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◆ Visas

J-1: It takes 2-3 months to process.

H1B: It takes at least 6-7 months to start the process.

* The premium fee is temporarily suspended.

On Friday, March 20, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced the temporary suspension of premium processing for all I-129 (H-1B) petitions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This means it will take more time to issue H-1B visas.

◆ Research Renewals

Please use updated templates when renewing contracts.

For those not being renewed, please initiate a Faculty Separation Form and upload the resignation letter. If they are being let go due to lack of funding, an email from the supervisor to the researcher informing them of the termination and indicating the last day of work and a reason for the termination should be uploaded.

● Postdoc Renewals

A Postdoc may be terminated at any time without cause, for reasons including but not limited to reduced availability of funds or changes in the nature and scope of work, upon 90 days written notice. Such terminations must be approved by the local academic unit's dean or director.

REMINDER

Please keep track of all of your faculty renewals and visa deadlines. The unit is responsible for tracking renewals and taking the appropriate action in advance of deadlines.

Tait sent some reminder emails regarding renewals (i.e. research faculty, research staff, postdocs) however some might have been missed. Please don't wait for a reminder email to prompt you to take action.

◆ Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL)

The Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) has granted an increase in total hours of Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL), increasing the total hours that can be used **from 80 hours to up to 160 hours***. This additional leave is intended to serve as a stop-gap measure until the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) goes into effect. Additional information is available in our [PHEL Guidelines](#).

◆ Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) will take effect on April 1, 2020, which will provide up to 80 hours of paid emergency leave at full salary and provides additional reduced paid leave. This will result in a new category of Family & Medical Leave (FML) for employees who must care for their children as a result of the closure of schools/daycare.

◆ D2 News

Every D2 Digest issue, as well as links to important information and resources from Mason, are posted on our [COS HR website!](#)

Missed the last D2 Digest? [Read it here!](#)

upcoming events >>>

◆ Weekly D2 Group Check-In Call

Every Tuesday 11 a.m.– 12 noon
[WebEx Meeting Link](#)
Meeting number: 615 325 797
Meeting password: COShr2020
Join by phone: 202-860-2110



Faculty Hiring Proposal Workflow

Updates to the RTS System

The Provost Office recently made changes in the Faculty Hiring Proposal Workflow (RTS system). Below is a list of all changes made:

- **Task List Page changes: there is a new format!**
 - * The former column titled “Additional Info” is now broken down into columns. Your page might be slightly different than the example below due to the differences in access.
 - * The “Type” category now has abbreviations, allowing for the separation and addition of new categories as requested.
 - * The former category of “Create Date” has now been updated to “Effective Date”.

Faculty Hiring

Requester	Type	Position #	Effective Date	Name	G#	Title	Hiring Unit	Status
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- **Search changes:**
 - * On the Previous Activity Tab, there had been issues with the search function. That has now been corrected.
- **Faculty Hiring Proposal form changes:**
 - * In the “This Hiring Action Is” section: if you select ‘Result of Search’ via eWork, you now need to add the recruitment number in a required box. The number is located on the posting you are preparing to upload. **This was requested by HR.*
 - * In the “Other Terms” section: the fund number is no longer required on the OPS statement. If this is left blank, the statement will print without leaving a blank spot.
 - * A checkbox is available if you want to add the word “annualized” to the contract. This is most often used when someone is hired for a shorter time period.
 - * The top of the Faculty Hiring Proposal now has a statement with who to contact if you are having issues with the system. Typical issues include:
 - a system glitch,
 - updates to the server, or
 - most commonly, user error. This includes not filling in all required fields, not submitting, etc.

If you have checked for user error, then before reaching out for help sign off, wait 15-30 minutes, then sign back into the system. That usually solves the server issue.
- **Counter-Offer Button:**
 - * Candidates often requested contract changes after the offer has been sent. There is now a Counter-Offer Button which you can select. This will move the packet back to the initiator stage. Once changes are made, the packet has to proceed through the whole approval process again. **This should only be used for multiple changes.**
 - For small changes (i.e. adjustment of dates, dollar amount changes under \$5,000, etc.), please reach out to provppm@gmu.edu and those changes can be executed without the routing of approvals again.
- **Candidate Checklist format updated:**
 - * The Checklist that is sent with the contract to the candidate has been updated. To see it, you will need to review the pdf that is attached to the email for the candidate.
 - Work is still being done to update the appearance of the checklist accessible on the “Make the Offer” screen. More updates on the way!
- **It has been restored – at the Dean’s Level – you now have the ability to edit the packet! No more having to send it back to the initiator for changes!**

The Provost office will be updating the instruction manual in the coming weeks. If you have any issues or would like to make a recommendation for additional changes or enhancements in the future, please send an email to the Provost office at provppm@gmu.edu.

*****Please share this information with all initiators in your unit.*****

STAY INFORMED

[New Temporary Process for Onboarding and Completing Section 2 of the Form I-9](#)

Now that Mason is encouraging all eligible faculty and staff to telework and the HR & Payroll office is fully teleworking, the university implemented a new temporary process for onboarding and completing Section 2 of the I-9 Form. [Read more here!](#)

[Faculty Overload Deadline - Summer 2020](#)

All overload requests for Summer Semester 2020 should be submitted two weeks prior to the start of the semester by COB Monday, 5/18/2020. The [Summer 2020 Calendar](#) was adjusted in response to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. First day of class will be June 1st. [Click here for more details.](#)

[Mason’s COVID-19 Updates](#)

The university is posting links to all of their recent communication at the bottom of the page. There are also helpful sections on business and research continuity guidelines, Mason service operations, and resources to support student and employee well-being.

Is there exciting news you want to share with the group?
Is there someone you wish to thank or recognize?
[Let us know so they can be featured in D2 Kudos!](#)