

## **Visiting Assistant Professor (VAP) Hiring Guidelines**

These guidelines are intended to ensure that Bucknell has consistent and high standards for recruiting talented Visiting Faculty needed to deliver curricular content at Bucknell. The VAP Hiring Guidelines apply to Departments and Programs in all of Bucknell colleges.

VAPs are typically hired for one semester or one academic year; however, in limited circumstances, the appropriate Dean's office may approve a Department/Program's request (in consultation with the Provost's office) to hire a VAP into a multi-year position.

### **Requesting a VAP Position**

Departments/Programs must request VAP positions or the reappointment of a current VAP from the Provost's office by following the process outlined below.

- November - Requests for a new VAP (or extension of a previously-approved position) are made by the Dean's office (on behalf of Departments/Programs) to the Provost's office as a part of the faculty replacement process. Decisions about VAP position approvals are made by the Provost's office and based on individual department/program needs, needs across all Colleges, and available resources. Note: Approval of extensions are still subject to the search provisions outlined below.
- December/January - The appropriate Dean's office notifies Departments/Programs regarding the disposition of VAP requests.

The above timeline does not include requests made off cycle for unique circumstances. Such requests should be presented to the Dean's office and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Once the Departments/Programs are notified of position approval, the Search Chair should reach out to their assigned HR [Recruitment Consultant](#) to begin the search process (or hiring process when a search is not required).

### **To Search or Not Search?**

One-semester VAPs - One semester VAPs generally teach 3 courses.

When a VAP position has been approved for a one-semester hire, the Department is not required to conduct a search, but must still interview the identified candidate(s) and conduct a review of teaching performance and other appropriate evaluative materials (i.e. recommendation letters, teaching evaluations, etc.) prior to extending an offer. If a search is utilized, the Department must follow the processes outlined in the Conducting a Search section below.

If the Department subsequently receives approval to extend a previously approved one-semester position, the Department must undertake a search as described below, rather than simply extending the appointment of the VAP hired without a search. The previously-hired one-semester VAP may apply for

the position. In extreme cases where unique circumstances may make a search difficult (for example, a Fall semester VAP being extended into the Spring semester), the Department/Program should make a request to the Dean's office and Human Resources for an exception to this process.

One-year or multi-year VAPs - When hiring a VAP for one academic year or into a multi-year appointment, a search must be conducted following the process outlined in the Conducting a Search section below. An exception to this rule would be if an individual is reappointed and originally identified through a search process. In this case, a review of teaching performance and other appropriate evaluative materials (i.e. recommendation letters, teaching evaluations, etc.) should be completed before an offer is extended.

Adjuncts/Lecturers - Typically, searches are not conducted for an Adjunct Instructor or Adjunct Lecturer. If a search process is utilized, the process outlined in the Conducting a Search section below must be followed.

## **Conducting a Search**

VAP searches should be consistent with the procedures for tenure-track searches as set forth in the [Faculty Hiring Guide](#), with modifications outlined below.

- Smaller Search Committee: Search committees for VAP positions must have no fewer than three members. An outside member is not required, but a diversity advocate should be included.
- Condensed Timelines: Search committees can begin reviewing applications two weeks after the position has been posted, rather than waiting the standard 30+ days. Search committees can begin interviews after this time, scheduled at their discretion. Applicants do not need to be kept at the same step in the evaluation process (i.e. some can be in the process of being evaluated while others are being phone screened, etc.).
- On-Campus Interviews: Departments should bring at least one more applicant than the number of positions open to campus for an interview, which means the search committee may conduct fewer initial interviews (via telephone/video or at a conference) than a tenure-track search. (For example, if the department is hiring two VAPs in the same discipline, at least three candidates should be interviewed on campus, likely interviewing five or six by phone/video.)
  - Although the Department can request that the Provost's office interview the candidates on campus, such interviews are not required. The role of the Dean's Office with respect to interviewing candidates varies by College.
  - Prior to the on-campus interview, the Dean's office and/or Department Chair may provide salary information to the candidates (along with the standard information that highlights the benefits of Bucknell and the local area). Current salary figures are obtained from the appropriate College's Associate Dean of Faculty. Because compensation for VAPs is fixed within a narrow band, the Department Chair may only provide the base salary figure. *Note: Salaries and course load are non-negotiable. The pay is set in advance. The standard teaching load is six courses per year. Additional adjustments may be warranted based on Provost guidelines.*

- Once interviews are complete, the Department Chair confirms the top candidate and appropriate offer rate with the Dean's office. The individual who actually extends the verbal offer varies by College. If the offer is accepted, the Dean's office will prepare necessary offer documents in conjunction with the Provost's office.
- Stop-and-go searches, where committees review/interview just one candidate at a time, with the intention of appointing someone without additional interviews, are not permitted.

### **Additional Information**

1. As noted in the [Faculty Handbook](#), the designation of 'visiting' is restricted to a member of the staff who renders full-time instruction to the University and whose academic qualifications are the same as those which would warrant a provisional appointment to the Faculty were an appropriate position available. A visiting appointment signals that the appointment is of a specified duration; the term of reappointment normally shall be one year, and the total of all full-time continuous appointments for an individual may not exceed five years (ten semesters).

2. As with all new faculty and staff, offers to incoming VAPs are contingent upon the successful completion of background checks in accordance with Bucknell University policy. At a minimum, all employees are required to complete an FBI Federal criminal history check conducted upon the submission of fingerprints. Additional checks may include:

- Pennsylvania State Police ("PSP") criminal history check;
- DHS check confirming whether the individual is named in the statewide database as the alleged perpetrator in a pending child abuse investigation or as the perpetrator of a founded or indicated report of such abuse;
- employment and education verification;
- motor vehicle driving history;
- other checks that may be required for certain positions.