



Welcome!

On behalf of the JMU School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE), the JMU Lifelong Learning Institute (JMU LLI), the JMU LLI Staff, and the members of our volunteer Advisory Board:

We are glad you're here!

At the JMU Lifelong Learning Institute, we are dedicated to enriching the intellectual and social lives of adult learners by offering stimulating non-credit educational, social, and travel opportunities.

Your participation as an instructor is critical to our success. Without you, there would be no JMU LLI!

We want you to enjoy your time with us, as working with our members can be an invigorating and inspiring opportunity. We hope this Handbook will answer many of your questions and provide information to ensure a successful class!

What is the JMU Lifelong Learning Institute?

The JMU Lifelong Learning Institute (JMU LLI) is a program dedicated to enriching the lives of adult learners by offering non-credit classes taught by highly qualified instructors and guest lecturers. In addition to classes, JMU LLI also provides opportunities for socialization, volunteer engagement, leadership, and travel specifically designed for adults.

What kind of classes does JMU LLI offer?

LLI offers a wide variety of intellectually stimulating non-credit classes that are not limited by a specific discipline. The typical class lasts five weeks. Each class meets once per week for two hours.

What is Lifelong Learning, and how is it different?

Our membership is what makes JMU LLI special.

Adult learners:

- Have a wealth of experience
- Have specific physical needs

- Have well-established habits and preferences
- Like to be independent
- Like to make good use of their time
- Have established values and attitudes
- May have experienced many changes and losses
- Like to see what they are learning

Not only are they older than other types of students, but they are also motivated by fundamentally different things.

Many come for intellectual stimulation, curiosity, to acquire new skills, or to deepen their experience with familiar ones, others come to pass the time or to be part of a social group, while many of our members join LLI for all the above reasons!

Because of their varying motivations to attend classes, many senior JMU LLI members prefer not to spend time between classes doing homework—they prefer to participate actively during class time by contributing their own knowledge on a topic, sharing relevant experiences, and asking questions. They expect some time for discussion even in a lecture-oriented class.

There are usually no requirements or prerequisites for classes. The makeup of any class may represent a wide range of educational and experiential backgrounds.

What makes a great LLI Instructor?

Like the JMU LLI members, instructors represent a broad range of formal education and life experience.

Instructors don't need to hold a Ph.D. with decades of teaching experience in a subject to be successful when teaching for LLI. Instructors might be retired educators, skilled artists, current JMU faculty or students, local professionals, or sophisticated enthusiasts. Unlike the faculty at virtually all other types of educational institutions, LLI instructors do not need academic credentials, just a long-standing passion for the disciplines they are teaching.

In many instances, this lack of professional credentials tends to make for better instruction! People who are knowledgeable but not professional "experts" in a field can sometimes explain concepts in that field more clearly than professionals, especially to students who lack prerequisite knowledge or experience.

A great JMU LLI instructor will also be confident and prompt in responding via email, as this is the main form of communication with both students in your class and the JMU LLI Staff.

Considerations to support Lifelong Learners:

As experienced, well-educated, and often well-traveled people, JMU LLI members expect the highest quality of instruction. Within the classroom, learners expect clear communication that provokes thought and insight; visual aids to enhance presentation material; presentations consistent with subject matter as described in the class catalog; and instructors who can relate their material to the interests of a mature adult learner audience.

Because of the above, we encourage instructors to consider implementing the following suggestions in their classroom:

- 1) Reserve time in each class for questions, whole class, or group discussion on the topic but remember you set the tone and can control the direction of conversation
- 2) Consider using class time for applied activities instead of expecting members to do the work in between classes
- 3) Honor differing opinions while not allowing one singular voice to overwhelm the focus of the class
- 4) Avoid industry or subject-specific jargon without explaining it first. If in doubt, have someone outside your industry or area of expertise read through your class materials for you to find those blind spots!
- 5) Come prepared! Lifelong Learners like their instructors to be knowledgeable, organized, and enthusiastic
- 6) Have a sense of humor in how you interact with your class. Learn from each other!
- 7) Consider varying your class format by offering hands-on activities, using a wide array of multimedia to engage with the topic, and offering field trips when appropriate. The LLI Staff can help you coordinate technological needs and travel!
- 8) Ask students to silence their phones before class so that the group can focus on the subject at hand
- 9) Because of the age of the members, please use the lapel/clip-on mics provided in our classrooms
- 10) Ensure visual aids use a sufficiently large type. Also, consider using dark fonts on light backgrounds and light fonts on dark backgrounds for accessibility
- 11) Repeating questions asked by students in class can be very helpful to ensure everyone in the class has heard the question
- 12) Offer students the ability to leave as needed for bio breaks or schedule an official 5–10-minute break during class. But keep the break time specific – give them a time when the class will resume.
- 13) Arrive at least 10 minutes before class to have your technology set up and help greet students. This will help to develop a welcoming classroom space.
- 14) Please begin and end class on time to honor students' other commitments and to ensure the space is available for other JMU LLI classes or University bookings
- 15) Help to establish a safe learning environment by establishing boundaries around discussion and discourse at the first class
- 16) Be willing to adjust your class timeline or content based on real-time feedback or interest
- 17) Remember that your students are here because they want to be, not because they have to be!

Class Proposals

Everyone interested in teaching for JMU LLI must submit a class proposal through the jmu.edu/lli website.

Proposals for the Fall Term are **due by the last working day of March**

Proposals for the Spring Term are **due by the last working day of September**

Proposals are welcome at any time through our website jmu.edu/lli however class proposals received after the above dates will only be considered if space is available or will be considered for the next term.

What makes for a strong proposal?

Competitive proposals provide information learners need to make informed registration decisions:

- What topic will you discuss?
- What information or experience will learners gain?
- How will instruction be delivered? (For example, is this an applied hands-on class, a lecture combined with a question-and-answer period, or another format to be negotiated with learner input?)

The “Professional Bio” section should be a succinct paragraph highlighting your training, professional experience, and active interests. This section should reflect your credentials (formal or otherwise) relative to the topic you propose.

Please note: both class descriptions and bios may be edited for content, length, and continuity by LLI staff before publication in the class catalog. You will have the opportunity to review the final description and bio before publication!

Avoidance of Bias

JMU LLI endorses academic freedom but expects instructors to demonstrate a lack of bias with regard to politics, religion, ethnicity, current affairs etc. Classes should examine “controversial” topics from a historical or comparative perspective without promoting any singular ideology.

JMU LLI staff may reach out to you to suggest changes to your class proposal/content before approving the class. We are happy to work with you to ensure you have a cohesive and comprehensive examination of the topic. JMU LLI staff also reserves the right to reject any proposal to stay aligned with directives, edicts, letters, suggestions, statements, or orders from JMU Leadership, the Board of Visitors, or the State or Federal government.

Avoidance of Promoting Specific Services or Products

Instructors should not promote specific services or products for personal benefit. We do not share member information with the public and do not allow instructors to do so for commercial purposes. JMU LLI offers sponsorship opportunities for those who are looking simply to market their product or service to our members.

Class Proposal Procedures

During the late summer and winter, JMU LLI staff with generous support from the JMU LLI Curriculum Committee, will facilitate the recruitment of instructors for the following semester’s classes and identify topics and areas of study members have expressed interest in. While class proposals can be submitted at any time, there will be a push during busier months!

All class proposals must be made on the JMU LLI website and completed fully.

If your proposed class is **more** than one session long, please use the Class Proposal Form.

If your proposed class is **only** one session long, please use the Special Event Form.

You will be asked:

- 1) Basic contact information
- 2) If you are retired from JMU, as this affects your hiring status and pay

- 3) A brief bio
- 4) Name and description of your proposed class
- 5) The days of the week you are available and what months you would prefer to teach. There is also an opportunity to explain times you aren't free due to travel or other commitments
- 6) If there are any additional fees associated with the class (for a book, art supplies, plant materials etc.) that students will need to pay
- 7) Ideal and Max class size
- 8) Your comfort level with classroom technology

After submitting, you will receive an email confirming that the JMU LLI staff has your proposal on record and when you can expect to hear from the LLI team. You will be allowed to download your response at that time, as well.

If there are questions or concerns about your class, the director may reach out to you after your proposal. Otherwise, expect to hear from the JMU LLI Director after the proposal deadline about approvals.

After the proposal closing date (see above), the LLI Director will consider all proposals to ensure JMU LLI presents a balanced and varied schedule of classes, trips, and workshops. At that time, the director will schedule all the classes at the JMU Ice House or alternative venues if the class will not take place at the Ice House, and update class descriptions and bios as needed. The director will then email you to confirm ALL finalized details for approval.

A prompt reply to this confirmation email is much appreciated as it keeps our catalog publication timeline moving forward!

Additional Processes

LLI Open House

All JMU LLI instructors are invited to attend our Open House events. These events are held during the week of class registration and are a great way to promote your class and get people excited to register. Before the event, we'll email you asking if you need to be near a power source for a laptop or other equipment. Bring whatever materials you feel would get people interested and excited about your class!

If you are unable to attend in person, you can still send materials to be put out for people to peruse. Please coordinate that with the LLI Program Coordinator.

Instructor Training

JMU LLI staff, along with our Faculty Support Committee, provide four training sessions per term:

- 1) General Instructor Onboarding that covers JMU LLI policies, best practices for classroom management, and payment for instructors who have requested payment. While not required, it is **STRONGLY** suggested, even if you have attended before, as policies may change from year to year, semester to semester.
- 2) Classroom Technology Training that allows instructors to learn all about the tech capabilities of our Ice House classrooms and gives you the chance to practice with your own technology (thumb drive, laptop, cloud service etc) If you do not attend the Tech Training, you are assuming all responsibility

for any tech issues you face in the classroom and will resolve issues directly with JMU IT and not JMU LLI staff.

Class Rosters

As an instructor, you will be given login information to view class rosters and contact lists. Please bookmark this information and write down your login information.

We suggest you do not print out your class roster until the morning of your class, as classes are open until filled and members can register until a class starts!

Class Prep

Two weeks prior to the start of your class, you will receive an email from the JMU LLI Classroom Liaison to confirm times and rooms, share any additional information, and schedule a “Tech Refresh” if you would like to come to campus and refresh your memory on how to use the computers and monitors. (If your class is off campus, we will coordinate a visit to your off-campus room for a “Tech Refresh” if needed.)

At that time, we will also collect any photocopies needed for the first class or classes. (More information on photocopies later!)

Class Evaluations

Class evaluations will be sent by JMU LLI staff at the end of each class. These evaluations will be anonymous but will be shared with instructors. If there are areas for improvement, JMU LLI staff are happy to meet with you to discuss potential solutions.

Details of your class evaluations will not be shared with anyone outside the LLI Staff, however if there are concerns general, non-specific information may be shared with our Curriculum Committee.

Instructor Pay

We hope the joy of teaching students eager to learn from you is the primary benefit of being an instructor at JMU LLI.

However, we fully respect how much time and effort goes into preparing and presenting a successful class. Which is why we're able to offer LLI instructors \$35 an hour for their instruction time. For example, a person teaching a 5 week, 2 hour class would receive a remuneration of \$350.

Please note the payment procedure is different for instructors who are retired JMU Faculty or Staff. Please contact the JMU LLI office for further information about this onboarding and payment process.

Hiring and Onboarding

For instructors who are not retired JMU faculty or staff, before the start of your class, you will be asked to fill out paperwork to onboard you to the university system and to ensure payment. You will also need to include a W9.

If you have not submitted this paperwork 1 week before your first class, you will not be allowed to teach due to JMU's HR rules! Please submit all onboarding paperwork promptly!

Instructor Perks

In addition to payment, JMU LLI offers Instructors the following:

- Free parking downtown, valid for the entire semester you teach, including on non-teaching days, evenings, and weekends. This is a great perk, especially on busy days or for special events like Best Weekend Ever or Skeleton Fest!
- A free class during the semester, or the semester after, they present a class. Free classes do not accumulate beyond the period for which they are offered and must be used before their expiration date. To take advantage of the free class, an instructor must be a member in good standing and have paid their annual dues. This free class does not include trips or include any additional fees associated with a class for supplies.

JMU LLI Instructor Policies

Instructor Illness or Emergency

If you become ill or have an emergency requiring the cancellation and/or rescheduling of a class, please contact the JMU LLI Program Coordinator director via phone or email. The office will do its best to inform the class students of the cancellation.

Please do not reschedule a class on your own as the JMU LLI staff will need to ensure a room is available at the date and time you'd like to reschedule. Please with the JMU LLI Program Coordinator who will reschedule the class if possible.

Classroom Emergencies

Direct one person to call 911 for Emergency Services. Provide as much information about the scene as possible. Direct a person from the class to go to the venue office and another to entrances to guide rescue personnel to the location. Keep the class members calm and away from emergency personnel. Call the JMU LLI Program Coordinator at (540) 568-2923 to inform the staff of the situation or send a class member up to the LLI office on the 3rd floor. If the class is happening at a partner venue, inform a member of their staff as quickly as possible.

Waitlist Procedures and “Freebies”

Everyone in your class MUST be a JMU LLI member in good standing and registered for the class. Many classes will fill up completely. As such JMU LLI allows for a waitlist. In order to keep our procedures equitable, we must offer spots that open in a class to individuals in order on our waitlist. We cannot prioritize friends, family, or neighbors.

In the past, we have learned that some instructors have foregone the waitlist procedure and allowed friends, family, neighbors, and even non-LLI members into the class. This has also happened in classes that do not have a waitlist, but people simply become curious.

PLEASE NOTE: Every person who skips over folks on the waitlist is not following procedure and acting unfairly towards fellow JMU LLI members. Every person who joins your class without registering is costing JMU LLI money that could go towards future special events or trips.

If JMU LLI learns that an instructor is ignoring these policies, they will be given one warning. If they do so again, they may be uninvited from teaching in future semesters.

Please help us enforce this policy!

Photocopies

Handouts can be a very helpful tool for your class. JMU LLI staff is happy to make these copies for you prior to your class.

To have them ready, we ask the following:

- 1) Please email the document in either PDF or Word Doc (.doc from Microsoft Word or .docx from Google Docs) to lli@jmu.edu with the title "Photocopy Request"
- 2) Please send them at least 2 working days before your class. (ie – you cannot send a request on Friday for a Monday morning class. But you CAN send a request Monday for a Wednesday class)
- 3) Use photocopies of supplements to class discussion, not a replacement for in-class visuals
- 4) When possible, consider sending documents with your class via email to save on printing costs and save trees!

As of Fall 2025, LLI will no longer print copies of slides/presentations used in class. Please plan on sending these either before or after your class session. If you need assistance with this process, please talk with the Classroom Liaison during your Tech Refresh Meeting. If you have concerns about visibility of your slides, please consider scheduling a meeting with a member of our Instructor Support Committee or LLI staff who can help you with your presentation.

Additional Considerations:

- 1) Please close the classroom door when class is in session to minimize sound bleed between rooms and distractions from other Ice House activities. Remember, we share this building with three other JMU Units and the public!
- 2) You are welcome to adjust the setup of the tables to a pattern that best suits your class, but please return the setup to how it was after your class is over.
- 3) If you are unable to attend a class and would prefer to send a substitute instructor instead of cancelling, that is fine. However, JMU LLI will not coordinate payment for that substitute.
- 4) Email is our only line of communication between you and our team. Please ensure JMU LLI emails aren't going to your spam and reply as needed.
- 5) We are always looking for the next great instructor! Please share teaching opportunities with friends and colleagues!
- 6) JMU LLI staff welcomes feedback. If you'd like to speak with us, please book a time via the link on our website. Otherwise, you can send it via email.