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# **Academic Affairs Guidelines for Recruiting and Hiring Faculty**

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James Madison University  
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# I. Introduction

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*James Madison University is an equal opportunity employer committed to creating and supporting a diverse and inclusive work and educational community that is free of all forms of discrimination. This institution does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, parental status, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.*

*We promote access, inclusion, and diversity for all students, faculty, staff, constituents, and programs, believing that these qualities are foundational components of an outstanding education in keeping with our mission. The university is interested in candidates whose experience and qualifications support an ongoing commitment to this core quality.*

*–JMU’s Statement on Diversity in Hiring*

This document is a companion to the mandatory training program for academic unit heads and faculty search committee chairs and members. It can be used as a reference during the 12 stages of the faculty recruitment and hiring process, which begins before a search commences and continues as departments work to hire and on-board excellent faculty.

The following operational principles inform faculty hiring at JMU:

- All processes and systems in Academic Affairs, including hiring, supporting and retaining instructional faculty, should reflect an active commitment to core values of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Diversity of identity, experience, expertise and interests is a core feature of an excellent faculty. Achieving faculty diversity is essential to institutional excellence.
- Our process for searching, hiring and welcoming new faculty must be aligned with, informed by and reflective of university, college and unit-level priorities.
- Each faculty hire we make provides an opportunity for expanding the diversity of our faculty, strengthening our academic community and enriching the educational experience of our students.

Every faculty position is unique so each search must be carefully planned. Search committee members, search chairs, academic unit heads and deans should agree upon specific recruitment and diversity enhancement strategies best suited to each position in order to optimize success.

## Cohort Hires

Hiring an intra- or interdepartmental cohort of instructional faculty who share overlapping disciplinary scholarship and expertise can be an effective means of hiring and retaining successfully. Academic units interested in collaborating with other units in pursuing cohort hires may find that this approach expands the parameters for the search and thus strengthens the applicant pool. This strategy has been utilized successfully to attract BIPOC faculty candidates who understand that they will have the opportunity to be part of an academic and intellectual cohort from the moment they arrive on campus.

## II. Laying the Groundwork

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Hiring new faculty for the institution is one of the most important functions departments will undertake. It is important to begin planning conversations early so that there is sufficient time to develop awareness and buy-in to the search process. Deciding on the priorities and parameters of the search early can help everyone feel a part of the process.

### Questions to Consider

- How should a new faculty position be defined in order to best address departmental needs (instructional or AP? RTA or tenure-track? Assistant or associate level?)
- What information about the department will be most important to share in order to attract a broad pool of qualified applicants?
- What qualifications, experience and characteristics will identify the top candidates?
- How will academic unit faculty be expected to engage with candidates during the interview process?
- What is the approximate timeframe for the search process?
- How large an applicant pool is expected?
- How will the new hire contribute new skills, perspectives and approaches to departmental practices and culture?

Before the search begins, the academic unit head (AUH) should initiate a department-wide conversation to discuss the importance of attracting faculty representing the full range of identities, experiences, types of expertise, and teaching and mentoring styles needed to ensure a healthy and thriving departmental environment. An ongoing departmental conversation can illuminate new areas of need in the department and can deepen a shared understanding of how faculty diversity will help the department meet key educational objectives.

- Assess your departmental diversity climate. What specific steps have you taken to prepare a healthy and supportive environment for a new hire?

### Creating A Network

Build the network for recruiting a diverse applicant pool.

- Enlist your faculty in developing the talent pool for your search. Use professional networks, conference venues and social media to get the word out about the new position you are hiring. Faculty professional contacts (graduate advisers, professional collaborators and peers, etc.) provide a useful way of connecting with potential candidates with the qualifications you seek.
- For some hires, individuals with backgrounds in business, industry or government may be particularly well-suited to the needs of the department. Consider building contacts and relationships with professional communities or industries that may be a good source of applicants with credentials appropriate for the position.
- Cultivate the pipeline to the professoriate by supporting [Preparing Future Faculty](#) (PFF), CVPA Cultural Connections Program and comparable programs. These programs help to prepare faculty in your discipline and can significantly contribute to their decision to apply for future positions at JMU.
- Encourage contacts to consider applying for future positions at JMU.

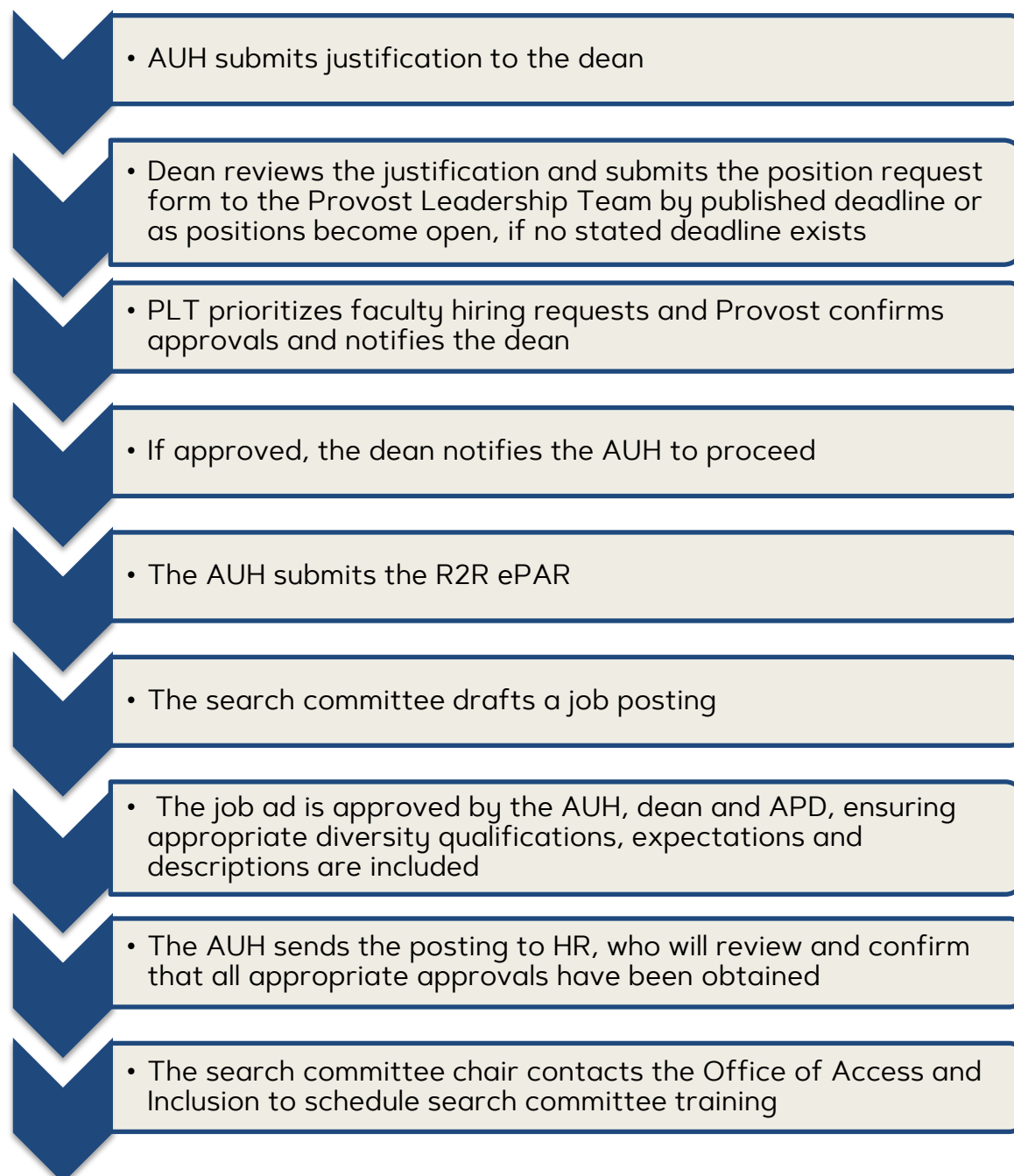
The [Office of the Associate Provost for Diversity](#) (APD), with administrative support from the [Office of Access and Inclusion](#), is available to assist academic departments with facilitating diversity conversations. For more information, contact Ms. Kim Moubray, Administrative Assistant, 568-4506, [delinkl@jmu.edu](mailto:delinkl@jmu.edu).

### III. Obtaining Permission to Recruit

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Hiring and supporting new faculty requires a significant outlay of resources at both departmental and university levels. Although need for a new faculty hire is determined at the departmental level, proper administrative approval must be obtained before the search process is initiated. Each new hiring request is reviewed and prioritized to ensure that sufficient resources are available to hire and retain excellent faculty who will contribute to the goals and objectives of the department and institution throughout their career.

The steps to seeking approval for a new faculty hire are:



# IV. Preparing for the Search and Developing the Position Description

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Departments are on display during a faculty search; job applicants are likely to seek information about the academic unit prior to deciding to apply, and they will glean information from the job description, departmental websites and their interactions with the search committee. Careful selection of the search committee members sets the tone for the search. Search committee members represent the department's values and priorities, and they play a crucial role in building a diverse and highly-qualified pool of candidates.

An early responsibility of the search committee is creating a position description for the search. Taking the time to develop a position description that thoughtfully reflects the best features of your department can serve to attract the most highly qualified candidates.

## Determining the Search Committee

The AUH invites faculty members to serve on the search committee. The AUH, in consultation with the dean, DEI Leader and APD, ensures appropriate diversity and representation within the search committee. For searches involving more than one academic unit (e.g. joint appointments or cohort hires), a balance of representatives across units should be created. Ultimately, the dean approves the search committee composition.

- The recommended size of a search committee is 5-7 people. The search committee should represent a range of diverse positions and perspectives within the hiring unit, including faculty rank, experience, gender and racial/ethnic identity. Search committees may include instructional, RTA or AP faculty and may include staff as needed.
- The search committee is a representative body charged with carrying out the recruitment and evaluation of candidates on behalf of the academic unit. Search committees must be positioned to conduct their work in an environment that reduces inherent bias and maintains strict confidentiality. Search committees comprising all of the faculty within an academic unit are not allowed at JMU.

## Including Committee Members from Other Areas

Search committee members from other departments and disciplines offer valuable differing perspectives in conducting the search process, as well as providing potential candidates with broader divisional viewpoints.

- The committee should include at least one member from outside the hiring academic unit, as well as one member from a different discipline than that being searched in order to broaden perspective about the qualifications and experiences being sought in the new hire. It may be useful for hiring units to consider including a representative from other divisions or support units on campus as relevant to the department or the position being hired. It is important to confirm availability with the corresponding AUH prior to extending an invitation for a faculty member outside the department to join a search committee.
- For all instructional faculty hires, a General Education program representative should be included on the search committee. The Office of General Education can assist in identifying a suitable representative given the nature of the search.

- For AP faculty hires, it may be appropriate to include individuals from other units or divisions who will work closely with the new hire or whose technical/professional expertise will be useful in evaluating applicant qualifications.
- The search committee chair should match or exceed the hiring position in rank and should be a person with prior search committee experience.
- An administrative support person should be assigned by the AUH to assist with the search process. The timeline and effort for administrative support should be clearly understood by the search committee.

Prior to reviewing applications, the entire search committee and all faculty and staff members of the hiring unit must complete faculty recruitment diversity training. The HR Academic Affairs Recruitment Specialist, the APD and in some cases College DEI Leaders are available to conduct diversity search training for the department search committees.

- Committee members who do not complete the training should be removed from their assignment.

As soon as the search committee is assembled, the search chair should schedule training by contacting Kim Moubray, Access and Inclusion Administrative Assistant, (540) 568-4506, [dellinkl@jmu.edu](mailto:dellinkl@jmu.edu).

## Developing the Position Description and Advertising Strategy

The search committee creates the position description in conjunction with the AUH. It is advisable to seek input from relevant stakeholders (such as program directors, faculty and the dean) as the position description, advertising materials, and advertising strategy are developed. The job description should be constructed based on the priorities and needs of the hiring unit and university. It is important to clarify at this early point whether the position is an instructional or AP faculty position. Expectations for teaching and scholarship contributions should be clearly described. Job descriptions should never be developed around the skills or qualifications of a single, known individual (e.g. a potential internal or external applicant).

Typically, a position description consists of several sections:

- Description of the position, including title, rank, status (tenure-track or administrative/professional; renewable or fixed term appointment; full time or part time; joint appointment), and objective of the search
- Position responsibilities including current role(s) and opportunities for growth
- Candidate qualifications including both required and preferred skills and work experience. Be flexible with numerical measures such as required years of experience, number of publications or grant record, which may inadvertently serve to restrict the pool of qualified candidates.
- Summary of hiring process and timeline
- Description of institutional and departmental landscape
- JMU non-discrimination and diversity in hiring statements

The job description should clearly describe all documents and information required in the application. Typically, this includes a cover letter or letter of interest; a current CV; list of 3-5 professional references; statements on teaching philosophy; research or scholarly interests and a diversity statement.

- Consider offering applicants the opportunity to demonstrate different types of skills and experiences by allowing the submission of supplemental materials.

Direct applicants to address diversity and inclusion in their cover letter or through a separate diversity statement.



- Applicants might be directed to describe their experience with diversity issues, working with diverse students, and/or working in multicultural environments. For example, when recruiting faculty for education, health or mental health faculty roles, consider asking applicants to describe their experiences working with ethnic under-represented individuals and/or ask them to describe how they might help our students understand how they might work effectively with these populations. Similarly, when recruiting faculty for fields that are dominated by either women or men, ask candidates to describe ways in which the university might attract more students from the under-represented gender to that field.

*For recruitment of positions at the AUH/director level and higher, applicants are required to submit a separate diversity statement with their application materials rather than having it incorporated into their cover letter.*

Departments that effectively recruit diverse faculty make it very clear to candidates that eligible under-represented candidates will be considered valued departmental assets who will quickly be integrated into the faculty.

- Use language consistently throughout the document to reflect commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Consult with the college's DEI coordinator for assistance developing equitable and inclusive language.
- Consider including a description of the department's commitment to diversifying its faculty (for example, review language suggested in the University of Michigan's [faculty hiring manual](#)).

Every job posting must contain the following institutional equal opportunity hiring statement verbatim:

James Madison University is an equal opportunity employer committed to creating and supporting a diverse and inclusive work and educational community that is free of all forms of discrimination. This institution does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, parental status, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

We promote access, inclusion, and diversity for all students, faculty, staff, constituents, and programs, believing that these qualities are foundational components of an outstanding education in keeping with our mission. The University is interested in candidates whose experience and qualifications support an ongoing commitment to this core quality.

Anyone having questions concerning discrimination should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity: (540) 568-6991.

All position descriptions must be approved by the dean, APD and HR prior to posting. Note that it may take up to two business days for HR to complete their review and post the position. The full-length description should be used for the JobLink posting; abbreviated ads containing the JobLink url may be used for listserv and social media posts.

- The search committee chair works with the administrative support person and HR to enter the position announcement on JobLink and to ensure that the position is advertised as planned.
- Faculty positions must be advertised on JobLink for 30 days before applicant screening can begin.

# V. Recruiting for the Position

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It is important to get the word out about every new hiring opportunity! Past practices which relied on placing job advertisements in a few select journals are obsolete in an era of rapid internet-based communication. Departments should think creatively about how to distribute the news of their faculty search using a combination of standard and novel approaches in order to attract a diverse pool of applicants.

## Understanding Search Committee Responsibilities

The search committee is responsible for developing a broad and diverse advertising and recruitment strategy for the specific position.

- This may include advertising in discipline-specific publications and databases, professional organization listservs and [diversity advertising sources](#), in addition to sharing the announcement across disciplinary communities and through professional connections with colleagues, graduate programs, or other avenues (see the box on the next page for examples).
- The chair should confer with the APD and should also review resources such as [The National Registry of Diverse and Strategic Faculty](#) and [the SREB database](#) in order to develop a plan for distributing the position announcement through venues that support BIPOC faculty candidates.
- A proposed list of additional advertising sites and recruitment venues should be reviewed by the AUH, dean and HR prior to posting.

The search committee chair is responsible for coordinating advertising and recruitment efforts with the HR Academic Affairs Recruitment Specialist. The following list includes standard practices which may be augmented with additional strategies tailored to the type of position being hired:

- Send the position announcement to faculty within the hiring unit so that they can assist in distributing the announcement to relevant professional networks and colleagues.
- Enlist the assistance of faculty and staff in other units representing overlapping or other relevant disciplines.
- Post the announcement to the home department website. The hiring unit should consider developing a dedicated webpage containing information relevant to the faculty search.
- Purchase ads in journals, websites and other high-traffic venues to expand the visibility of the hiring opportunity.
- Utilize career boards and other sites hosted by relevant professional and disciplinary organizations.
- Utilize social media platforms to get the word out about the hiring opportunity – posts should be brief and eye-catching, with a link to the JL posting.
- Consider preparing a one-page flyer about the position that can be distributed by JMU faculty at conferences and other networking events.

### Diversity Enhancement Strategies

Employing multiple recruitment strategies can increase the diversity of the applicant pool. In addition to advertising on JobLink and in national publications or job-listing databases appropriate for your discipline, consider:

- Publications that are read by under-represented candidates.
- Listservs that are followed by under-represented candidates.
- Personalized letters or e-mails to potential applicants or to colleagues who might refer potential applicants.
- Attending conferences within your field associated with BIPOC groups, such as the Asian American Psychological Association.
- Consulting with under-represented faculty on campus about the type of outreach they would find most effective.

### Confirming the Budget

Typically, the hiring unit covers all costs related to advertising. Costs vary by discipline and typically include advertising, candidate travel expenses, and the cost of faculty and student meals with candidates.

- The AUH should confirm the budget for the search process with the dean and Office of the Provost before the search begins.
- The administrative support person should maintain a list of all advertising venues used, including for-pay and free sites.

# VI. Screening Candidates

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From the onset of the screening process, it is essential that the dean, the AUH and the department are in agreement on the fundamental characteristics of ideal candidates and the expectations for the faculty member who will be in the position. Departmental discussions to consider the new faculty role can help to build buy-in among faculty and will inform the search committee's process as they represent departmental interests.

## Establishing Expectations

The AUH should meet with the full search committee to discuss parameters for the search and expectations for the role of the search committee prior to application review. It is important to ensure that the search committee understands its role regarding review and selection of candidates with appropriate qualifications. Ultimately, the search committee must be prepared to:

- Propose criteria that are directly related to the requirements of the position as described in the position description. The criteria and priorities should be clearly understood and accepted by all members of the committee, and the criteria must be reviewed and approved by the AUH.
- Discuss how reviewers will practice strategies to mitigate unconscious or dysconscious bias, which may lead to preferential assessment of applicants who share similar educational background, social experience, values and behaviors to the search committee members.
- Consider including as an important selection criterion each candidate's ability to contribute to experiential and intellectual diversity to the department, to work successfully with diverse students and colleagues, and to mentor diverse students.
- Ensure that evaluation bias does not inadvertently exclude people with non-traditional resumes, CVs or career paths. (e.g. allowing evidence of gaps that could be attributable to child/eldercare priorities to negatively impact a candidate's evaluation.)
- Consider multiple dimensions when identifying top applicants and identify specific evidence for rating each candidate on each dimension.
- Consider alternate career paths. Top candidates may emerge from applications which document unconventional work experience or transferrable professional skills.
- Evaluating Internal Candidates – Internal applicants, i.e. applicants who currently hold positions at JMU, should be evaluated in the same manner as all other applicants. Reviewers should take appropriate measures to mitigate bias either in favor of or oppositional to applicants about whom they have prior knowledge. For instance, the search committee may decide to redact\* all identifying information in order to reduce the risk of reviewer bias. Internal applicants should not receive a priori preference based on their internal status.

\*Redacting application materials – The process of reviewing applications in the absence of identifying information (applicant name, institutional affiliation, etc.) is an effective strategy for mitigating reviewer bias. Application materials can be converted to pdf format, and then modified by the support staff person in accordance with the committee chair's instructions. If the search committee elects to redact identifying information from application materials, the redaction should be completed prior to release of the applications to search committee members by an individual who will not be reviewing applications. The search

committee chair should coordinate the timing of application release with the HR Academic Affairs Recruitment Specialist.

## Developing the Evaluation Criteria and Review Process

The search committee chair, in conjunction with the committee, should develop screening criteria based on the qualifications in the position description prior to application review and also used to develop the screening matrix. Maximum weight may be assigned to the most essential duties of the position. The candidate screening matrix should be reviewed and approved by the AUH.

- All search committee members must use the screening matrix for evaluating applicants.
- Applicants who meet the state definitions for veteran status must be identified during the selection process. Veteran status must be considered as part of the initial evaluation of applicants.

The search committee should develop a common strategy for application review. For small applicant pools, it may be possible for all committee members to review every application. For larger pools, at least 2-3 committee members should review each application. The committee chair should develop an equitable means of sharing reviewer assessments with the full committee as the basis for identifying top candidates to advance in the search.

Search committee members must avoid the appearance of impropriety in order to protect the integrity of the confidential search process.

- Reviewers should avoid any conflict of interest in their service to the search process. If a search committee member has previous knowledge that may have bearing on the candidacy of an applicant, they should recuse themselves.
- If a reviewer has information of a serious nature about an applicant that might raise concerns about suitability, they should discuss their concerns confidentially with the search committee chair. The search committee chair will determine an appropriate course of action in conjunction with the AUH and dean.
- Search committee members may not serve as references for either internal or external applicants in a search. A committee member who serves or has served in the past as a reference for an applicant should recuse themselves from evaluating the applicant and from all discussions regarding the applicant's qualifications.

## Reviewing Applications

After the position has been posted for three weeks, Human Resources will review the diversity of the candidate pool.

- HR will consult with the APD to confirm if the committee may move forward to the review phase; when the APD has approved the pool, HR will inform the dean, AUH and search committee chair.
- If the candidate pool is not diverse, the dean, APD and HR will work with the search committee on strategies to increase the diversity of the pool. Lack of diversity in the applicant pool may lead to extending, delaying or cancelling the search. In this case, the AUH, dean and APD will confer to determine the best course of action. Ultimately, the dean has the responsibility to determine whether a search moves forward.

Only search committee members, AUH and dean or dean's designated representative should have access to applicant materials, including the letter of interest, CV or resumé, reference letters, and all additional submitted materials, during the initial review. No one outside of these authorized reviewers should have access to application materials or knowledge about the search process, applicants or application materials. It is essential for

the integrity of the search process to maintain strict confidentiality. Failure to maintain confidentiality can erode trust in the integrity of search committee members, can lead to loss of top candidates or can cause the search to be failed or canceled.

- It is not appropriate or equitable to utilize information from sources outside the application materials during initial screening. All applicants should be evaluated on the basis of the information they choose to share in their application materials. It is not appropriate to seek additional information on an applicant through internet searches or any other means.
- Search committee members should review all application materials submitted by their assigned applicants and should evaluate each candidate according to the criteria and priorities developed in the screening matrix. Typically, each member submits their completed matrix to the search committee chair so that a group tally and/or applicant rankings can be compiled.

The search committee chair will convene the full committee to review the compiled information and identify top applicants.

- It may be helpful for the committee to construct three pools for rating individual applicants: Highly qualified, Qualified, Not Qualified.
- The committee should carefully discuss any applicants for which there exist differences of opinion, as these may reflect applicants with unconventional qualifications meriting further consideration.

Ultimately, the search committee should develop a list of top candidates to advance to first stage interviews. Typically, 7-10 applicants may be advanced to this stage, depending on the number of interesting candidates, the number of positions being filled, the timeline for the search and the availability of the search committee members. The AUH or dean may ask the committee to justify the inclusion of particular individuals on the list and/or may ask the committee to reconsider applicants not on the initial list.

The list will be sent to HR, who will review it in collaboration with the APD and determine if the diversity represented is sufficiently diverse compared to the applicant pool. HR will inform the dean, AUH and search committee chair of the review results. If the list is not sufficiently diverse, the dean and APD will meet with the search committee to discuss whether and how the search will proceed.

The AUH and dean make the final determination of the first-round candidates. If no appropriate candidates for first round interviews are identified, the search may be extended in order to pursue additional recruitment strategies, postponed or canceled.

# VII. Conducting First Round Interviews

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Interviews provide an essential opportunity to interact with candidates in order to deepen your understanding of their qualifications for and interest in the position. Conversely, they also serve as a critical window for the candidate into the hiring department. Candidate interviews, whether held by phone, videoconference or in person, provide a great opportunity to present the best of your department and heighten the interest of the candidates in the position you are hiring.

## Scheduling First Round Interviews

It is important to manage all candidate interviews with consistency to avoid any impression of bias in the interview process. It is helpful to review with the search committee and the departmental members a list of topics that are not appropriate for interview conversations (see the list on the next page). Everyone involved in the process should be mindful of confidentiality and professionalism.

The search committee chair should contact all selected applicants to invite them to participate in a first round interview.

- The best impression will be made by contacting each candidate by phone. If the length of the interview pool precludes phone contacts, then the search committee chair should construct a personalized email message that conveys interest and excitement in the candidacy of each applicant.
- The administrative support person should follow up with the candidate within 24 hours to schedule the interview.
- Once the full interview schedule is set, the administrative support person should send a personalized confirmation email to each candidate which includes the date, time and duration of the interview, the meeting link (if needed), the names of the search committee members who will participate in the interview, and contact information in case of technical issues prior to or during the interview. If the search committee desires, additional information (e.g. the interview questions) may be shared with candidates at this time as well.

## Planning First Round Interviews

For phone, online or in-person first interviews, the search committee should develop a list of questions, then determine the order of the questions and who will ask each one. For information on allowable questions for the interview, see the table on the next page. Also discuss how follow-up questions will be handled.

- It is important to provide time in the interview for the candidate to ask questions. It is a good idea to discuss how the search committee will respond to the candidate's questions.
- While a candidate may elect to share personal information during the interview, the search committee must adhere to the guidelines in any responses; it is best not to respond to personal information with a follow-up question.
- If the interview is to be recorded, you must obtain the candidate's permission and should clearly explain how the recording will be used and by whom and how it will be stored and deleted. Contact your Recruitment Specialist for a copy of JMU's Video Release Form.

## Interview Topics and Questions

Category	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Age	Only if the applicant must meet a minimum age requirement.	Questions to determine applicant's age (i.e. high school graduation date) are unacceptable.
Arrests and Convictions	Questions about convictions specific to the qualifications of the position are acceptable.	No inquiry may be made into convictions not specific to the qualifications or other arrests that did not result in convictions.
Birth Place	No questions related to birth place are acceptable.	No questions related to birth place are acceptable.
Citizenship	Only ask if authorized to work in the US; must ask every candidate or none.	Any questions about whether the applicant is a natural-born citizen or a naturalized citizen or about the citizenship of spouse are unacceptable.
Disability	Only ask if applicant is able to perform essential job duties with or without accommodations.	No additional questions about an applicant's disability are acceptable. If an applicant indicates disability status, HR will obtain appropriate documentation of to support accommodations.
Education	It is acceptable to ask about degrees and the nature and extent of academic, professional or vocational training.	Don't ask questions that would reveal nationality or religious affiliation of the schools where training occurred.
Gender	No questions related to gender are acceptable.	No questions related to gender are acceptable.
Military Service	When military service is relevant to the job qualifications, questions concerning service may be asked. If an applicant indicates an affirmative Veteran status, HR will obtain appropriate documents to support credit for preferred qualifications.	Avoid questions about military service in any country other than the United States. Do not request military records. Do not ask questions concerning military discharge.
Name	Name, including pronunciation.	No questions seeking the origin of a name are acceptable.
Organizations	Questions may be asked about memberships and offices held by the applicant if relevant to position qualifications.	Don't ask questions about office, memberships or organizations that would reveal race, color, religion, sex, nationality, disability, age, sexual orientation, parental status, genetic information or ancestry of the applicant.
Political Position or Affiliation	No questions related to political positions or affiliations are acceptable.	No questions related to political positions or affiliations are acceptable.
Race and Ethnicity	No questions related to race or ethnicity are acceptable.	No questions related to race or ethnicity are acceptable.
Relatives	In relation to the nepotism policy, may ask if any relatives are JMU employees	No questions about the applicant's relatives are acceptable.
Religion	No questions related to religion are acceptable.	No questions related to religion are acceptable.
Sexual Orientation	No questions related to sexual orientation are acceptable.	No questions related to sexual orientation are acceptable.
Work Schedule	Questions about the applicant's availability to work the required job schedule may be asked.	Don't ask about activities/commitments you think might impact an applicant's availability to work, e.g. parental status.



## Recommending Applicants to Advance

Once all first-round interviews are concluded, the committee should meet to identify which candidates to recommend advancing as finalists to the next stage of the process.

- This determination should consider the attributes and potential of each candidate as assessed from both the application materials and the interview conversation.
- The committee should carefully consider key qualifications for the position, the current and long-term needs of the department and the unique attributes each candidate can contribute as an educator, scholar and faculty colleague.

The search chair will send to HR the names of the proposed finalists to advance. HR will conduct a confidential assessment to ensure the diversity of the finalist pool.

- Once the diversity of the pool has been confirmed, permission of the AUH and dean is required before progressing to on-campus interviews.

If no appropriate candidates are identified, the AUH and dean in consultation with the search committee chair will determine whether to extend, delay or cancel the search.

# VIII. Interviewing Finalists

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The search committee should take responsibility for developing a well-planned itinerary for each candidate's visit. From the time a candidate is first greeted, to the final exit interview with the search committee, each candidate's impression of the campus is largely set by their experiences during the interview. In the end, they will learn as much about us as we learn about them in the interview process, so it is important to put forth the effort required to make a positive impression of the campus, its people, culture and practices. Here are some practices to incorporate into the interview to ensure a positive, successful interview for the candidate:

- Once the AUH and dean have given approval of the finalist list, candidates may be notified of their status and invited to campus for an interview. The search committee chair should reach out to each candidate by phone to invite them to campus for a final interview. The chair should identify a suitable date for the interview and should provide a general description of the interview plan.
- Each candidate should have the opportunity to provide information about how to make the campus visit as comfortable and accessible as possible. Candidates should be asked about any dietary restrictions or preferences as well as mobility or other accessibility needs. The search committee chair and administrative support staff should arrange accommodations ahead of each candidate's arrival.

## Creating the Itinerary

Once the date for the candidate's visit is set, the candidate works with the administrative assistant and search chair to develop travel and accommodation plans. The administrative support person designated for the search develops a detailed itinerary for each candidate that includes all events planned for the visit. Rooms are reserved for meetings and participant attendance is confirmed.

- In consultation with the dean, the search committee and AUH develop a list of planned events for campus interviews. Faculty interviews typically include meetings with the dean, AUH, program director(s), search committee, departmental faculty and students.
- Each finalist should meet with a designated DEI Leader or the APD in order to learn more about campus climate and JMU's ongoing work to advance equity and inclusion.
- The interview typically includes a teaching demonstration and a presentation of research plans or scholarship. For AP faculty hires, a teaching demonstration may be less relevant than demonstrations of other skills, such as technical abilities, advising, etc. The search committee should include other interactions that will provide opportunities for the candidate to learn about the department and university (e.g. JMU Libraries, CGE, CFI). Sample itineraries and a hospitality checklist are available on the [Faculty Recruitment Training](#) website.
- The itinerary should include a schedule of meetings and activities planned for their visit (including transit information between events) and the names of people involved in each. The itinerary should include accommodation information, instructions for proceeding if there are travel delays and the name, phone and email address for a designated contact person. It may also be helpful to include a list of the names of important people: search committee members, department chair, dean, Provost, etc.

- Candidates should be provided with the expectations for their presentations, including information about the objective of the presentation and the composition of the audience.
- Consultation and support are offered by [JMU's Recruitment Specialist in the Office of Human Resources](#). The departmental administrative support staff should arrange for the recruitment specialist to send information about JMU and the local community prior to the scheduled interview. If a candidate is interested in following up on any aspect of this information, this should be accommodated in the regular interview schedule.
- Candidates must provide informed consent prior to their visit for audio or video recordings of any parts of their interview. Contact your recruitment specialist for the required Video Release Form. Note that interview recordings are subject to [University Policy 1109](#) regarding document retention and archiving.
- Candidates should be provided with their interview schedule at least one week prior to their interview. If necessary, an updated, final copy of the itinerary can be provided when they arrive on campus.

## During the Interview

The interview is an opportunity for the candidate to learn about the institution and its people. All efforts should be made to ensure a smooth, well-organized and positive interview experience for the candidate. Each search committee member should know their role in the interview process.

- Arrange for candidates to be met upon arrival. If they are arriving by air, arrange for a JMU driver to meet them at the airport and transport them to their hotel. If they are driving themselves, a host should be present to greet them briefly when they arrive at the hotel, or plan to call shortly after their arrival.
- Candidates should be escorted from one event to another, usually by one of the search committee members. If preparation time is to be provided for the candidate, be sure to schedule a space that can be made private. Consider the amount of time required to transport from one event to the next in the itinerary so that the candidate does not feel rushed. Be sure to build in refreshment breaks for each candidate and take note of the location of restrooms in each building.
- Be sure to provide information for follow-up if the candidate has questions or concerns after the interview. Provide information as quickly as possible in response to any requests they make.

Once finalist interviews have been scheduled, the recruitment specialist will reach out to each finalist to share information about [diversity resources](#), JMU Ambassadors and the [Dual Career and Community Resources Program](#). This information will be sent to all finalists prior to their interview date. HR will also extend an invitation to meet with or schedule a call with a Faculty Ambassador (FA), a representative from Access and Inclusion, APD, and/or HR if desired.

## Participating in the Campus Interview

The search committee is responsible for ensuring the success of the interview schedule. Committee members should be enlisted to host each session and to transport candidates between sessions. One person, typically the search committee chair, serves as the main point of contact during the interview; each candidate should have contact information for the PoC prior to their arrival on campus.

- Prior to the arrival of the first candidate, the search committee chair should work with the AUH and dean to prepare the department for the interview. Typically, only

the candidate's CV and cover letter are shared with members of the department, along with a copy of the interview itinerary; this should be done in a manner that protects the privacy of the candidate and respects the confidentiality of the documents. It is a breach of confidentiality to share reference letters or other candidate information with anyone outside of the search committee.

- The search committee chair and AUH should inform department members of all opportunities to participate in the interview. Interviewers who are better prepared ask more informed questions and make a better impression on candidates.
- Remind interviewers that all time spent with an applicant, including social functions, is considered part of the interview process. Do not initiate conversations about topics that must be avoided during an interview, as shown on page 14. If search committee members are unsure how to respond to a question, it is acceptable to let the candidate know that they will find the answer and provide it as soon as possible.

Occasionally, candidates may prefer to invite a family member to accompany them to Harrisonburg for the duration of the interview. While this is allowable, candidates should be informed that JMU will not cover expenses for a visitor.

- Visitors should not be invited or allowed to participate in any part of the interview process. If requested, the search committee or supporting administrative assistant may assist in scheduling a campus tour or meetings with other units on campus, e.g. HR regarding employment prospects, Admissions regarding undergraduate admission.
- It is appropriate to refer candidates and/or their guests to HR's [Dual Career and Community Resources](#) program to help make connections that may be important to them during the decision process. These may include, but not be limited to, other professional contacts, tours by real estate agents, conversations with individuals familiar with the local schools or places of worship, etc.
- In the event that a candidate requires a dedicated support person to provide required assistance during an interview (e.g. ASL interpretation), JMU will cover all reasonable expenses for both the applicant and their support person. The search committee chair should coordinate with the HR Academic Affairs Specialist to make appropriate arrangements for the candidate and their support person during the campus interview.

During and shortly after each candidate visit, the search committee should establish an anonymous and confidential means for faculty, staff and students who interacted with each candidate to provide feedback about their qualifications.

- Typically, the search committee will develop a short electronic survey that can be sent out to all participants. This survey should be made available shortly after each interview and should provide space for both quantitative (e.g. Likert scale queries) and qualitative feedback. It is also helpful to collect information from each respondent about the nature of their interaction with the candidate (e.g. reviewed application materials, attended a 1-on-1 meeting with candidate, attended public presentation, etc.). Only the search committee, AUH and dean should have access to the feedback gathered by this method.

# IX. Checking References

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Reference checks provide another layer of information about a candidate from the perspective of their colleague, mentor or supervisor. What information do you seek about your finalists? Be thoughtful in developing questions that will engage each reference in considering how the qualifications of the candidate match the needs of the position. It is safe to assume that candidates will have a follow-up call with their references, so consider also how you may reflect the benefits of the position and your excitement about how the candidate's qualifications will contribute to departmental goals.

## Conducting Reference Checks

Reference checks are typically conducted following the finalist interview, though in some circumstances pre-finalist reference checks may be preferred. The search committee chair should confer with the AUH, dean and APD to determine when reference checks will be conducted for each search. The primary purpose of these checks is to gain information about the candidate from the perspective of their supervisor or professional colleague.

- Candidates should be notified by the search committee chair prior to initiating reference checks.
- An instructional faculty search does not typically include checking references outside of the list provided by the candidate. Candidates should be notified if reference checks will include off-list contacts and should have the opportunity to identify individuals who should not be contacted.
- Search committee members may not serve as references for either internal or external applicants in a search. A committee member who serves or has served in the past as a reference for an applicant should recuse themselves from evaluating the applicant and from all discussions regarding the applicant's qualifications.

Typically, reference calls are conducted by the AUH as the hiring authority rather than the chair of the search committee.

- The search committee should develop the script for reference checks that includes a description of the position being sought and a list of standard questions which invite the reference to evaluate the candidate on specific qualifications for the role.
- It is appropriate for the AUH to follow up on responses to these questions in the course of the reference conversation.
- The AUH should retain records of each reference call, including name and contact information for the reference and notes taken during the call. These records will be submitted to HR for archiving once the search is concluded.

## X. Selecting and Recommending Candidates

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The search committee represents the interests of the department and as such is charged with making recommendations about the suitability of each finalist interviewed. Ultimately, the committee will need to convey the sum evaluation of each candidate's standing based on all available information from application materials, interview notes, reference calls and anonymous feedback from stakeholders. The committee should work diligently to consider all aspects of their information gathering process and should seek to identify points of potential bias to ensure that their final assessment is equitable and evidence based.

Once all interviews have been concluded, the search committee should convene to discuss the attributes and potential of each candidate and determine collectively whether each finalist is acceptable. The committee should review all feedback received regarding all candidates as well as considering their own impressions, and then summarize the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate vis à vis their potential for success in the position. The AUH may request that the search committee consider additional factors or address follow up questions.

The search committee chair will then convey their overall assessment of candidate suitability (e.g. acceptable or not acceptable) as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate to the AUH. The search committee may elect to share compiled assessments from individual committee members, especially if there is not unanimous agreement. The search committee does not provide a ranking of finalists.

The AUH and dean will consider the assessments of the search committee to develop a hiring proposal. The dean should consult with the Provost to confirm final approval, including the availability of sufficient funding and resources, for the hiring plan prior to any offer.

- Either the dean or the Provost may disagree with the proposed hiring plan; in this case, further conversations with the AUH, and search committee chair as needed, may ensue to reach an agreement about the hire.
- Both the Provost and dean must approve the hiring plan before the AUH proceeds to make an offer.

# XI. Making the Offer

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The presentation of a job offer to your selected candidate sets the tone for their arrival at JMU and in your department. It can significantly affect their decision to accept the position. An offer that is presented positively will help to create a sense of excitement for the candidate as they consider the offer. More importantly, an open and honest negotiation process can establish a trust-based foundation for the candidate's departmental entry.

The AUH should make the initial offer to the selected candidate via a phone call. Candidates should be able to sense the transparency of their interactions with the AUH and feel their needs are being respected during negotiations.

- In the initial phone conversation, the AUH should describe the terms of the offer including salary, type of faculty line and any specifics regarding teaching and scholarship responsibilities.
- At this time, the AUH should begin a discussion about the candidate's specific needs such as dedicated space, equipment, summer or student support.

The AUH should maintain a record of negotiations by sending a follow-up email after each conversation outlining the terms discussed and requests that the candidate confirms within a specified timeframe. The negotiation may continue with subsequent rounds of phone conversation and summary emails until all terms are settled. AUHs may need to confer with the dean about any terms that require resources outside the control of the department.

- Hiring offers are confidential personnel interactions involving only the AUH, dean and Provost. It is not appropriate to release any information about the status of any offer made to search committee members or faculty colleagues until negotiations are concluded and a signed offer letter is in hand.
- During the negotiation process, the AUH may ask the candidate if they will require immigration sponsorship. Contact the director of [International Student and Scholar Services](#) immediately if offers are made to foreign nationals to begin the process of securing Visa assistance.
- Candidates may have questions about relocation expenses. The AUH may offer relocation support as prearranged with the dean.
- Candidates may have questions related to campus culture, living in the Harrisonburg area, childcare or eldercare support, cultural interests, or other topics not directly related to their professional faculty role. These factors may significantly impact a candidate's decision to take the job. The AUH should be ready to respond to requests for such information by putting the candidate in touch with someone who can address their questions. This may include an HR staff person, administrator, DEI Leader or faculty member, depending on the nature of the questions. At this point, the candidate's offer is still confidential so all contacts should be advised not to discuss their interactions with the candidate or reveal any information that is shared.
- Hiring Advanced Candidates. Searches for faculty at an advanced stage in their careers may attract candidates interested in being hired with tenure or with an expedited tenure clock. The AUH should discuss this possibility with the dean prior to making the offer and may not make such an offer without dean approval. All details regarding commitments of tenure or years toward tenure must be approved by the Provost and should be carefully documented in the offer letter.

## Drafting the Offer Letter

Once all terms are negotiated to mutual satisfaction, the AUH drafts an offer letter describing all terms as discussed. The chart below lists the required content and recommends language to use in the letter.

The Offer Letter Must ...	Suggested Language
Include detailed information about start date and employment term	The effective date of your contract is XX/XX/XXX. Your obligation as a faculty member includes being available two weeks prior to the first day of class in the fall semester and through the two weeks following commencement in the spring semester.
Detail the formal position title and reporting structure.	I am very pleased to extend this offer to assume the position of [insert position title here]. As an Instructional Faculty position, [position title]s report to the [supervisor position title], are evaluated annually by the [supervisor position title] and serve at the request of the dean with the Provost's approval. Refer to the Faculty Handbook regarding <a href="#">instructional faculty appointments</a> and <a href="#">related contract types</a> .
Include detailed information on salary	The salary will be \$xxxx per year, paid out in 24 payments over a 12-month period.
Detail the faculty evaluation process and timeline. If early promotion or tenure consideration has been negotiated, the specifics of the arrangement should be described here.	This is a tenure-track position as Assistant/Associate Professor and you will be eligible to apply for tenure and promotion in 20XX. <i>OR</i> This is a Renewable-Term Appointment as Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Principal Lecturer, and you will be eligible for promotion in 20XX. As an instructional faculty member, you will be evaluated by your AUH annually as prescribed by the <i>Faculty Handbook</i> . Promotion and tenure evaluations will be conducted according to the Faculty Handbook and the T&P guidelines for the Department of XX which can be found here [link].
Include faculty-specific considerations such as moving expenses, office and laboratory space, equipment, supplies, professional travel, summer teaching, etc. as they are applicable.	A moving and relocation provision for moves greater than 50 miles is available, and contingent upon further discussions with my office and the JMU <a href="#">moving and relocation policy</a> . [insert contact here] will reach out to you regarding your moving and relocation needs.
Include a deadline for submission of the candidate's official transcript and any other materials required for verifying their teaching credentials.	You must submit your official transcripts for your highest degree earned by [insert date]. <i>NOTE: If any outstanding professional experience or demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline have been considered in addition to formal academic preparation, include a list of the required documentation and their due date.</i>
Include next actions to finalize the hire.	If this offer is acceptable to you, please sign and return it to me by 12:00 p.m. on [insert date here]. Once you have done so, we will generate a formal contract (turn-around time is 2-3 weeks). We will then work together to develop a plan of transition for the period of time between now and [insert date here].



The letter must also include:

- Information on their promotion and tenure timeline if it differs from the standards shown in the Faculty Handbook, e.g. "As negotiated, you are eligible to apply for early tenure/promotion and accomplishments completed in the last XX years of your employment at [former employer] will be considered in the evaluation."
- A description of departmental expectations for teaching or other duties.

The dean must sign the offer letter before it is sent to the candidate for signature.

- Typically, the candidate must sign and return the offer letter by a stated deadline.

No discussions may proceed with other candidates during the negotiation period. The failure of a candidate to accept an offer within the timeframe specified by the AUH is sufficient basis for notifying a candidate that the offer has been withdrawn.

- After the signed offer letter is returned, the department initiates the formal contract and ePAR.

If the candidate declines the offer, the AUH should immediately inform the dean in order to discuss next steps. The dean and AUH will determine whether an offer will be made to another finalist, or whether the search will be extended or failed.

## XII. Closing the Search

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Once the search is concluded, it is important to ensure that all materials have been properly documented.

- After the candidate returns the signed offer letter, the search committee chair should individually contact all individuals interviewed by telephone or email for to notify them that the position has been filled.
- The search committee chair updates the applicant's statuses accordingly and the position status to Filled on JobLink. JobLink auto-notifies each applicant in the original pool that the position has been filled. This action should take place promptly, as this information is used in diversity recruitment reports for the Provost's Office.
- The AUH reviews the [contract document](#) and ensures that all signatures have been obtained and that a PAR form is sent to HR.

All information from a search and selection process must be retained by the hiring authority for a minimum of three years in a manner that the complete recruiting effort for any position can be reconstructed, if necessary, for review by the Office of Equal Opportunity, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labor or any other regulatory agency.

- A file of documents of the selected and non-selected candidates for the position and all other pertinent information must be retained.
- After three years, the records are subject to the regular records retention schedule for the university, as detailed in [University Policy 1109](#).

# XIII. On-Boarding New Faculty

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Once the signed offer letter has been returned, the AUH and dean may announce the hire to the department. At this time, it is appropriate for department members to reach out to their new colleague to establish a connection and welcome them to JMU and the unit.

Throughout the period between the candidate's decision to accept the offer and their start date, the AUH should maintain regular contact with them. This may include regular interaction to arrange for departmental accommodations upon arrival, relocation logistics, or responding to other questions that arise.

- The AUH may also connect them informally to departmental or other campus networks. These might include faculty familiar with the courses the new hire will teach, faculty who can assist with the initiation of anticipated laboratory or research needs, and a faculty member who can serve as a general mentor for the newly hired individual.
- The AUH maintains contact with the newly-hired faculty member and ensures that they are aware of expectations and that their office and other resources are prepared in advance of the start date.
- The AUH and department should not expect participation from a new hire until their contract officially begins, which, for instructional faculty, is two weeks prior to the start of classes in the fall and two weeks after commencement in the spring.
- For faculty starting in August, the AUH ensures that the new faculty member is aware of university-wide orientations and relevant upcoming events. For instance, the AUH may alert new faculty about the programs and services of the [Center for Faculty Innovation](#) and [JMU Libraries](#).

Upon the arrival of the new faculty member the AUH or a designee should ensure that they have the resources needed to initiate their position, including an orientation to basic needs such as how to obtain keys, get mail, use the copier, etc.

The first few days and weeks are a difficult time for all new employees. New employees are likely to have to endure time-consuming and sometimes frustrating experiences as they become integrated into university systems. The AUH may designate a point person to provide support and assistance to the new hire during the first weeks to mitigate difficulties and facilitate their transition to JMU.

# XIV.Additional Resources

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[Academic Affairs Diversity website](#)

[Access & Inclusion at James Madison University](#)

[Diversity Advertising Sources](#)

[Dual Career and Community Resources Program](#)

[Faculty Handbook](#)

[Faculty Recruitment Diversity Strategies](#)

[Faculty Search Audit Process & Checklist Form](#)

## Related Policies

[Policy 1109. Records Management](#)

[Policy 1302. Equal Opportunity](#)

[Policy 1320. Providing and Obtaining Employment Reference Information](#)

[Policy 2101. Faculty Hiring Procedures](#)

Assistance with the recruitment process is available from the Office of HumanResources:

- Danielle Brooks Ritchie, Recruitment Specialist, (540) 568-7203, [brook3de@jmu.edu](mailto:brook3de@jmu.edu) .