



HIRING DUAL CAREER COUPLES: Tip Sheet

INTRODUCTION

The recruitment and retention of world-class faculty often depends upon support for the accompanying spouse/partner of the recruited individuals. MSU and the Provost's Office welcome and encourage spousal/partner hires to help recruit world-class faculty. Thus, MSU has created a dual career practice that pertains to the hiring of individuals into tenure system and executive management positions. This includes guidelines around exploring spousal/partner hiring opportunities and if hired, salary support. In accordance with university [policy](#), MSU regards spousal/partner hires as a legitimate exception to the normal practice of competitive recruitment. Candidates being considered for spousal/partner hire must nevertheless meet the qualifications and standards for the position.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The approval of the Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (FASA) **is required** if the unit is requesting **centrally funded money** for a spousal/partner hire.

The chairperson/director or dean should work proactively and collaboratively to explore spousal/partner opportunities across the institution.

It is imperative that the unit plans for the success and sustainability of the spouse/partner hire after the initial three-year central funding end date.

PROCESS/STEPS

- 1 If a spouse/partner has qualifications for an academic position at MSU, the dean and chairperson/school director should work collaboratively and proactively to explore spousal/partner opportunities across the institution. Deans and chairpersons/school directors should work under the principles of collaboration, reciprocity, and mutuality.
- 2 If a placement has been made, the hiring unit must be willing to work through the complexities of such appointments. Items to explore and discuss are the following:
 - **Funding.** In cases **where a position does not already exist** within MSU, typically, the salary for the spouse/partner will be shared equally (i.e., 1/3 split) for the first three years by:
 - the Provost's Office,
 - the department/school of the original candidate, and
 - the hiring unit of the spouse/partner

The department/school of the original candidate and the hiring unit of the spouse/partner *may* come to an arrangement in which Provost Office funding is not needed to support the position.

Vacant Positions: The above cost-sharing arrangement is not available for vacant positions as departmental/school/unit funds are already available in these cases.

- **Resources.** Leaders in both units should explore, discuss, and ensure suitable and appropriate resources are available for the hired spouse/partner (e.g., supplies, staff support, computers and related IT support, professional development, travel, contract and grant support)
- **Plans for position sustainability.** Unit should discuss expectations and assumptions about the sustainability of the position beyond the initial three-year period. Funding from the Provost office does not extend past the three-year period. Deans and chairpersons/school directors need to consider their long-term budgets and how the position will be budgeted as they review these positions.

Additionally:

- Units are highly encouraged to document the arrangement in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all impacted units signing the agreement.
- Units should assess and address any potential conflict-of-interest situations due to the spousal/partner arrangement. If the spouse/partner are to be employed in the same unit/MAU, plans for navigating any conflict of interest within the unit/MAU should be developed and the [Conflict-of-Interest-Form](#) completed.
- FASA liaisons are available to consult around potential conflict of interest situations and to assist in drafting/reviewing plans for mitigating potential conflicts of interest.

- 3 Requesting central funding.** If the arrangement requires centrally funded financial support, the dean should send a request to the FASA liaison (copying the Office of the Provost Budget and Personnel Officer) for review and approval with a brief explanation of the arrangement that includes:
- the name of the original faculty candidate and the position and department/school/unit for which they have been offered a position
 - the spouse/partner’s credentials and CV
 - the position and hiring unit for which the spouse/partner is being considered
 - the proposed spouse/partner salary amount
 - the proposed financial arrangement

Once FASA has reviewed the request, they will respond via email to the Office of the Dean with a determination.

- 4 Offers of appointment.** An offer of appointment made to the spouse/partner is contingent upon acceptance of the offer made to the original faculty candidate. The offer must provide clear expectations around the responsibilities of the position, length of appointment, what will happen after the appointment has ended, and that reappointment beyond the end date (if applicable) is subject to available funds, future needs of the unit, and performance.

- 5 For the HR Unit Administrator.** Once funding is secured, the unit is responsible for requesting an **exception to posting** by submitting the posting exception form via EBS to create the position to hire the spouse/partner. Attach documentation of the approval from FASA of any central funding.

Once submitted, the exception form routes to FASA, the Office for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, and to any academic unit and MAU approvers.

It is important to note that the **hire form must be completed** after the exception form is approved. Once the exception form is fully approved, the unit utilizes the position number from the exception request to complete the EBS Hire form for the spouse/partner official hire in our SAP payroll system. The Hire form routes to Human Resources Academic Operations for review and approval. The unit then initiates hiring paperwork and processes including the criminal background check, Conflict of Interest Form (if applicable), etc.

RESOURCES

- [Conflict-of-Interest-Form](#)
- [Conflict-of-Interest-Policy](#)
- [Michigan Higher Education Recruitment Consortium \(HERC\)](#)
- [MSU WorkLife Office](#)

RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE WITH SPOUSE/PARTNER ARRANGEMENTS

Some universities have a dual career coordinator who can assist the spouse/partner with employment opportunities. At this time, Michigan State University does not have such a position. The table below outlines the individuals and offices who can assist in identifying positions based on the type of position being sought by the spouse/partner.

The spouse/partner is interested in...	Individuals/offices who can assist in identifying positions...
1. Faculty and academic staff positions within MSU. This can include, but is not limited to, the following categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. tenure system faculty b. fixed term faculty and academic staff (e.g., instructional and/or research) c. academic specialists (e.g., advising, curriculum development, teaching, research, outreach) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Dean of the initial candidate • Office for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (FASA) FASaffairs@msu.edu
2. Administrative positions within MSU. This includes the following categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. non-academic staff positions b. executive management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Dean of the initial candidate • Office for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (FASA) FASaffairs@msu.edu • Human Resources (517-353-4434) or by email at SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu
3. Positions outside of Michigan State University	The spouse/partner can be referred for consultation to the Director of the Michigan Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC), Maranda Holtsclaw (mholtscl@msu.edu) who may be able to provide helpful resources in exploring opportunities outside of MSU.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What options are available for a spouse/partner who is not seeking a faculty or academic staff position?

Unfortunately, there are limited options for assistance with non-faculty/academic positions. The spouse/partner is encouraged to apply to open positions that align with their qualifications on the Careers website. It should be noted that the spouse/partner will not be given preferential treatment over other candidates in a competitive search.

There may be more flexibility/opportunity if the spouse/partner has research assistant/technician qualifications. In this case, the dean should reach out to various colleges to inquire on whether any opportunities exist.

For external positions, the spouse/partner can be referred for consultation to the Director HERC who may be able to provide resources helpful in exploring opportunities outside of MSU. The Director of the Michigan Higher Education Recruitment Consortium, Maranda Holtsclaw may be contacted at mholtscl@msu.edu.

2. What if the spouse/partner's employing unit doesn't have funding after the initial three-year funding arrangement? Can centrally funded money be requested again?

No. The Provost's Office provides approval for one-time financial support; funds will not be continued after the initial three-year commitment. It is imperative that the unit plans for the success and sustainability of the spouse/partner hire after the initial three-year central funding end date.

3. Can the university assist in securing admission into a degree program for a spouse/partner?

No. Admission decisions are the responsibility of the degree program.