

Dual Career Guidelines for Department Heads

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Virginia Tech is committed to responding to the needs of dual career couples within available resources in cases that are consistent with our mission and goals. These guidelines outline the basic conditions under which dual career hires will be considered. However, the guidelines do not create an entitlement. Given limited resources, the lack of disciplinary fit in some cases, and the university's mission and aspirations as a research university, it simply will not be possible to respond to the employment needs of all dual career couples.

The employment preferences and needs of dual career couples vary from one case to another. Information about employment opportunities in the region may result in an appropriate placement for some. In other instances, referral to existing vacancies on the faculty or staff may provide an appropriate match between opportunity and the individual's skills. In cases where a faculty position does not currently exist, and the individual's credentials merit appointment to the faculty, it may benefit the university to allocate a temporary or permanent appointment to accommodate a dual career recruitment or retention. The following guidelines address this latter instance:

1. Allocation of a position, either temporary or permanent, for a dual career partner should address demonstrated institutional and/or departmental needs and goals. Given limited funding, priority will be given to individuals with outstanding faculty credentials where the primary candidate is being recruited for a tenure-track faculty or senior administrative position.
2. There must be an appropriate fit between the qualifications of the individual and the available or proposed position.
3. Following an appropriate interview and evaluation process, an offer of employment to the partner shall be extended only if there is strong support on the part of the department where the position is to be located.
4. University search procedures allow an exemption to search for a dual career appointment to a faculty position. Requests for an exemption to a search are approved by the provost and president. Please note that searches cannot be waived for staff positions. Consult with Human Resources for procedural advice concerning staff positions.

Implementation Procedures for Department Heads:

1. **Informing Candidates:** There is a natural tension between the hiring department's need to know as soon as possible about a dual career hire and the candidate's possible reluctance in revealing that information if they believe that it might negatively affect their consideration. There are several strategies departments can use to encourage candidates to let them know of their needs earlier in the recruitment process. Creating a link to the dual career guidelines and the Family Work/Life Resource Center on the recruitment website or in the posted position ad is one strategy. Distributing an information sheet or brochure may also be useful; share such information with all candidates when they are invited to interview. Arrange a meeting with all interviewing candidates with the college liaison; the college liaisons are prepared to discuss dual career opportunities. Remember that it is illegal to ask a candidate directly about whether they are part of a dual career couple.

It is important to proceed with the interview and offer process to the primary candidate even if the possibility of an appointment for the partner is not yet clear or the individual is not suited to

a position at the university. Do not discriminate against a candidate because of a dual career situation – the decision to accept or reject an offer should be made by the candidate.

2. **Identifying Possibilities for Appointment:** The primary candidate lets the hiring department head know about the need for dual career consideration and supplies information regarding the partner's educational background, experience, and employment history. Suggestions for appropriate placements should be solicited from the candidate and/or partner. The primary department head identifies and investigates the best possibilities for employment in consultation with the Provost's Office, if needed. The relevant deans should also be kept apprised of any discussions.

In cases where staff positions are appropriate and of interest to the individual, referral should be made to Human Resources to review both opportunities and strategies for pursuing staff positions. Other options are described below.

3. **Target Unit Evaluates and Interviews the Potential Candidate:** The target unit initiates an evaluation process, including a review of a vita/resume and references of the individual, and conducts an interview with the potential candidate. If there is an appropriate personnel or standing search committee in the department, this committee would normally be involved, as would other faculty members depending on the nature of the proposed position. The candidate's qualifications should be evaluated using criteria appropriate to the proposed role and credentials required in the field. For example, it may be appropriate to consider whether the candidate might have been on a short list had the opening been advertised.

Standard review and appointment procedures should be used when appropriate and the level of review should be consistent with that accorded similar positions and types of appointments. For example, if the appointment involves a rank above assistant professor or includes tenure, then the appropriate departmental committee must approve such an appointment.

4. **Cases where there is an Existing Position or Funding Available in the Receiving Department and/or College:** Receiving departments (and/or colleges) that have available funds and/or positions and are prepared to make an offer for a dual career partner may develop an appropriate job description (if not already available) and proposed offer and then seek an exemption to search, using the process in place by the Office of Equity and Access in Human Resources. The search exemption includes a letter of explanation including a brief statement of how the proposed appointment benefits the receiving department and/or college and documenting the process used to review and evaluate the candidate. Attach the candidate's vita. The exemption request must be approved by the department head, relevant dean or senior manager, the provost, president, and the Office of Equity and Access. The formal offer may not be made until approval has been granted.
5. **Cases where a New Position Must be Allocated and Shared Funding Arranged:** In cases where the receiving department/college does not already have a position and/or adequate funds available to support the proposed appointment, the expectation is that the hiring and receiving departments (and colleges) and the provost may share in funding the position on a transitional basis. After the approval of the proposal, the provost typically commits bridge funding for up to three years at one-third salary (in limited cases, two years at half salary), with the remainder shared by the primary hiring and receiving departments or respective colleges. Permanent

funding, in the case of a hard-funded appointment, is the responsibility of the hiring department and/or college at the end of the transition period. Bridge funding available from the provost is limited and may not be available to support all requests. Typically the highest priority would be to support a faculty position in response to a tenure-track or tenured faculty hire or senior administrative hire. If the receiving department accepts bridge funding from the provost, the expectation is that the dual career appointment continues beyond the bridge period if the performance and accomplishments of the individual warrant continuation.

Departments requesting funding assistance should submit a written proposal through the responsible dean to the Provost's Office. The following information is needed to evaluate the request:

- An explanation of the situation;
 - An explanation of how the university will benefit from the appointment and how the proposed appointment fits within the priorities of the receiving department and/or college;
 - The vita of the individual under consideration;
 - The proposed salary, type of appointment, and job description;
 - A statement indicating the source and amount of funds from the participating units, and the amount requested for bridge funding from the provost, and the time period involved in the transition; and
 - Information about potential future funding. (The goal is to move employees from temporary funds to permanent funds whenever feasible and appropriate.)
6. **Make an Employment Offer:** Upon approval by the provost, president, and the Office for Equity and Access, the receiving department head is authorized to make the offer to the dual career partner using the standard Terms of Faculty Offer detailing the nature and conditions of the appointment. Expectations should be stated very clearly so that any special conditions are fully documented for the record. Every effort should be made to welcome the new faculty member in the receiving department and help make him or her become a full participating member of the faculty. Helping the individual succeed will serve both the department and employee, and help accomplish the primary goal of the dual career-hiring program, which is to recruit and retain talented faculty members.

Dual Career Issues Associated with Retention:

Retention of talented individuals currently on the faculty can also be affected by employment opportunities for their partners. In the case where there is a determination that a dual career appointment is critical to retaining the faculty member, and it is in the university's interest to try to respond to this need, the process described above provides general guidance for how to proceed.

Options Other than Tenure-Track Appointments:

Affiliated Research Faculty (see section 6.7, Faculty Handbook): Status as an unpaid Affiliated Research Faculty member may allow a fully credentialed person to pursue grants and contracts as a member of the Virginia Tech faculty. The host department may provide lab or office space, or other resources as available, to support the individual's efforts to obtain sponsored funding or to continue his or her research. The request to establish an affiliated research faculty appointment is handled on a P-85 form approved by the host department, college, and Office of the Vice President for Research. With the

appropriate credentials and research faculty rank, the individual may serve as PI on a grant with permission of the department.

Research Faculty Appointments (see section 6.5, Faculty Handbook): Research faculty appointments are often an appropriate way to provide employment opportunities for well qualified academic partners. Full or partial bridge funding over several years can be provided with the expectation that the individual develop a viable research program and receive sponsored grants or contracts that cover salary and benefits beginning at a specified point in time. If the individual fills the need on an existing grant or contract, the procedure for hiring is similar to that described above – a position description should be developed, credentials evaluated, the individual interviewed, and a request made for an exemption to search. The Office of the Vice President for Research is also involved in approval of such requests.

Other Restricted Appointments: Individuals may fill important institutional or departmental needs that are not yet defined or funded as permanent positions. These can be full or part-time, instructional or administrative.

Enrollment in Graduate School: It is relatively common that a spouse or partner may prefer enrollment in a Virginia Tech graduate program rather than full-time employment. Such potential students must be admitted through usual departmental procedures and should be considered for whatever departmental funding is offered to all students. Where such funding is not available, the primary department may consider paying for a full or partial assistantship in the receiving department in order to facilitate the enrollment and support of the partner of the primary recruit.

The Provost's Office has partnered with Human Resources to fund the position of Dual Career Program Manager, which is intended to assist with employment outside of Virginia Tech. The Dual Career Program Manager offers job search assistance for up to one year for spouses or partners of newly recruited faculty or administrators. Departments may also refer current faculty members where retention is a concern due to spouse employment issues. The Program Manager can provide general information on employment in the region, help identify appropriate employers and make connections with key contacts, critique resumes, cover letters and other documents for the client, help prepare the client for interviewing; serve as a liaison between client and hiring managers and act as a sounding board for job seekers in need of encouragement, support or focus. The program offers a variety of services:

- General information on employment in the region
- Assistance to the client by reviewing resumes, cover letters or other documents related to the job search process
- Networking
- Job coaching or career exploration
- Interviewing skills
- Job search strategy

For more information, please review HR's website at www.hr.vt.edu/employment/dualcareers.

Questions? Please contact Jack Finney, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, at finney@vt.edu.