

# Academic Affairs Guidelines for Recruiting and Hiring Instructional Faculty

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for  
Academic Affairs

James Madison University

This document is in use for the  
2023-24 academic year.

In collaboration among Academic Affairs administration, instructional faculty, Human Resources, the Office of Equal Opportunity and University Counsel, this document will be reviewed annually and regularly updated.

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# Introduction

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JMU's Division of Academic Affairs strives to be "an inclusive academic community committed to excellence in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge." In working to support this mission, faculty comprise our most valuable resource. Recruiting, selecting and retaining exceptional faculty are among the most important responsibilities of both Academic Affairs administrators and instructional faculty. These guidelines help facilitate a robust recruitment and hiring process that allows JMU to build a thriving academic community and reflect the values of excellence, collaboration, equity and transparency.

This document supersedes previous faculty recruitment guidelines. It is reviewed annually and modified as needed in response to updated recommended practices, human resource-related guidelines, and state and federal laws, as well as feedback collected from our collaborative experience going through the process.

These guidelines apply to instructional faculty. Academic unit heads (AUH) are instructional faculty, and some of the guidance for their searches is included in this document. However, AUH positions are 12-month appointments with significant administrative responsibilities, and the AUH search process is detailed in the [Faculty Handbook section III.C.3. Appointment of Academic Unit Heads](#). Guidance provided in the Faculty Handbook supersedes this document.

# 1. Operational Principles

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The following operational principles inform faculty hiring at JMU:

- Faculty hiring is an iterative and collaborative process, dependent on open collaboration among faculty, staff and administrators.
- All processes and systems in Academic Affairs – including hiring, supporting and retaining instructional faculty – must reflect an active commitment to our core values of transparency, consistency and increasing the representation of underrepresented populations within the field of practice.
- Our process for searching, hiring and welcoming new faculty must be aligned with, informed by and reflective of university, college and unit-level priorities.
- Engaging in consistent communication throughout the recruitment process – with candidates, within the search committee and with the hiring authority – is critical to our success. In moments of disagreement, we must all remain committed to collegial, civil discourse.
- Maintaining confidentiality throughout the process is crucial to ensure the success of the search and sustain an environment where all involved feel comfortable sharing their perspectives. Rather than limiting transparency, confidentiality creates a professional and ethical climate.
- Each faculty hire provides an opportunity to increase the intellectual diversity of research at the university, strengthening our academic community and enriching the educational experience of our students.

## 1.2 Feedback on the Hiring Guidelines

As we undergo searches this year, it is anticipated that you will find areas for improvement related to the search process and these guidelines. You are encouraged to [submit feedback online](#) throughout the year, which will be considered during the annual review of the guidelines.

## 1.3 Changes to the Hiring Guidelines

Throughout the 2023-24 academic year, limited changes may be made to this version of the hiring guidelines. These could include edits such as revising links, correcting typos, updating references or other minor revisions that maintain the integrity of the original document and ensure that it is as helpful as possible.

A list including the date of any changes will be added to the document.

## 2. Laying the Groundwork

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Hiring new faculty for the institution is one of the most important functions faculty, in consultation with the academic unit head (AUH) and dean, undertake. Planning conversations must begin 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.

### 2.1 Getting Started

Before a search begins, the AUH must initiate a department-wide conversation to discuss the needs of the unit and the importance of attracting faculty representing a full range of identities, experiences and expertise. Researchers have found that a diverse employee environment brings a wealth of new ideas and contributes to innovation. In fact, these environments are often the most productive (Hewlett et al., 2013).

Ongoing conversations can illuminate new areas of need in the academic unit and can deepen a shared understanding of how the distinctive mix of faculty perspectives and expertise will help the department meet key strategic objectives. It is important to have conversations with the dean and units, within and beyond your college, to encourage broad understanding of teaching needs, identify needs in terms of research and plan for the discipline's evolution. These conversations are needed for succession planning and strategic vision.

**Inclusive Conversations**  
The Office of Strategic Initiatives and Global Affairs (SIGA) is available to assist academic units with facilitating inclusive conversations.

In addition, academic units must address in conversation with the dean the specific steps taken to prepare a healthy, welcoming and inclusive environment for a new hire. Creating an inclusive culture attracts highly qualified faculty.

Position requests for the upcoming year must be submitted to Academic Resources and will be reviewed by June 15 for searches to begin that fall. The Office of the Provost will review and approve out-of-cycle position requests in a timely fashion as they are submitted.

### 2.2 Thinking Ahead

Spending time to plan and cultivate a network to recruit a comprehensive, competitive and diverse applicant pool is a valuable process that allows us to meet federal hiring requirements. Faculty input is essential in this process.

- Faculty can assist in developing the talent pool for the search. Use professional networks, conference venues and social media to get the word out about the new position you are hiring.
- Engage professional listservs to share your position. Many professional organizations have sub-groups or committees that target a variety of populations of scholars.
- Directly contact qualified scholars and ask them to consider applying for positions. This is a strategy many institutions have engaged in. Faculty must work together to develop a list of potential scholars and develop a communication to send to these scholars.
- For some hires, individuals with backgrounds in areas other than higher education may be particularly well-suited to meet the needs of the department. Consider building contacts and relationships with professional communities or industries that may be a good source of applicants.
- Engage organizations that cultivate a wide variety of scholars. See Appendix III for sources.

## 2.3 Following the Steps

The search process is comprised of multiple requirements and best practices to which all involved must adhere. For an overview of required actions in the search process, see the Hiring Checklist in Appendix II. A checklist for search committee chairs is also included in Appendix II.

## 2.4 Confirming the Budget

Costs related to recruitment vary by discipline and typically include advertising, applicant travel expenses and the cost of faculty and student meals with applicants. The AUH will confirm the budget for the search process with the dean before the search begins.

### 3. 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 the need for new faculty hires may be determined by the college and academic unit, administrative approval must be obtained from the provost before the search process is initiated. Each new hiring request is reviewed and prioritized to ensure that sufficient resources are available.

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

1. The dean, AUH and faculty discuss and determine the need for a new faculty hire.
2. The AUH submits a justification for a new hire to the dean.
3. The dean reviews the justification and submits the position request form to the Provost's Office by the established deadline.
4. The provost confirms approvals and notifies the dean.
5. The dean notifies the AUH to proceed with the search.
6. The AUH completes and submits a Request to Recruit ePAR to the dean.
7. The dean reviews and approves the ePAR and submits it to Academic Resources.
8. Once the ePAR is approved, the hiring unit creates the posting in JobLink.
9. The hiring unit submits the posting to HR for final review.



## 4. Developing the Search Committee

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Search committee members represent the academic unit's values and priorities, and they play a crucial role in building a qualified pool of applicants. Communication is of utmost importance throughout the recruitment and hiring process. As a good faith effort to maintain a consultative relationship between the search committee and the designated hiring authority, it is recommended that regular, ongoing communication is a central feature of the search process (e.g., a weekly check-in between the search committee chair and the AUH and/or dean).

### 4.1 Determining the Search Committee

Search committee assignments are considered part of faculty member's service loads and, as such, are made by the AUH, with final approval by the dean. The AUH must solicit nominations (including self-nominations) and consult broadly with the academic unit before finalizing the composition of the search committee. Eligible faculty members are encouraged to volunteer to serve. AUHs must maintain lists of faculty nominations for search committees and lists of faculty members who have served on search committees, including their frequency, each academic year.

In consultation with the dean, the college's Shared Equity Leader (SEL) and/or the Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Global Affairs (VP SIGA), the AUH ensures that the composition the search committee represents the field of practice. The AUH must ensure that the committee includes faculty whose area of expertise aligns with the desired expertise sought in the recruitment process. For searches involving more than one academic unit (e.g., joint appointments), a balance of representatives across academic units must be created.

The recommended size of a search committee is 5-7 people. Proportionally smaller committees are permissible for smaller units. The search committee must represent a range of diverse positions and perspectives within the hiring unit, including faculty rank, experience, gender and racial/ethnic identity. The following must be considered:

- Search committees may include instructional, RTA or A&P faculty, and may include staff as needed. Search committees may not be comprised of all the faculty within an academic unit. The search committee may include non-field experts whose work is relevant to the position (e.g., cognate disciplines) or whose participation may contribute to our commitment to inclusive excellence. If the committee does not appropriately reflect the field of practice, individuals from other areas within Academic Affairs or from other areas of the university, as deemed appropriate by the AUH and dean, may be asked to serve.
- The search committee is a representative body charged with carrying out the recruitment and evaluation of applicants on behalf of the academic unit. Search committees are responsible for putting forward the best applicants for hiring. Search committees are not responsible for hiring applicants.
- Search committees must be positioned to conduct their work in an environment that reduces inherent bias and maintains strict confidentiality.
- The search committee chair is appointed by the AUH, with final approval by the dean.
- The committee chair must:
  - Be of an academic rank that matches or exceeds that of the hiring position in academic rank
  - Have prior search committee experience.

- It is recommended that the chair be tenured for tenure-system (i.e., tenure-track and tenured) searches. If no tenured faculty of the department are available to serve, the chair may be a tenured faculty member from outside the academic unit.
- The search committee chair must periodically update the academic unit on the status of the search, while being mindful that updates should include general information such as number of applicants, timeline and the next stage in the interview process rather than confidential information as detailed in the hiring training.
- An administrative support person must be assigned by the AUH to assist with the search process.
- It is recommended that the committee create a Recruitment Plan for discussion with the AUH, dean and Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Global Affairs (VP SIGA). See Appendix II for the suggested format.

## 4.2 Including Committee Members from Other Areas at JMU

Search committee members from other departments and disciplines offer valuable differing perspectives in conducting the search process, as well as providing potential applicants with broader divisional viewpoints. As such, the committee may include at least one faculty member from outside the hiring academic unit.

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 or supervisor prior to extending an invitation for a faculty member outside the department to join a search committee.

## 4.3 Including Committee Members from Outside of JMU

In some limited circumstances, it may be useful to include someone that is not employed by JMU, such as a college advisory board member, to serve as an ex officio member of the committee. For a non-JMU individual to serve, they must:

- Have an affiliation with the university through their association with the college and/or academic unit in which the search is occurring.
- Attend all interviews with search committee members.
- Submit their potential interview questions to the search committee for feedback, guidance and approval prior to participating in a formalized interview.
- Provide any recruitment materials they create during the search, such as interview notes, to the hiring authority at the conclusion of the search, as they become part of the search's permanent record. See Section 12.1 Keeping Records for more information on search record retention.

All search committee members are held to the same standards, responsibilities and expectations throughout the search process, which includes attending search committee training where confidential requirements are discussed.

Committee members external to JMU are subject to the same confidentiality requirements as other committee members and must sign a non-disclosure agreement. Contact the Office of the Provost for a sample agreement.

## 4.4 Hiring Training

Prior to reviewing applications, the entire search committee must complete the hiring training for that academic year. This hiring training addresses hiring guidelines, employment laws, recruitment and bias.

Hiring training is available via Canvas. All Academic Affairs employees have been added to the training course and should log in to access the materials in the course titled Academic Affairs Hiring Training. All modules must be completed annually.

HR notifies the search chair the information about the required training when a position posts. The search committee chair is responsible for verifying that all members of the search committee have met this requirement. Committee members who do not complete the hiring training will be removed from the search committee.

All faculty and staff members of the hiring unit who will likely interact with the applicants in any way, which includes attending a presentation, must also complete the hiring training prior to on-campus interviews.

# 5. Creating the Job Posting and Beginning Recruitment

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In consultation with the dean and AUH, the search committee should review the position description and create a draft job posting to support the recruitment of qualified faculty. The position description

## Consider Alternatives

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 applicants.

and job posting may require several revisions, and search committee members should be prepared for this collaborative process. In some cases, such as in JMU Libraries, these documents may be created through a different process and given to the search committee. It is a best practice to have these documents reviewed by the college Shared Equity Leader. The job posting must be approved by the AUH and dean in consultation with HR.

Note that the description and advertisement must not be tailored to specific people. Taking the time to develop a job posting that thoughtfully reflects the best features of your

department can serve to attract highly qualified applicants (Stewart & Valian, 2018).

## 5.1 Reviewing the Position Description

The position description is comprised of multiple sections, and some elements must remain as provided by the Office of the Provost and the university, including:

- Position Details, which includes an explanation of the position, including title, rank and status (tenure-system or renewable/fixed term appointment; joint appointment, etc.)
- Position responsibilities
- Applicant qualifications including required skills, preferred skills and work experience

## 5.2 Creating the Job Posting

The job posting must be constructed based on the priorities and needs of the hiring academic unit and university, and expectations for teaching and scholarship contributions must be clearly described. It is advisable to seek input from relevant constituents (such as program directors, department faculty and the dean) as the advertising materials and advertising strategy are developed.

Job postings consist of several sections:

- Description of the position, including title, rank, status (tenure-system or renewable/fixed term appointment; joint appointment)
- Position responsibilities
- Applicant qualifications including required skills, preferred skills and work experience
- Anticipated search timeline

### 5.2.1. Standard Language

Standard information about the university is included in all faculty job postings and cannot be modified. These fields are pre-populated in JobLink:

- About James Madison University statements, including “Who We Are” (below)
- Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) statement (below)
- Reasonable Accommodation Request statement

- Annual Security and Annual Fire Safety Report
- Who We Are (below)

## Who We Are

Located in the heart of Virginia’s beautiful Shenandoah Valley, the city of Harrisonburg is approximately 120 miles from Washington, D.C. and Richmond, VA. With a population of just over 53,000, Harrisonburg is one of the most diverse communities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. JMU is a selective, public institution with a growing national reputation for offering experiences that lead to an outstanding education and inclusive environment for students, faculty and staff. The student body includes approximately 20,000 undergraduate and 1,900 graduate students, with over 1,000 full-time instructional faculty.

JMU offers thriving programs in the liberal arts, science and technology, and professional disciplines at the undergraduate, master’s and doctoral levels. The university is committed to expanding diversity, fostering equity and inclusion, and supporting superlative teaching and scholarship. JMU has achieved national recognition for the high quality of its academic programs, focus on maintaining strong student/faculty interaction, and innovative faculty research.

## EOE Statement

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.

## 5.2.2 Required Materials

The job posting must clearly describe all documents and information required in the application. The following list of items is suggested as a standard of practice for applicant materials:

- Cover letter or letter of interest
- Current CV
- Minimum of three professional references. Search committees may ask for letters to be uploaded or for the applicant to provide the names and contact information for their references.
- Statements on teaching philosophy and research or scholarly interests, as appropriate to the position

### Optional Materials

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

### 5.2.3 Assessing Commitment to Inclusive Excellence

As JMU makes strides toward inclusive excellence in service of our academic mission, it is our duty to ensure that applicants share this commitment. Search committees must use questions within the interview process to assess candidates' commitment to inclusivity as described by their field of practice, inherent in JMU's commitment to inclusive classroom practices and outlined in our university strategic plan. See Appendix II for sample interview questions.

A college may choose to require a Statement of Inclusive Excellence from each applicant for positions within all academic units the college. If an inclusive excellence statement is required within your college, the committee must use a rubric to assess each candidate's statement. Contact the Office of the Provost for a sample rubric.

If your college requires inclusive excellence statements, the position description must include a clear explanation of inclusive excellence as it will be evaluated. The position description also direct applicants to address their action-based efforts towards creating an inclusive classroom and/or commitment to inclusivity as guided by their field of practice in a statement that is separate from the cover letter. The goal of the statement must be to ensure applicants have a focus on inclusivity within their scholarly and/or teaching activities. Applicant statements must not focus on their personal values and personal experiences but must focus on their actions and experiences as they relate to inclusive excellence (Canning & Reddick, 2019; Schmalings et al., 2015).

### 5.2.4 Publicizing the Job Posting

As noted previously, the job posting must be approved by the AUH and dean in consultation with HR. The search committee chair then works with the administrative support person and HR to create the posting in JobLink and to ensure that the position is advertised as planned. It may take up to two business days for HR to complete their review and post the position.

Instructional faculty positions must be advertised on JobLink for 30 days before applicant screening can begin. The full-length description must be used for the JobLink posting; abbreviated ads containing the JobLink URL may be used for listserv and social media posts.

For questions regarding federal requirements on outreach, including case-by-case consultations and the effects of a shortened posting period on the applicant pool, contact the OEO.

## 5.3 Publicizing the Search

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 (Fradella, 2018). Departments must think creatively about how to distribute the news of their faculty search using a combination of standard and novel approaches to attract a representative and qualified pool of applicants.

To maintain compliance with federal requirements, hiring departments and search committees must collaborate in recruitment activities as required by the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). These activities are required for all types of hires unless an exception is granted by the Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity. For a consultation, contact the OEO director to schedule an appointment.

### 5.3.1. 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 [advertising sources for employment positions](#). This must be done in addition to sharing the announcement across disciplinary communities and through

professional connections with colleagues, graduate programs or other avenues, such as conferences. See Appendix II for examples. The search committee chair must review the resource section of this guide in order to develop a plan for distributing the position announcement through venues that support populations historically absent or marginalized. Consider conferring with the SIGA for additional support.

HR will automatically share instructional faculty positions in the following locations at no cost to the hiring unit once the posting is live in JobLink:

- HigherEdJobs.com
- DiversityJobs.com
  - This resource includes BlackCareers.org, VeteranJobs.net, AfricanAmericanHires.com, AsianHires.com, WeHireWomen.com, AllHispanicJobs.com, LatinoJobs.org, DisabilityJobs.net, AllLGBTJobs.com, NativeJobs.org, and OverFiftyJobs.com
- Shared with the JMU listserv that encompasses HBCU and HACU listserv members
- [The National Registry of Diverse & Strategic Faculty](#) (i.e. The Registry)
- The [SREB](#) (Southern Regional Education Board) job board

A proposed list of additional advertising sites and recruitment venues must be reviewed by the AUH, dean and HR prior to posting.

The search committee chair is responsible for coordinating advertising and recruitment efforts with their college's assigned [HR 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 relevant disciplines.
- Post the announcement to the home academic unit website. The hiring unit should consider developing a dedicated webpage containing information relevant to the faculty search.
- Work through their [HR Recruitment Specialist](#) to coordinate purchasing ads in journals, websites and other high-traffic venues to expand the visibility of the hiring opportunity.
- Post to career boards and other sites hosted by relevant professional and disciplinary organizations.
- Use social media platforms to get the word out about the hiring opportunity – posts must be brief and eye-catching, with a link to the JobLink posting.
- Consider preparing a one-page flyer about the position that can be distributed by JMU faculty at conferences and other networking events.

The hiring unit covers all costs related to recruitment, and all advertisements with an associated cost should be coordinated through the department's [HR Recruitment Specialist](#). The AUH or their designee must maintain a list of all advertising venues used, including for-pay and free sites.

## 6. Screening Applicants

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### 6.1 Establishing Screening Criteria

The AUH must meet with the full search committee to discuss parameters for the search prior to recruitment and expectations 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 applicants with appropriate qualifications. Ultimately, the search committee must:

- Propose only criteria that are directly related to the requirements of the position as described in the position posting. The criteria and priorities must 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 conscious 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 applicant's ability to contribute to experiential and intellectual diversity to the department, and their ability to work successfully with diverse students and colleagues.
- 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 an applicant's evaluation). Top applicants may emerge from applications which document unconventional work experience or transferable professional skills.
- Consider multiple dimensions when identifying top applicants and identify specific evidence for rating each applicant on each dimension.
- Only consider applicants who have submitted a completed application and all required documents.

#### Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias is hardwired, automatic, constant and impacts everyone. We see the world through our own individual lens, which is shaped by how we are raised, our value systems, our personal experiences and our experiences with others. These biases can impact our decision making and how we view others. Our biases are most active when we are cognitively strained and acting in auto pilot with no time for reflection. It is important that we learn to set aside, or bracket, our biases by (1) identifying when we are working in auto pilot and/or constrained moments, (2) purposefully using reflections in the most difficult times, (3) constantly questioning our decisions, (4) acknowledging and naming our biases, and (5) paying attention to our emotions, especially strong emotions, and tracing where those feelings derived (Tyner, 2019).

No candidate can be added at any stage of the interview process or advance to the next level of the search without the review and approval of the search committee.

#### 6.1.1. Evaluating Internal Applicants

Internal applicants, i.e., applicants who currently hold positions at JMU, must be evaluated in the same manner as all other applicants. Reviewers who have prior knowledge of an applicant must take



appropriate measures to mitigate bias. For instance, the search committee may decide to redact all identifying information to reduce the risk of bias. Internal applicants must not receive a priority preference based on their internal status. However, if an applicant indicates a previous status as a state employee, HR will obtain appropriate documents to support credit for preferred qualifications as needed.

Internal and external applicants must have an identical experience throughout the search process. Search committee members must take particular care to maintain strict confidence and the highest ethical standards when considering internal applicants.

The search committee must establish methods to ensure confidentiality for all searches involving an internal candidate, such as

- allowing the internal candidate to work from another location to ensure they are away from campus during the on-campus interviews of other candidates in the pool.
- securing all candidate materials in separate locations that require e-ID access and allow access to the materials to be tracked.

## 6.2 Developing the Evaluation Criteria and Review Process

In collaboration, the search committee chair and committee develop screening criteria and a screening matrix/rubric based on the qualifications in the position posting prior to application review (Flaherty, 2022). The applicant screening matrix must be reviewed and approved by the AUH. See Appendix II for a sample screening matrix.

- The search committee must develop a common strategy for application review.
- All search committee members must use the screening matrix for evaluating all applicants.
- Applicants who meet the state definitions for veteran status must be identified during the selection process, and veteran status must be considered as part of the initial evaluation of applicants. If there are questions about integrating veteran status into the screening process, the search committee chair should contact the [HR Recruitment Specialist](#).
- All reviewers must 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 must recuse themselves from the review of that candidate throughout the process. If a reviewer is concerned about an apparent conflict of interest, they must consult with the dean and/or AUH for guidance.
- If a reviewer has information of a serious nature about an applicant that might raise concerns about suitability, they must discuss their concerns confidentially with the search committee chair. The search committee chair will determine an appropriate course of action in collaboration 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 must recuse themselves from evaluating the applicant in the current search and from all discussions regarding the applicant's qualifications.

## 6.4 Reviewing Applications

After the position has been posted for 30 days, the VP SIGA and Human Resources will review the applicant pool. This review of the candidate pool ensures:

- the pool is representative of the field of practice;
- the pool is large enough (fewer than 15 applicants is considered a small pool and may not suffice); and
- recruitment efforts outside of marketing ads were conducted to increase the number of applicants.

The VP SIGA will confirm if the committee may move forward to the review phase by notifying HR. Once the VP SIGA has approved the pool, the [HR Recruitment Specialist](#) will inform the search committee chair.

- It is the responsibility of the search committee chair to inform the AUH whether or not the candidate pool has been certified; the AUH should notify the dean.
- If the applicant pool is not considered appropriate, the dean, VP SIGA and HR will work with the search committee on strategies to expand the composition of the pool. Lack of discipline representation in the applicant pool may lead to extending, delaying or cancelling the search. In this case, the AUH, dean and VP SIGA will confer to determine the best course of action. Ultimately, the dean has the responsibility to determine whether a search moves forward.

Only the search committee members, AUH, and dean or dean's designated representative will have access to applicant materials during the initial review.

- Beyond updates provided by the search chair that do not violate confidentiality, no one outside of these authorized reviewers can 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, lead to loss of top applicants, result in a misconduct charge or cause the search to be failed or canceled.
- It is not appropriate or equitable to use information from sources outside the application materials during initial screening. All applicants must be evaluated based on 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. These efforts lead to bias and potential discrimination against applicants.
- All search committee members must review all application materials submitted by all applicants, unless members have been assigned specific applicants to review.

### **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 should be converted to pdf format, then modified in accordance with the committee chair's instructions.

If the search committee elects to redact identifying information from application materials, the redaction must be completed by an individual who will not be reviewing applications prior to release of the applications beyond the search committee.

- Committee members must evaluate each applicant 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 evaluations can be compiled.

The search committee chair will convene the full committee to review the compiled information and identify top applicants. The committee must construct three categories for rating individual applicants: Highly Qualified, Qualified and Not Qualified. The committee must carefully discuss any applicants for which there exist differences of opinion, as these may reflect applicants with unconventional qualifications meriting further consideration.

The search committee must develop a list of top applicants to advance to first stage interviews. Typically, 7-10 applicants may be advanced to this stage, depending on the number of qualified applicants, 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 provide their reasoning related to the inclusion of applicants on the list of top applicants and/or may ask the committee to reconsider applicants not on that initial list.

The search committee chair will send the list to the HR Recruitment Specialist, who will share the composition of the short list with the VP SIGA, who will make the final determination on the certification of the applicant pool. The HR Recruitment Specialist will inform the search committee chair of the results of this review. If the list does not meet the criteria, the HR Recruitment Specialist will inform the search committee chair, and the SIGA and dean will meet with the search committee to discuss whether and how the search will proceed.

# 7. Conducting First-Round Interviews

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## 7.1 Interview Importance

Interviews provide an essential opportunity to interact with applicants to deepen your understanding of their qualifications for and interest in the position. Conversely, the applicant is also interviewing the academic unit, college and university. Applicant interviews, whether held virtually or in person, provide a great opportunity to present the best of your department and heighten the interest of the applicants in the position you are hiring. The interview process begins with the scheduling of interviews. Be mindful of your communication, organization and professionalism.

## 7.2 Scheduling First-Round Interviews

It is important to manage all applicant interviews with consistency to avoid any impression of bias in the interview process. The search committee and the academic unit members must review a list of topics that are not appropriate for interview conversations; see the list below. Everyone involved in the process must be mindful of confidentiality and professionalism.

The search committee chair must contact the top applicants to invite them to participate in a first-round interview.

- It is recommended that each applicant be contacted with a personalized email message that conveys interest and excitement in the candidacy of each applicant.
- As a best practice, offer the applicant multiple dates to choose from to account for potential schedule conflicts.
- The administrative support person or search committee chair must follow up with the applicant within 24 hours of the applicant's response to schedule the interview.
- Once the full interview schedule is set, the administrative support person or search committee chair must send a personalized confirmation email to each applicant that includes the date, time and duration of the interview; the meeting link (if needed); the names of search committee members who will participate in the interview; and contact information in case of technical issues. If the search committee desires, additional information (e.g., the interview questions) may be shared with applicants at this time as well.
- Once the full interview schedule is finalized it becomes the official schedule for the interview process, and any meetings outside of the official schedule are excluded from the interview process. No feedback from outside meetings should be included when assessing candidates.

### **Influencing Applicants**

Our goal for any recruitment is a large, varied pool of qualified applicants. How we treat our applicants influences who applies and who accepts.

## 7.3 Planning First-Round Interviews

The search committee must develop a list of questions, then determine the order of the questions and who will ask each one. The initial set of questions must be developed using the screening grid and derived from the job description. These questions must be structured and asked consistently of each applicant. Follow-up questions by the search committee are permissible depending on the applicant's answers. Follow-up questions must relate specifically to areas of the job advertisement.

Questions should be carefully developed to address the qualifications of the candidate. Be sure to avoid questions that delve into personal and protected characteristics, as shown below.

Do not ask questions related to protected classes, which include:

- Age
- Color
- Disability
- Gender Identity
- Genetic Information
- National Origin
- Parental Status
- Political Affiliation
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Veteran Status

Category	Acceptable Questions	Unacceptable Questions
Arrests and Convictions	Questions about convictions specific to the qualifications of the position are acceptable.	No inquiry may be made into arrests that did not result in convictions.
Citizenship	Only ask if the applicant is authorized to work in the U.S. 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 their spouse are not relevant to the selection process.
Disability	Only ask if the applicant is able to perform essential job duties with or without accommodations.	Any further questions are not relevant to the selection process.
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.
Family Status	No questions should be asked regarding a candidates' marital or family status.	No questions should be asked regarding a candidates' marital or family status.
Organizations	Questions may be asked about membership and offices held by the applicant if relevant to the position qualifications.	Don't ask questions about memberships, office or organizations that would reveal race, color, religion, sex, nationality, disability, age, sexual orientation, parental status, genetic information or ancestry of the applicant.
Military Service	When military service is relevant to the job qualifications, questions concerning the service may be asked if an applicant indicates an affirmative Veteran status.	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.
Relatives	It is acceptable to ask if any relatives are JMU employees.	Except for nepotism policy ( <a href="#">University Policy 1301</a> ) concerns, the applicant's relatives are not relevant to the selection process.
Work Schedule	Questions about the applicant's willingness to work the required job schedule may be asked.	Don't ask about things that might interfere with the applicant's willingness to work, such as parental status.

You can answer candidates' questions, even if it is inappropriate for you to ask them question regarding a topic. For example, you should never ask a candidate about their religion; however, if a candidate asks if there is a Muslim community in the area, you can and should provide information or help the candidate discover the answer to their question. You may share information from your experience and not your opinion. Avoid lengthy conversations about prohibited topics.

Provide time in the interview for the applicant to ask questions. It is a good idea to discuss how the search committee will respond to the applicant's questions.

- While an applicant may elect to share personal information during the interview, the search committee must adhere to the guidelines in any responses; do not respond to personal information with follow-up questions.

### 7.3.1 Recording Interviews

You must obtain the applicant's written permission in advance if you plan to record any part of an applicant's interview, using the JMU recording release form. Prior to providing the form to the candidate, you must explain how the recording will be used and by whom, as well as how it will be stored and deleted. Contact your HR Recruitment Specialist for a copy of the latest release form and advice on securing permission to record.

## 7.4 Accountability

All questions and responses must be documented during the interview, and those records must be maintained by all search committee members until the end of the process. At this time, they will be collected by the search committee chair.

University Policy [2101. Faculty Selection and Hiring Procedures](#) is comprised of the state and federal laws and university guidelines that direct the recruiting process. The recruitment process is closely monitored by state and federal agencies. It is critical that the process for hiring employees at JMU reflect a commitment to hiring practices that do not discriminate in accordance with University Policy [1302. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination](#) and JMU's Statement on Non-Discrimination and Non-Retaliation, which states:

James Madison University does not discriminate and prohibits discrimination in its employment, programs, activities, and admissions on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information (including family medical history), marital status, military status (including veteran status), national origin (including ethnicity), parental status, political affiliation, pregnancy (including childbirth or related medical conditions), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or on any basis protected by law, unless otherwise permitted or required by law.

The following state and federal regulations guide recruitment and hiring procedures:

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments Act; Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974; and relevant Executive Orders of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For the protection of those applying for positions, information related to the recruiting and selection process, e.g., internal conversations, meeting minutes, detailed feedback and survey results, etc., must be kept confidential. In addition, under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (2.2-3700), agencies are not required to allow applicants to examine reference data or recommendation letters. Therefore, documentation of reference checks and information obtained must be maintained in strict confidence.

### 7.4.1 Documentation

The search committee must maintain rigorous documentation for each applicant. Therefore, the search committee chair should collect the documents below from all committee members. The materials listed below must be maintained in the office of the AUH of the hiring academic unit for three years.

- The screening grid documenting the following:
  - Applicant names for all the applications received
  - Specific criteria used to evaluate applicants
  - Ratings based on the established criteria for all applicants
- Interview questions and notes on all applicants interviewed from all search committee members
- Feedback from departmental faculty surveys
- Any correspondence to or from the applicants
- Reference check forms and/or reference letters for those applicants that were not hired

*NOTE: Reference checks and/or letters for hired candidates must be sent to Human Resources immediately following completion of the search.*

### 7.5 Recommending Applicants to Advance

Once all first-round interviews are concluded, the committee must meet to identify which applicants to recommend advancing as finalists to the next stage of the process. This determination must consider the attributes and potential of each applicant as assessed from both the application materials and the interview.

- The committee must carefully consider key qualifications for the position, the current and long-term needs of the academic unit and the unique attributes each applicant can contribute as an educator, scholar and faculty colleague.
- No candidate can be added at any stage of the interview process or advance to the next level of the search without the review and approval of the search committee.
- The search committee chair will send the list of proposed finalists to their HR Recruitment Specialist. The HR Recruitment Specialist will share the composition of the finalist list with the VP SIGA, who determines if the composition of the pool is appropriate. The HR Recruitment Specialist will inform the search committee chair of the results. The committee chair must inform the AUH when this notification is received.
- Once the diversity of the pool has been approved by SIGA and HR, permission of the AUH and dean is required before progressing to on-campus interviews.
- If no qualified applicants are identified, the AUH and dean in consultation with the search committee chair will determine whether to extend or cancel the search.
- Searches for faculty at an advanced stage in their careers may attract applicants interested in being hired with tenure or with an expedited tenure clock. In the case of offers with tenure, and bound by confidentiality, the unit's PAC, AUH and dean must affirm the applicant has credentials appropriate to the rank and tenure status into which they are being hired. See section 11.1 for more information.

## 8. Interviewing Finalists

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### 8.1 Preparing for Finalist Visits

The search committee must make it a priority to welcome and support applicants. The search committee must develop a well-planned itinerary for each applicant's campus visit. Here are some practices to incorporate into the interview to ensure a positive interview experience for the applicant:

- Once the AUH and dean have given approval of the finalist list, applicants may be notified of their status and invited to campus for an interview. The search committee chair must reach out to each applicant to invite them to campus for a final interview. The chair, in collaboration with the applicant, must identify a suitable date for the interview and must provide a general description of the interview plan.
- Anticipate when on-campus interviews will occur. Review academic and university calendars to ensure there are minimal or no conflicts. If the applicant will be meeting with the dean or other administrators during their visit, set up those appointments now.
- Each applicant must have the opportunity to provide information about how to make the campus visit as comfortable and accessible as possible. Applicants must be asked about any dietary restrictions or additional accommodations as needed.
- The search committee chair and administrative support staff must arrange accommodations ahead of each applicant's arrival.

#### **Schedule Early!**

When the search committee creates its initial timeline, include anticipated dates for on-campus visits. Share those dates with anyone the candidate will meet with (AUH, dean, provost, etc.) to avoid delays.

### 8.2 Creating the Itinerary

Once the date for the applicant's visit is set, the applicant works with the administrative assistant and search chair to develop travel and accommodation plans. The search committee, in consultation with the AUH and dean, creates the itinerary. The administrative support person designated for the search or the committee chair develops a detailed schedule for each applicant that includes all events planned for the visit. Rooms must be reserved for meetings and participant attendance must be 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, academic unit faculty and students.
- Each finalist must meet with a designated Shared Equity Leader to learn more about campus climate and JMU's ongoing work to advance equity and inclusion.
- The interview may include a teaching demonstration and a presentation of research plans or scholarship. For some 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 applicant to learn about the department and university (i.e., JMU Libraries, Center for Global Engagement, Center for Faculty Innovation).

#### **Hiring Training**

All faculty and staff members of the hiring unit who will likely interact with the applicants must also complete the online hiring training prior to on-campus interviews. See section 4.4.



- Sample itineraries and a hospitality checklist are available on the [Faculty Recruitment Training](#) website.
- The itinerary must include a schedule of meetings and activities planned for the applicant's visit (including transit information between events) and the names and roles of people involved in each. It may also be helpful to include a list of people with whom the applicant will interact: search committee members, academic unit head, dean, etc.
- The itinerary must include accommodation information, instructions for proceeding if there are travel delays, and the name, phone, and email address for a designated contact person.
- Applicants must be provided with the expectations for their presentations, including information about the objective of the presentation, the composition of the audience and technological options.
- Applicants must provide informed consent in writing prior to their visit for audio or video recordings of any parts of their interview, including any presentations. Contact your HR Recruitment Specialist to receive guidance on securing appropriate approvals and for a copy of the latest release forms. Note that interview recordings are subject to [University Policy 1109](#) regarding document retention and archiving.
- Applicants must be given 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.

Occasionally, applicants may choose to invite someone to accompany them to Harrisonburg for the duration of the interview. While this is allowable, applicants must be informed that JMU will not cover expenses for a visitor.

- Visitors must 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 for the visitor, e.g., HR regarding employment prospects, Admissions regarding undergraduate admission, etc.
- It is appropriate to refer applicants 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 an applicant 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 must coordinate with the HR Recruitment Specialist to make appropriate arrangements for the applicant and their support person during the campus interview.

### 8.3 During the Interview

The interview is an opportunity for the applicant to learn about the institution and its people. All efforts must be made to ensure a smooth, well-organized and positive interview experience for the applicant.

- Applicants should be met upon arrival. If candidates 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 must be present to greet them briefly when they arrive at the hotel, or plan to call shortly after their arrival.

- Applicants must be escorted from one event to another, usually by one of the search committee members. Be sure to account for different abilities related to transportation needs when considering moving about campus. Ask applicants their preferences related to walking or other physical activities. Consider the amount of time required to transport from one event to the next in the itinerary so that the applicant does not feel rushed.
- If preparation time is to be provided for the applicant, be sure to schedule a space that can be made private.
- Be sure to build in refreshment breaks for each applicant and take note of the location of restrooms in each building.
- Be sure to provide details for follow-up if the applicant 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 chair should inform their HR Recruitment Specialist, who will reach out to each finalist to share information about [diversity resources](#) and the [Dual Career and Community Resources Program](#). This information will be sent to all finalists prior to their interview date.

## 8.4 Participating in the Campus Interview

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

- Prior to the arrival of the first applicant, the search committee chair must work with the AUH and dean to prepare their faculty and staff for the interview. Share a copy of the interview itinerary as soon as possible to help increase departmental involvement.
- The search committee chair and AUH must 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 applicants.
- Remind interviewers that the interview comprises the complete itinerary, including scheduled social functions. Interactions outside of the interview may not be considered in the evaluation of applicants.
- Do not initiate conversations about topics that must be avoided during an interview, as shown in Section 7.3. If search committee members are unsure how to respond to a question, it is acceptable to let the applicant know that they will find the answer and provide it as soon as possible.

### 8.4.1 Sharing Applicant Materials

When sharing an applicant's materials, take care to ensure confidentiality.

- The committee may share materials including an applicant's CV, cover letter, teaching philosophy and research statement with members of the academic unit. Providing these materials must be done in a manner that protects the privacy of the applicant and respects the confidentiality of the documents. See Appendix III for suggestions on sharing applicant materials.
- It is a breach of confidentiality to share reference letters, results of reference checks, the Statement of Inclusive Excellence (if required) or other applicant information or materials with anyone outside of the search committee.

## 8.4.2. Providing Feedback

During and shortly after each applicant visit, the search committee must establish an anonymous and confidential means for faculty, staff and students who interacted with each applicant to provide feedback, in addition to any other opportunities for comments. Typically, the search committee will develop a short electronic survey that can be sent out to all participants, including all faculty from the academic unit into which the faculty member will be hired.

- The survey must be made available soon after each interview and must 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 applicant, e.g., reviewed application materials, attended a one-on-one meeting with applicant, attended public presentation, etc.
- As a best practice, include a reminder on any feedback surveys that only position-related and professionally relevant feedback should be shared.
- Only the search committee, AUH and dean should have access to the feedback gathered through the surveys. The AUH and dean may summarize the feedback and share it generally with faculty in the academic unit.

# 9. Checking References

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## 9.1 Being Intentional

Separate from letters of recommendation, reference checks provide another layer of information about an applicant from the perspective of their colleague, mentor or supervisor. Reference checks for finalists are required, though they must be done only after careful consideration.

Consider the information you seek about your finalists. Be thoughtful in developing questions that will engage each reference in considering how the qualifications of the applicant match the needs of the position. It is safe to assume that applicants 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 applicant's qualifications will contribute to departmental goals.

## 9.2 Conducting Reference Checks

The search committee chair, in consultation with the AUH, will determine the process for conducting reference checks. Reference checks may be conducted following the finalist interviews, though checking references earlier may help ensure the ability to make a timely offer. References may be checked as soon as finalists are determined.

Below are some important considerations for reference checks:

- The AUH or dean may conduct reference checks or delegate this task to the search committee chair and/or search committee members.
- The search committee, in consultation with AUH/dean, must develop the script for reference checks that refers to a description of the position being sought and a list of standard questions which invite the reference to evaluate the applicant on specific qualifications for the role.
- Applicants must be notified by the search committee chair that references will be checked in advance of conducting the reference checks.
- Off-list references are individuals who are not named by the applicant as references and who you choose to contact in addition to the provided references. Only professionally relevant off-list references should be contacted. Contacting people off-list is only permissible after providing notice to the applicants that references other than those provided will be checked. It is not required to tell the candidate the names of intended off-list references.
- It is appropriate for the person conducting the reference check to ask follow-up questions for responses to the questions asked during the reference conversation. Thorough and consistent records must be kept of each call.
- If there are any questions about the use of information obtained through the reference check, the AUH, dean, search committee chair, HR and/or legal must consult.
- All reference check notes are confidential to the dean/AUH (or their designee). General information from these checks must be summarized for the search committee.
- The AUH must retain records of each reference call, including the reference's name, their contact information and all notes taken during the call. These reference check records for hired candidates will be submitted to HR for archiving once the search is concluded.
- If committee members other than the chair have conducted reference checks, they must submit their notes to the search committee chair soon after completion of the check.

# 10. Selecting and Recommending Applicants

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## 10.1 Committee Assessment

The search committee represents the interests of the department and as such is charged with making recommendations about the suitability of each finalist interviewed. Committee recommendations are informed by a holistic assessment of applicants' submitted materials, interview(s), and reference checks (where applicable). All stakeholders must have an opportunity to provide feedback. The results of search committee discussions, screening matrix completion, and faculty, staff and student feedback inform the process. Committees must discuss the strengths and weaknesses of all finalists, working diligently to consider all aspects of their information gathering process, and must seek to identify points of potential bias to ensure that their final assessment process is equitable, and evidence based.

As subject matter experts, feedback from academic unit faculty comprises crucial information for evaluation of finalists. The search committee must facilitate various ways for feedback to be gathered. The committee may facilitate open discussions with unit faculty to receive faculty insight. In addition, unit faculty must have the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback.

Once all interviews have been concluded, the search committee must convene to discuss the attributes and potential of each applicant and to determine collectively whether each finalist is acceptable. The committee must review all feedback received regarding all applicants as well as consider their own impressions. The AUH may request that the search committee consider additional factors or address follow-up questions.

## 10.2 Hiring Proposal

The search committee chair must convey to the AUH and dean a written hiring proposal that includes the committee's overall evaluation of each finalist as acceptable or not acceptable, as well as the holistic strengths and challenges of each applicant.

Rating candidates as not acceptable means that they would not be able to successfully do the job, and a candidate should not be noted as not acceptable unless they do not meet qualifications. If a candidate is deemed not acceptable, the explanation provided must be based on job qualifications or concerns that were realized during the on-campus interview. Contact the Office of the Provost for a sample hiring proposal.

The AUH and dean will consider the assessments of the search committee as presented in the hiring proposal.

Where assessments are not unanimous, the committee may provide a dissenting report or note in the committee report that there were dissenting views. In recognition of the complexities and nuances of preparing a full assessment of candidates, some search committees may wish to have a conversation with the AUH and/or dean in addition to submission of their written memorandum. In these cases, the search committee may request a meeting with the AUH/dean, who will meet to discuss aspects of the hiring proposal prior to making an offer.

If a concern or disagreement arises prior to the point of offer, the involved parties—subject to confidentiality—should consult, and every effort should be made to ensure open and transparent communication.

The dean must obtain final approval from the provost prior to any offer.

# 11. Making the Offer

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## 11.1 Engaging with the Applicant

The AUH must make the initial offer to the selected applicant. The AUH must describe the terms of the offer including salary, type of faculty line and specifics regarding teaching, scholarship and service responsibilities. In addition, the AUH must begin a discussion about the applicant's specific needs such as dedicated space, equipment, summer schedule and start-up.

The AUH must maintain a record of negotiations by sending a follow-up email after each conversation outlining the terms discussed and requesting that the applicant confirms within a specified timeframe. AUHs may need to confer with the dean about any terms that require resources outside the control of the academic unit.

- 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.
- The AUH may not ask the applicant if they will require immigration or work authorization sponsorship; this information is collected as part of the initial JobLink application. After an offer has been accepted, the AUH may ask if sponsorship is required.
- The AUH may offer relocation support as prearranged with the dean.
- Applicants 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 an applicant's decision to take the job. The AUH must be ready to respond to requests for such information by putting the applicant in touch with someone who can address their questions. This may include an HR staff person, administrator, Shared Equity Leader or faculty member, depending on the nature of the questions. At this point, the applicant's offer is still confidential so all contacts must be advised not to discuss their interactions with the applicant or reveal any information that is shared.
- Searches for faculty at an advanced stage in their careers may attract applicants interested in being hired with tenure or with an expedited tenure clock. The AUH must discuss this possibility with the dean prior to making the offer and must not make such an offer without dean approval. In the case of offers with tenure, and bound by confidentiality, the unit's PAC, AUH and dean must affirm the applicant has credentials appropriate to the rank and tenure status into which they are being hired according to the academic unit's approved promotion and tenure guidelines. All details regarding commitments of tenure or years toward tenure must be approved by the provost and must be carefully documented in the offer letter.

## 11.2 Drafting the Offer Letter

Once all terms are negotiated to the satisfaction of the university, the AUH must draft an offer letter describing all terms as discussed. See Appendix II for a chart listing the required content and recommended language for the letter.

- The dean must sign the offer letter before it is sent to the applicant for signature.
- Typically, the applicant must sign and return the offer letter by a stated deadline.
- No discussions may proceed with other applicants during the negotiation period.

- The failure of an applicant to accept an offer within the timeframe specified by the AUH is sufficient basis for notifying an applicant that the offer has been withdrawn.
- After the signed offer letter is returned, the department initiates the formal contract and ePAR.
- New faculty must submit their official transcripts prior to the beginning of their first semester teaching in keeping with [University Policy 2101](#). Candidates who have not submitted their transcripts by the deadline may have their position offer withdrawn.
- If the applicant declines the offer, the AUH must immediately inform the dean 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.

# 12. Closing the Search

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## 12.1 Keeping Records

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

- After the applicant returns the signed offer letter, the search committee chair must individually contact all individuals interviewed at any stage by telephone or email to notify them that the position has been filled.
- The search committee chair works with the administrative support staff member assisting with the recruitment to update applicants' statuses and change the position status to Filled on JobLink. All applicants with a status of "Not Interviewed" will receive an automated email from JobLink to let them know the position has been filled once the posting is changed to Filled. It is the search committee chair's responsibility to contact those that were interviewed but not hired to let them know the position has been filled. This action must take place promptly, as this information is used in recruitment reports for the Provost's Office.
- The AUH reviews the [contract](#) and ensures that all signatures have been obtained and that an ePAR is sent to the dean for processing and submission to HR.

All information from a search and selection process must be retained by the hiring authority in the academic unit office 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 applicants 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](#).

## 12.2 Debriefing

At the request of the unit, the hiring authority and the search committee chair must debrief with the search committee and unit faculty to share information as it relates to the success of the search process and to make suggestions for improving that process.

- Debriefing must be done in a synchronous format.
- Confidentiality of this information is of paramount importance.

To protect the privacy of interviewees and the integrity of search and negotiation processes, the hiring authority and the search chair cannot share detailed information about why an offer may have been rejected. Moreover, the search committee and department may not be told if an applicant fails a background check. The dean may communicate that they were unable to move forward with an applicant but may not disclose that an applicant did not pass their background check.



## 13. 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. It is appropriate for academic unit members to reach out to their new colleagues to establish a connection and welcome them to JMU and the unit. The AUH may share the successful applicant's current email address, with permission of the new hire. Faculty and staff from the academic unit must not contact finalists before this point.

Throughout the period between the applicant's decision to accept the offer and their start date, the AUH must maintain regular contact with them. This may include regular interaction to arrange for academic unit 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 and department must 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.
- For faculty starting in August, the AUH ensures that new faculty members are aware of university-wide orientations and relevant upcoming events, including any divisional, college and academic unit meetings or retreats. 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 must 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 may undergo 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.

# Appendix I: Terminology and Usage

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Throughout these guidelines:

- *Must, should and will* indicate mandatory actions.
- *May* and *recommend* indicate optional actions.
- *Hiring Authority*: The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs is the designated hiring authority for Academic Affairs, holds direct responsibility for the position and has ultimate oversight of the search and hiring process. For instructional faculty searches, the provost typically delegates hiring authority to the dean; the dean typically delegates hiring authority to the academic unit head.

# Appendix II: Samples and Forms

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Hiring Process Checklist

Search Committee Chair Checklist

Sample Interview Questions Related to Inclusive Excellence

Sample Rubric for Evaluating a Statement of Inclusive Excellence

Sample Confidentiality Agreement

Sample Recruitment Plan

Sample Screening Matrix

Offer Letter Requirements

## Hiring Process Checklist

- Dean, AUH and faculty discuss and determine the need for a new faculty hire
- AUH submits justification for a new hire to the dean
- Dean reviews the justification and submits the position request form to the provost's office by the established deadline
- Academic Resources prioritizes faculty hiring requests
- Provost confirms approvals and notifies the dean
- If approved, the dean notifies the AUH to proceed with the search
- AUH completes and submits a Request to Recruit ePAR to Academic Resources
- AUH establishes the search committee and selects a chair
- Search committee completes required training and begins meeting
- Search committee reviews job description and creates job announcement; to HR for review via JobLink
- HR reviews and posts job announcement, typically within two business days of submission to JobLink
- Search committee members publicize the search through their networks
- SIGA certifies the applicant pool prior to application review beginning, HR informs the search committee chair
- After 30 days, application review begins
- Search committee uses the criteria of the job announcement to create a screening matrix
- Search committee evaluates applications using the screening grid
- Search committee determines first-round candidates
- Search chair submits proposed first-round interview candidates to HR; SIGA certifies the proposed candidates and HR informs the search committee chair
- Search committee uses the criteria of the job announcement to create first-round interview questions
- Search committee conducts first-round (typically phone or virtual) interviews
- Search committee meets to discuss the first-round interviews and determine candidates for second-round (typically in-person) interviews
- Search chair submits proposed second-round interview candidates to HR; SIGA certifies the proposed candidates and HR informs the search chair
- Search committee creates questions for second-round interviews
- Search committee creates an itinerary for second-round interviews
- Faculty and staff outside of the hiring committee who plan to interact with the candidate complete hiring training
- Search chair informs their HR Recruitment Specialist once all second-round interviews have been scheduled
- Search committee conducts second-round interviews
- Search committee collects anonymous feedback from faculty, staff and students who interacted with the candidates
- AUH or designee conducts reference checks, if not already completed

- AUH or designee who conducted reference checks shares general information from the checks with the search committee
- Search committee discusses candidates and prepares a hiring proposal
- Search committee chair and AUH review the hiring proposal
- AUH and dean consult on finalists; dean consults with the provost
- AUH makes an offer to the candidate

## Search Committee Chair Checklist

- AUH establishes the search committee and selects a chair
- Search committee chair discusses the search strategy with the AUH
- Search committee chair meets with the administrative assistant assigned to the search
- Search committee chair convenes the search committee to discuss the search strategy
- Search committee chair ensures all search committee members complete the required training
- Search committee chair works with the individual within the hiring unit who will be creating the posting (often the administrative staff member who will support the search) to submit the job announcement to HR via JobLink
- Search committee chair collects completed screening grids after the search committee evaluates applications using the screening grid
- Search committee chair convenes the search committee to discuss the first-round interviews and determine candidates for second-round (typically in-person) interviews
- Search committee chair shares the second-round interview itinerary with the administrative assistant to begin planning campus visits
- Search committee chair convenes the search committee discuss the second-round interviews and feedback and to determine finalists
- AUH or designee conducts reference checks; may be delegated to the search committee chair
- AUH or designee who conducted reference checks shares general information from the checks with the search committee
- Search committee chair writes the hiring proposal on behalf of the search committee after discussion with search committee
- Search committee chair and AUH review the hiring proposal
- Search committee chair collects all materials related to the search from committee members

## Sample Inclusive Excellence Interview Questions

The questions below, or some variation of them, must be used consistently with candidates to evaluate their commitment to inclusive excellence.

- How have you incorporated your field's commitment to inclusivity within your teaching, research and collegial relationships?
- How do you uphold the principles of your national/professional organizations in your work?
- How do you create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all?
- What supports do you need to uphold JMU's commitment to inclusivity as outlined in our university strategic plan?
- What professional experiences have prepared you to effectively advise/mentor/teach a broad student population?

# Sample Recruitment Plan



## Instructional Faculty Recruitment Plan

### Goals

1. To engage in a proactive recruitment process, which includes advertising as widely as possible to attract a diverse pool of qualified applicants.
2. To identify a final set of diverse candidates with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and expertise to best serve the needs of our students, curriculum, department, and relationships within our regional community.

### Search Information

Academic Unit Head: Click or tap here to enter text.

Academic Unit and College: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position Title & Number Being Searched: Click or tap here to enter text.

Search Committee Chair Name and Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Committee Diversity Liaison (if applicable): Click or tap here to enter text.

### Training

Annual hiring training is required for all search committee members, as well as all faculty and staff who may interact with the candidates. *Training must be retaken if it expires within a month of this recruitment plan.*

Have all members completed the search committee training for the current academic year?

Yes    No

Search Committee Members	Training Completion Date
(Chair)	

### **Recruitment Details**

Be specific in your planning and consider methods you haven't engaged in previously to expand your reach.

As you prepare your recruitment plan to attract a diverse pool of qualified applications, please provide details on how you intend to:

1. Go beyond the standard job posting sources to advertise your position.
2. Solicit nominations from professional colleagues from diverse backgrounds.
3. Target underrepresented populations (e.g., women, Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), military affiliated individuals and veterans, LGBTQ, and individuals with disabilities).
4. Leverage faculty attendance at conferences, faculty participation in list-servs, faculty memberships in national organizations, and faculty participation in college recruitment fairs to diversify the applicant pool.
5. Reach out to historically black or Hispanic serving institutions and organizations working with minority scholars with terminal degrees in your field (See Appendix I for suggestions).
6. Include individuals from JMU affinity groups in the recruitment process.
7. Encourage active engagement of faculty within the department in the recruitment process.

Attach a document that addresses all seven areas identified above.

Search Committee Chair Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

AUH Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dean Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

VPSIGA Signature \_\_\_\_\_

[Download the hiring plan template here.](#)





## Offer Letter Requirements

The Offer Letter Must	Suggested Language
<b>Include detailed information about start date and employment term.</b>	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 [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 must 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. OR This is a Renewable-Term Appointment as Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/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 <a href="#">Faculty Handbook</a> . 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 applicant'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]. 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 required documents and their due date.
Include information on their promotion and tenure timeline if it differs from the standards shown in the <i>Faculty Handbook</i> .	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.
Include a description of departmental expectations for teaching or other duties.	Your standard teaching load will include [sections per semester] of [class type, as appropriate]. In addition, you are expected to [additional expectations and deadlines, as appropriate].
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].

# Appendix III. Resources

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## Best Practices in Creating a Position Description

To effectively recruit and attract underrepresented qualified faculty, departments must be intentional in making it very clear to applicants that they will be valued and supported within the academic unit and at JMU. Integrating the following best practices can assist in meeting this goal:

- Use broad terms so that applicants can see themselves within the position description.
- Provide a sense of the department /division climate.
- Allow for flexibility
- View from the applicant's perspective
- Keep the ad up to date, avoid using old ads that do not capture the current environment
- Do not be overly creative with job description or title.
- Avoid using subjective terms, opinions, or recommendations in ads.
- Avoid jargon and technical terms
- Avoid the inclusion of future duties
- Be aware of discriminatory language i.e., able bodied etc. Consult with the college's Shared Equity Leader for assistance in developing equitable and inclusive language.
- Use language consistently throughout the document to reflect commitment to inclusive excellence.
- Consider including a description of the department's commitment to diversifying its faculty.

## Hiring Resources for Universities

The list below is not exhaustive, and additional suggestions are welcome.

[Academic Affairs Diversity website](#)

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

[Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\)](#)

[American Association for Women in Community Colleges \(AAWCC\)](#)

[American Association of Blacks in Higher Education \(AABHE\)](#)

[American Association of University Women \(AAUW\)](#)

[American Indian Higher Education Consortium \(AIHEC\)](#)

[Americans with Disability Act \(ADA\)](#)

[Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education \(APAHE\)](#)

[Association of Black Women in Higher Education \(ABWHE\)](#)

[Association of Black Women in Higher Education \(ABWHE\)](#)

[Association of University Centers on Disability \(AUCD\)](#)

[Association on Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#)

[Association on Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#)

[Campus Pride](#)

[Coalition for Sexuality and Gender Identities \(CSGI\)](#)

[Consortium of Higher Education](#)

[Council of College and Military Educators \(CCME\)](#)

[Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology \(DO-IT\)](#)  
[Dual Career and Community Resources Program Faculty Handbook](#)  
[Faculty Recruitment Diversity Strategies Faculty Search Audit Process & Checklist Form Handbook Faculty Searches and Hiring – University of Michigan](#)  
[Higher Education Resources Services \(H.E.R.S\)](#)  
[Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities \(HACU\).](#)  
[Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#)  
[LBGTQ Presidents in Higher Education](#)  
[Military.com](#)  
[National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education \(NAFEO\)](#)  
[National Association of Student Personnel Administrators \(NASPA\)](#)  
[National Association of Veterans Upward Bound \(NAVUB\)](#)  
[National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education \(NCWGE\)](#)  
[National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education \(NCORE\).](#)  
[National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals \(NOGLSTP\)](#)  
[National Organization on Disability \(NOD\)](#)  
[National Resource Directory \(NRD\)](#)  
[Society of the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science \(SACNAS\)](#)  
[Students Veterans of America \(SVA\)](#)  
[The National Association of HBCU Students and Alumni](#)  
[The National Registry of Diverse and Strategic Faculty](#)  
[The PHD Project](#)  
[Women in Higher Education \(WIHE\)](#)  
[Women Leaders in College Sports \(WLCS\)](#)

## Reporting Suspected Wrongdoing

The Division of Academic Affairs strives for a culture that promotes lawful and ethical behavior. Employees who suspect wrongdoing in the context of the recruitment and hiring process should [report their concerns](#). Retaliation against employees raising good faith concerns will not be tolerated

## Sharing Candidate Materials Options

When posting candidate materials, the search committee has a responsibility to maintain candidate confidentiality. Here are two options for electronically sharing materials in a way that protects the candidates.

### Secure Website

- Create separate secure websites, which must be accessed using a JMU eID.

### Teams

- Host all files on Teams with links in the websites (behind password protection).

## Strategies to Attract Underrepresented Individuals

Employing multiple recruitment strategies can assist in widening and increasing underrepresented populations in the applicant pool. In addition to advertising on JobLink, national publications and/or job- listing databases appropriate for your discipline, consider:

- Publications that are read by underrepresented applicants.
- Listservs that are followed by underrepresented applicants.
- Personalized letters or e-mails to potential applicants or to colleagues who might refer potential applicants.
- Attending conferences within your field associated with diverse cultural groups, such as the Asian American Psychological Association.
- Attending conferences specific to diverse cultural groups, such as Faculty Women of Color in the Academy Conference.
- Consult with underrepresented faculty on campus about the type of outreach they would find most effective.
- Consider collaborating with the caucus leadership and JMU conference hosts to share job ads. (Bhalla, 2019).

## University Contacts

- For questions about the recruitment process, contact your [HR Recruitment Specialist](#).
- For questions about the certification of the candidate pool process, contact your [HR Recruitment Specialist](#).
- For questions about inclusive excellence contact the Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Global Affairs.
- For questions about Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and search exceptions including deviations from standard recruitment practices, contact the [Office of Equal Opportunity](#).
- To request review and approval of the inclusive language in your position advertisement prior to recruitment, contact your college's Shared Equity Leader.
- For questions about international candidates, contact [International Student and Scholar Services](#).
- For legal questions, contact the [Office of University Counsel](#).

- For questions about offering to a finalist or obtaining permission to move a search forward, consult with the AUH of the hiring unit and/or the dean.

## University Policies

[Policy 1109. Records Management](#)

[Policy 1302. Equal Opportunity](#)

[Policy 1320. Providing and Obtaining Employment Reference Information](#) [Policy 2101. Faculty Hiring Procedures](#)

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# Hiring Guidelines Errata

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11/13/23: This version of the hiring guidelines is formatted in Times New Roman to optimize viewing. No content has changed, though some page numbering is different.