

Applying for Tenure-Track Faculty Positions: Tips for the Application and Interview Processes

At all phases of the process, demonstrating your understanding of your field, professional duties, and Santa Rosa Junior College will make your application and interview performance stronger. We recommend that you get to know SRJC by exploring our website, watching SRJC YouTube videos, and visiting our campuses and sites if possible.

The States of the Screening and Interviewing Process

1. **Committee screening.** The members of the screening and interviewing committee read and review all application materials and score each application according to categories on a rubric which the committee develops prior to viewing any applications. The scoring categories must be logically relevant to the job announcement.
2. **Committee interviews.** The screening and interviewing committee will develop a set of questions that are based on the job announcement and that will be asked of every candidate. Each committee member scores each interviewee's response to each question and records those scores on a rubric. The scored rubrics provide the basis for committee deliberation in determining the candidates who will be forwarded to the semi-finalist interviews.

Screening and interviewing committees forward recommended candidates to the appropriate Vice President(s) and/or Executive Dean.

3. **Semi-finalist interviews.** This interview includes the Vice President of Academic Affairs; the Vice President of Student Services, if the position is in Counseling or Disability Resources; the Executive Dean of SRJC Petaluma, if the position is assigned to the Petaluma Campus; and perhaps the faculty chair of the screening and interviewing committee. Interviews at this stage will focus on the alignment between College-wide priorities and candidates' experiences, abilities, and professional interests.
4. **Finalist interviews.** The College President meets with and interviews the candidates whom the Vice President(s) forward as the finalists.

The finalist interview is with the College President and will likely be a 1:1 interview. Finalists should come prepared for an interview that addresses the directions that the College is moving in, statewide and national trends in education, and the skills and vision that you have to offer the College and the larger community.

5. Human Resources makes formal offers, and the Board of Trustees approves all hires.

Application Materials

Written documents in support of your application—for example, a cover letter, curriculum vitae, or statement of philosophy—should do two important things: one, reflect you so that the screening committee can get a sense of you as a faculty member; and two, respond to the specifics in the job announcement. When the screening committee creates the rubric for scoring applications, the criteria they identify must be stated in and relevant to the job announcement.

Tips for application materials:

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- Address the job description with as much specificity as possible. Study the JA--highlight and annotate it--so that your application materials can focus on what the department and College say they're looking for in a new colleague.
- Address the preferred qualifications with as much specificity as possible.
- Fit your strengths into the job description and preferred qualifications.
- Describe specific experiences that highlight your strengths – do not just rely on statements of principle. Such statements can appear empty without specific experiences to back them up. Specifics distinguish you from other candidates.
- Follow all instructions in the job posting.
- Provide everything that is requested. If the search committee is looking for something, assume it is important. Note that Human Resources will forward only complete applications to the screening and interviewing committee.
- Provide only what is requested. If you provide materials beyond what is requested in the job announcement, Human Resources will not forward that material to the screening and interviewing committee.
- Be sure to edit your documents to make sure there are no spelling, grammatical, or logical errors. Pay attention to the organization and flow of each essay.

Equivalency

If you do not meet the Minimum Qualifications for your discipline exactly as stated in the [Chancellor's Office Disciplines Handbook](#), be sure to follow the steps for applying for equivalency and include your equivalency application with your overall application. HR will not determine on its own that an applicant should apply / should have applied for equivalency. Equivalency applications are reviewed by an independent committee, and during hiring season their plate is very full, so the more you can do to provide clear documentation that supports your claim to equivalency, the better.

There is information about equivalency on the HR website (see their "[How to Apply and Qualify](#)" page). You will also find MQ and equivalency resources on the [Academic Senate for California Community Colleges website](#). You may also find [this PowerPoint](#) helpful in providing an overview of equivalency.

Preparing for Interviews

Anticipate questions that the committee is likely to ask.

- Interview questions must be relevant to the job announcement, so identify important focuses on the job announcement that could be the basis of interview questions.
- Talk with colleagues who have recently applied for contract faculty positions in the CCC system, and ask them about interview questions.
- Research online.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion will likely be a part of the interview.

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Plan responses to anticipated questions.

Strong responses integrate concepts and philosophy with specifics.

It will be important for you to think about your course content, teaching philosophy, the College at which you are interviewing, and community college in general so that your thinking about these topics can inform the ideas in your responses.

Write up thoughtful responses that include one or two key points and specific examples. Make sure your responses are flexible and can adapt to different ways that the topic/question can be expressed by the committee.

It will be important to demonstrate that you take issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion seriously and that DEI principles inform your work as a faculty member.

Practice delivering responses to questions. Ask a friend or colleague—or, better yet, a group who can simulate an interview committee—to conduct a mock interview for you so that you can practice answering the anticipated questions. Good mock interviewers will ask follow-up questions and will take notes so that they can give you feedback.

If you will be giving a teaching demonstration, style it however you are most comfortable and in a way that represents how you teach. If the instructions provided for the teaching demonstration are not clear about the audience, contact HR to ask to have this clarified so that you know whether you will be teaching to actual students or to the committee as if they were students, or talking the committee through your lesson as a conversation among colleagues. A straight non-interactive lecture may not be the best approach.

If you are relying on technology for your teaching demonstration, have a backup plan in case something does not work.

During the interview

Arrive a bit early, so that you have a chance to walk in without rushing yourself.

The committee assumes that you are nervous and should make allowances for that, and they will do their best to be collegial and welcoming.

Use notes during the interview if that is helpful. Have pen and paper at hand so that you can take brief notes on key points in the committee's questions or key items that you want to address in your response.

Provide ample detail in each of your responses. A short answer to a question will provide very little information to the committee. They cannot read between the lines and fill in their own thoughts. The candidate should describe specific experiences that address the question. Each answer should occupy a few minutes. Of course, there may be some questions that you want to give more attention to. Those questions are probably more suited to your overall strengths.

Strong responses are structured—for example, a candidate might say, “I would break that down into two areas of development. First, ... ”

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Strong responses make full use of the question so that you can show the committee that you understand how the scope of the teaching or allied services work connects with department service, college service, and professional development.

The committee cannot use anything they know about you from outside the application and interview. Even if you know everyone in the room for years, you should behave as though you are meeting them for the first time. You want them to know how wonderful you are so you must describe aspects of you that you are convinced they already know.

Promote how wonderful you are without coming across as arrogant. You want the committee to get the impression that they will enjoy working with you – that they will want to collaborate with you and that they will learn something from you. You should be viewed as someone who will complement the strengths of the department and the college.

Finally, keep your eye on the clock so that you use a fair amount of time for each question. If you use an excess of time during one part of the interview, you will have less time for later questions, and important contributions will go unsaid, which may affect the score that the committee is able to give you for that question.

Preparing for second round of interviews.

While the interviews with the screening and interviewing committees focus primarily on essential duties of faculty members (teaching, providing allied services), the Vice Presidents have a responsibility to consider candidates' potential contributions to the College as a whole, in addition to candidates' contributes in their departments and disciplines. They may also wish to hear from you regarding state and national concerns, particularly if broader trends have a significant bearing on your discipline.