Platt Boulevard  
Claremont, CA 91711

## **Guidelines for External Reviewers**

This document is intended for external reviewers in reappointment, promotion, and tenure cases in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ at Harvey Mudd College.

### About the College

HMC is a small, highly selective, undergraduate college with approximately 900 students and 100 full-time faculty members. HMC offers bachelor of science degrees in science, mathematics, and engineering and requires a strong grounding in the humanities, social sciences, and arts. There are seven academic departments. The nominal teaching load is five courses per year. HMC students are among the finest in the nation. HMC graduates are highly placed in industry, academia, and other domains. The college typically ranks among the top few institutions in the nation with respect to the fraction of its graduates who continue on to doctoral programs.

### About the \_\_\_\_\_ Department

[Add a brief description of the department here.]

### Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Considerations

The HMC Faculty Notebook states that, in faculty promotion and tenure considerations, excellence in teaching is of primary importance, professional engagement is of secondary importance, and service to the college and the broader community are of tertiary importance. Although the primary mission of the college is undergraduate education, professional engagement is strongly valued and expected. External reviewers, however, are asked to keep in mind that the college's emphasis on teaching affords our faculty members with less time and fewer resources to engage in research and other scholarly work than they would typically have at a major research university. Our emphasis, therefore, is on the quality of the candidate's professional engagement, not on its quantity. In considering the kinds of activities and qualities we look for when considering a colleague's progress, external reviewers should consider the following paragraph from the Faculty Notebook:

Professional engagement: advanced studies or professional activities in established or new areas of competence involving research, engineering design and development, artistic creation, consulting, or other original work; examination of diversity, equity, and inclusion through a disciplinary lens; contributions to the educational literature, or advancement of teaching or professional practices beyond the institution; efforts connecting one's scholarship to pressing civic and social concerns, local communities and organizations, or governmental agencies; effective communication of any of the above activities to the profession or the public; editing and refereeing journals or conference proceedings, and reviewing grant proposals.

## Advice to Candidates Regarding the RPT Portfolio

- Align your portfolio with the three areas of evaluation listed in section 4.4.1 of the Faculty Notebook: ability as a teacher; professional engagement; and engagement with and service to the institution.
- Regarding ability as a teacher and professional engagement, your statements should:
  - be succinct. Three-to-five pages for each statement should be sufficient. Append teaching documents (syllabi, course materials, *etc.*) and evidence of professional engagement (publications, pre-publications, grant proposals, exhibitions, manuscripts, or anything else you would like the committee and external reviewers to see) as supplemental material. Do not append student evaluations of teaching as these are available to the committee elsewhere.
  - be self-reflective, especially in the teaching statement. Section 4.4.3 of the Faculty Notebook directs the committee to seek evidence regarding ability as a teacher that includes a “demonstrated awareness of the strengths, weaknesses, and interests of one’s students and the ability to make suitable adjustments to the content, organization, and pacing of course work.” What approaches have you taken to teaching, and why? What has and has not worked for you? What will you try next time? What have you learned from student evaluations, and how have you addressed student feedback?
  - look forward as well as backward. Describe your future teaching and professional engagement plans in addition to your accomplishments to date.
- Regarding service to the institution, report: College-wide and Claremont-wide committee assignments; departmental service (*e.g.* job search committees, seminar coordinator, *etc.*); contributions furthering diversity and equal opportunity within and beyond the College; special efforts in curricular or institutional development; and participation in forms of professional and community service that bring academic recognition to the institution.
- Finally, ask colleagues and your department chair to review your portfolio before it goes to RPT. Leave yourself plenty of time to put it together and receive appropriate feedback.