

CHSS Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

George Mason University is now the most diverse public university in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Mason's recent reclassification as a Tier-1 research university creates opportunities to recruit top postdoctoral researchers and fellows to support the research activity of our faculty and the curricula of our academic programs. The College of Humanities and Social Science (CHSS) is committed to offering state-of-the art opportunities in postgraduate education to support our faculty and our majority-minority student body.

The overarching goal of the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PFP) in CHSS is to provide enhanced professional development and research training support to postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows in CHSS. The learner-centered program offers training, mentoring, and guidance to prepare postdoctoral fellows for careers in and beyond the academy. When appropriate, this program will also seek to recruit and support postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows who contribute to issues related to diversity and inequality within their respective disciplines or reflect the student body in a way that will enhance a department/programs ability to mentor diverse students.

Postdoctoral Fellow Job Description and Responsibilities

Postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows are expected to fulfill the following duties and responsibilities:

- Continue training in their specialty area under the supervision of a more senior faculty member ("Faculty Research Mentor")
- Participate in the Postdoctoral Research and Teaching Fellows Workshop Series
- Conduct research, scholarship, and creative activities
- Submit the results of their research for publication
- Write and submit grant proposals as appropriate

Postdoctoral teaching fellows are also required to teach 2 courses per semester. Postdoctoral researchers do not have standardized teaching responsibilities but are encouraged to build a teaching portfolio.

To be eligible for the postdoctoral fellows position, applicants must have received their terminal degree within the last 5 years.

Conditions of Appointment

Postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows receive the benefits of employment which are ordinarily provided to 12-month term faculty members, including annual leave and sick leave accrued at the same rate as is accrued by 12-month term faculty members. However, postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows are not faculty members and are not governed by the Faculty Handbook.

Postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows are not permitted to engage in outside consulting.

Postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows are assigned to work in local academic units, subject to the approval of the dean or director.

Appointments are generally made in one-year renewable terms, up to a maximum of three years.

Postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows are subject to all University policies applicable to all employees, including but not limited to Policy 4001, Conflicts of Interest.

Evaluation Process

Postdoctoral researchers and teaching fellows will undergo an annual evaluation conducted by the faculty member coordinating the workshop series for CHSS postdoctoral fellows, with input from the fellows' research, teaching, and professional development mentors and the department chair or director.

Postdoctoral Fellows Workshop Series

The Postdoctoral Fellows Workshop Series will consist of bi-monthly 2-3 hour meetings. Workshop topics will be determined in consultation with the current cohort of postdoctoral scholars, but might include:

- Exploring Career Preferences and Pathways
- Leadership in Higher Education and Beyond
- Responsible Conduct of Research
- Scholarly Writing, Work-life Balance, and Well-being
- Grant writing
- Sharing Your Research with the Public
- Collaborations and Multidisciplinary/Transdisciplinary Work
- Student Engagement and Learning Styles
- Course design, Assessment, and Classroom Management
- Dossier Development: Research and Diversity Statements, Cover letters, CV writing
- Professional Branding and Networking
- Job Interviewing
- Mock Job Interviews

Mentorship

The faculty member coordinating the Postdoctoral Fellows Workshop Series will also facilitate a structured mentoring programs, meeting regularly with each postdoctoral fellow and communicating with each fellow's team of mentors to ensure integrity of the program.

Mentoring plan. Aligned with the recommendations by The National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN), the Postdoctoral Faculty Fellow will create a mentoring plan. NRMN identified themes that are evidence-based practices for mentoring postdoctoral scholars,

graduate students, and early career faculty. NRMN's mentoring model emphasizes "the benefits and challenges of diversity, inclusivity, and culture within mentoring relationships," with the goal of enhancing the diversity of the research workforce. With this in mind, a mentoring plan must include a culturally aware mentoring philosophy and address how the mentoring relationship will:

- Enhance Work-Life Balance
- Maintain Effective Communication
- Promote Mentee Research Self-Efficacy
- Promote Professional Development
- Teach Disciplinary Knowledge

The Mentoring Plan is required and will articulate who will serve as research, teaching, professional development mentors, how often the mentors will meet with the postdoctoral fellow, and an outline of required topics. When appropriate, attention will be paid to facilitating mentors that support the recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented scholars and/or scholars who contribute to issues related to diversity and inequality within their respective disciplines.

Research Mentor. Primary mentorship on research will come from the Faculty Research Mentor who will typically be from the postdoctoral fellow's home department. The Research Mentor will meet with the postdoctoral fellow regularly and provide guidance on research activities.

Teaching Mentor. Primary mentorship on teaching will come from a Faculty Teaching Mentor who will be identified based on the teaching responsibilities of the postdoctoral fellow. The Teaching Mentor will meet with the postdoctoral fellow, conduct teaching observations, and provide guidance on teaching practices.

Professional Development Mentor. In addition, each Postdoctoral Fellow will have at least one Professional Development Mentor, who will be a senior faculty member. Typically, this mentor will be from outside the postdoctoral fellow's home department. The mentor will meet with the postdoctoral fellow monthly to discuss issues related to professional development, including (but not limited to) common considerations, challenges, and opportunities for faculty members or individuals in other professions. In addition, the department chair will meet with the postdoctoral fellow once per semester to track progress and provide guidance. Supplementary mentorship may be available from additional collaborators in other departments and/or at other institutions/organizations. Such mentorship will be arranged through the Postdoctoral Faculty Fellow for the program.

Professional Development Funds

Postdoctoral researchers will have access to \$2,000/year in professional development funds to attend conferences or pursue external opportunities for skill development. Additional research-related resources may be available from home departments.

Recruitment Plans

Consistent with Mason values, Faculty Mentors are strongly encouraged to advertise to recruit Postdoctoral candidates who represent groups traditionally underrepresented in their domains and/or scholars who contribute to issues related to diversity and inequality within their respective disciplines.

Postdoctoral fellows will be hired with a competitive search. The competitive search process should be similar to tenure-track hires with on-campus interviews. All search processes must adhere to university policies and include diversity plans per CHSS hiring procedures.

Per university policy, academic units must submit the following information in the Faculty Hiring Proposal System:

- A position description describing the duties and responsibilities of the position, which must be consistent with this policy;
- The name of the department or center and the Faculty Mentor who will be directing the individual;
- Confirmation that sufficient funding is available to fund the position through externally sponsored funds or other sources;
- The curriculum vitae of the proposed candidate; and
- A description of how the candidate was identified, whether by competitive search or not, and why the particular recruitment mechanism was selected.