

# BEST PRACTICES FOR GUEST VISITS

Guidelines that provide recruitment support for  
faculty candidates who bring a guest to campus

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## Introduction

Recent research at Michigan Tech suggests that when a guest accompanies a faculty candidate to their on-campus interview, the candidate is much more likely to accept an offer. When the guest can see the Houghton area and Michigan Tech for themselves, they have more information to help them make a decision about moving to the area. When a couple decides together to accept a position, satisfaction increases and the likelihood for retention is increased.

The provost supports the opportunity for faculty candidates to bring a guest to campus in an effort to increase acceptance of offers, help couples make informed decisions and to increase satisfaction and retention. All tenured, tenure-track, and some Instructional Track Faculty candidates should be given the opportunity to bring a guest.

It is important not only to invite a guest to campus, but to make sure that their visit is a good experience for them. Providing a well-planned, customized itinerary, while allowing sufficient time for free time and exploring on their own will demonstrate our interest in the guest's time while in Houghton.

Most searches consist of three external candidates. Preparing an itinerary for each is important; however, only one candidate is likely to receive an offer. For this reason, you want to plan a welcoming visit for all guests, but not tailor an itinerary so specifically that you create unnecessary work. Avoid planning special meetings for one guest but not others. Make every effort to have all guests treated equally.

Each college is unique, as are the departments within. This document will provide you with ideas and information to help you plan a welcoming itinerary for the guest. The final product is yours to create.

**Note:** When candidates bring a guest, they are the guest of the hiring department. It is important for the hiring department and university as a whole to provide the guest with a great experience. This guide will help you navigate this process.

## Guest versus Partner

The guest is often, but not limited to the candidate's spouse or partner. The term "guest" is used to avoid unintentionally excluding candidates who do not have a partner. If a candidate wants to bring a guest who is not their partner, such as a sibling, it is allowed. An itinerary does not need to be prepared for a guest who would not relocate to Houghton if the candidate were offered a position.

## The Job Announcement

Some candidates may be surprised by an offer to bring a guest. By seeding this idea in your job announcement, your candidates will have time to consider an invitation in advance. A statement such as this can be used:

*Candidates who are selected for on-campus interviews **will be** offered the opportunity to bring a guest with them for their visit.*

It is important to remember, if one candidate is offered the opportunity, **all** candidates in the same search must also be offered the opportunity.

## Initial Contact with the Candidate and Guest

Once the finalists who will be offered on-campus interviews are identified, they are contacted to schedule their visit. This is done by the department chair or his/her designee.

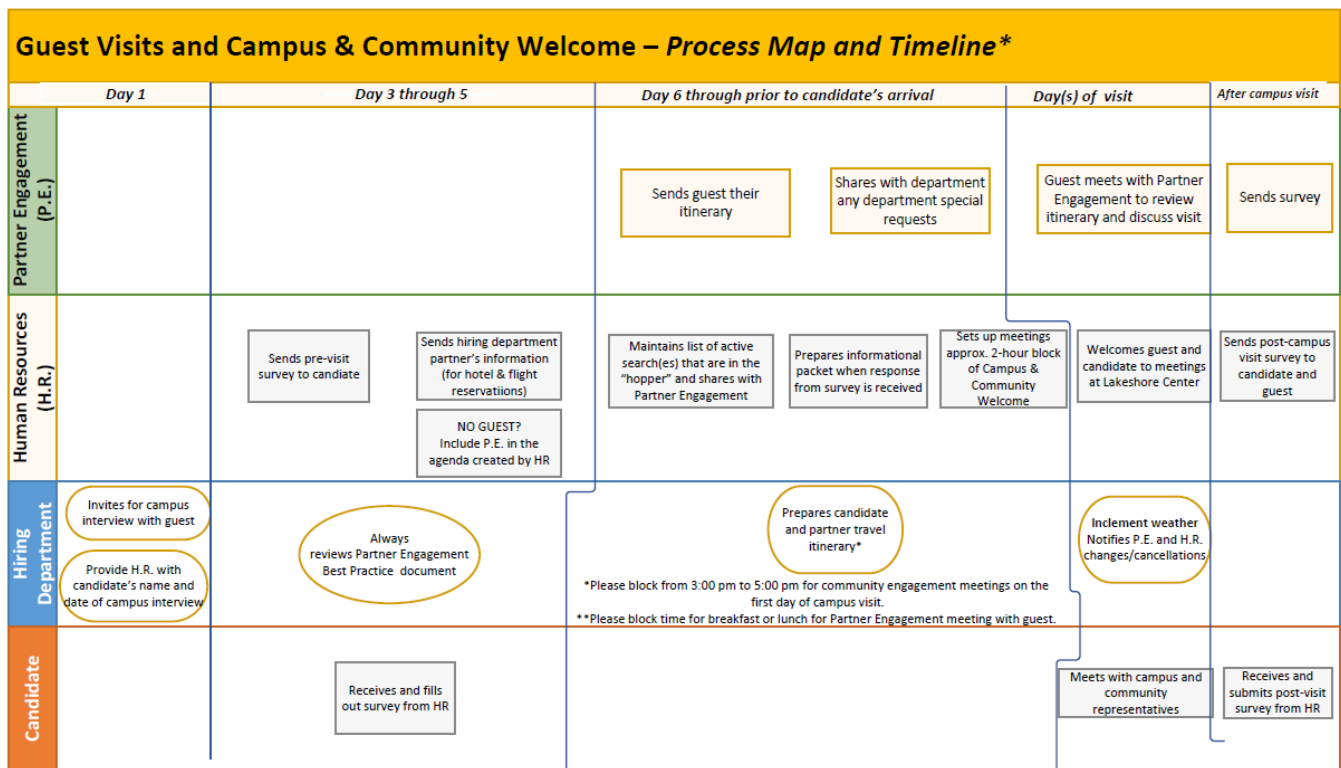
It's at this time, that an offer is made to the candidate to bring a guest. Appendix A includes sample language of how to talk to candidates about bringing a guest.

## Arranging for the Campus and Community Welcome meeting

The names and email addresses of the candidates who will be interviewed on campus are forwarded to Renee Ozanich in Human Resources. From there, a Campus and Community Welcome meeting will be planned for the candidate and their guest. This meeting will cover any additional information the candidate and or guest have asked for through the survey. This includes partner employment

More details about the Campus and Community Welcome are in Appendix 5b: Recruitment Support Meeting.

## Process Map



## Planning a Guest Visit

### 1. Hotel Accommodations

**It is the provost's strong preference that a downtown hotel be used.** The cost may be a little higher, but the candidate and guest **experience is proven to be better.** It is assumed that the candidate and guest will share the same room. A downtown hotel may alleviate some transportation issues for the guest. When they have free time, we want them to be able to walk to campus or to shops and restaurants. The provost's office also offers funding that will help to offset this small increase in cost.

### 2. Guest Itinerary Planning

A separate itinerary is prepared for the visiting guest by Shannon Vairo and Elena Busova. Itineraries take into consideration information that would be of interest to any guest visiting the Houghton area and any information requested from the Human Resources survey. This no longer includes real estate tours. It is up to the department to schedule real estate tours for the **last day** of interviews and to communicate this schedule with partner engagement.

### 3. Assign Guest Contact

A specific person should be assigned as the guest's contact during their visit, usually the departmental coordinator, who can answer questions, and knows what is going on regarding the candidate's interview schedule. This will be added to the guest's itinerary, along with flight and hotel information.

### 4. Office of Partner Engagement

Partner Engagement schedules a meeting with the guest which will be held on the first or second day of the candidate's interview. This usually includes breakfast or lunch (covered by the hiring department, see new tax information for guests). This informal meeting downtown is a good way to start the guest's introduction to the community. During that time, Shannon Vairo will discuss the guest's itinerary, explain that this is an exploration visit for the guest. All information remains confidential and there is no report back or discussion with anyone on the search committee. If the candidate wants to be included in the guest meeting, that meeting will be held in the afternoon on the second (last) day of the candidates' interview.

If the guest asks about a specific interest or meeting, it can be arranged. Shannon or Elena will work with the specific department to add it to the guest's itinerary. Examples might include:

- a. A meeting to see a specific Department
- b. A meeting to tour a campus facility
- c. A meeting with a department member (other than that of the one in which the candidate is interviewing)

Some guests have very specific needs regarding an academic career at Michigan Tech. In these cases, the Office of Partner Engagement explains the resources available and the process that is required to obtain a tenure-track or non-tenure-track position at Michigan Tech. These guests

are encouraged to discuss their needs with the candidate's dean or chair when *they* feel comfortable doing so. Early interaction allows Michigan Tech more time to determine a solution.

**It is vital to express to all candidates and guests that “we (Michigan Tech) do not promise employment for guests/partners, nor do we create positions for guests/partners. We will however do our very best to assist you in finding employment in the local area, whether that be at Michigan Tech, remotely, or in the community.”**

*\*Some guests have friends or colleagues that work on MTU's campus. It is okay for them to use their free time to meet with others. However, it is important to remind those MTU employees that they cannot share partner conversations with anyone on the hiring committee. Please keep all conversations confidential.*

## 5. Transportation –

Consideration of both the candidate and guest's travel around town is important. Therefore, it is helpful to have campus or downtown activities grouped together for ease of transportation. During the guests' first meeting with Partner Engagement, Shannon Vairo will provide information about taxis, walking distances, Lyft, and shuttle bus services.

## 6. Meals

**Guests are not to be invited to meals with the candidate.** Feedback suggests that candidates who do not bring a guest may be perceived to have the advantage of more interview time, due to the increased time during meals for professional discussions. Conversations, when a guest is present, tend to be more social in nature. All candidates must be treated equally.

The Provost prefers (*though not required*) that someone from your department meet and host the guest for a meal, if available. This can be anyone who would like to have a social meal with a guest. (A faculty partner of the department is preferred). The guest should never be put in a situation where they feel they are being evaluated (positively or negatively) for their “fit” on campus or the local area. **See Appendix E regarding discussions during meals.** Please remind candidates and guests to retain receipts for reimbursement purposes.

## 7. Free Time

Open time on a guest's itinerary is always scheduled. They are not here for an interview; they are here for a relaxing look at our campus and community. They may want to explore the waterfront, trails, SDC, or shops downtown. Partner Engagement and Campus and Community Welcome will provide guests with pamphlets, such as the mineral museum, restaurants, the public library, etc. Often, Shannon will take them on a local tour avoiding the real estate side.

## 8. Paying for Guest Travel

Please see Guest Travel Guidelines (Appendix F) for information on reimbursements for guest visits. A guest will have two options for deciding on how to be reimbursed.

Partial support for the additional expense of a guest's travel is available. The first \$500 of guest travel will be covered by the Office of Partner Engagement. Further consideration may be given for guests traveling internationally. Guests must save their receipts and submit them with the candidates at the end of the visit. It is the department's responsibility to submit a budget transfer for each candidate who has a guest. The name of the candidate must be included in the description. The index to charge is A11813.

## 9. Children

Guests are welcome to bring children at their **own** expense. An exception could be made at the chair's discretion. If a child does accompany the candidate and guest, we ask that the department or candidate rent their own vehicle. Partner Engagement will not be able to transport children.

## 10. Special Consideration

The candidate's interview and the guest's visit should be separated as much as possible. The intent is for the candidate to focus on their interview and the guest to spend their time learning about our area and gathering information.

## APPENDIX A - INVITATION TO BRING A GUEST TO CAMPUS DURING FACULTY CANDIDATE INTERVIEW

### **When to make the offer for guest travel:**

When the department chair or his/her designee invites the candidate to come to campus for an interview, they may not ask discriminatory questions about the candidate's guest status. A candidate may be offered the opportunity to bring a guest, if there is someone they wish to accompany them.

It is important to make sure that the candidate is comfortable talking with you and that they understand that you are on their side. You are interested in the best outcome for them and for Michigan Tech.

**Please refer to the sample invitation letters on the faculty hiring website, Step 7.**  
**<https://www.mtu.edu/hr/hiring/faculty/applicant-pool-interviewing/#step7>**

### **Reminders:**

Avoiding asking: "Is there someone that you want to bring?" Make it an offer and let them respond. If they decline the offer, but you sense that they were caught off guard or feel they need to discuss it with their partner, you could give them an offer to contact you with their reply.

*"If you need some time to think about it, I understand. Please follow up in a day or two to let us know if you will be bringing a guest or traveling alone."*

A guest offer should not use the word *spouse* or *partner*. The offer is intended for spouses or partners; however, the offer could be interpreted differently. To avoid discrimination, if they say they want to bring their brother, friend, or grandmother, etc., we will allow that. There is value in having someone who is close to them see the Houghton area.

When interviewing more than one candidate, each must be given the same offer. You cannot offer guest travel to one candidate, but not another.



## APPENDIX B: GUEST VISIT CHECKLIST

- Candidates are invited to bring a guest to campus.
- Send candidate's name and email address to Recruitment Support Team (Madeline Mercado Voelker [mmercado@mtu.edu](mailto:mmercado@mtu.edu) & Renee Ozanich [rozanich@mtu.edu](mailto:rozanich@mtu.edu))
- Identify the person from your unit who will act as guest's contact.
- Share candidate itinerary with Shannon Vairo ([ssvairo@mtu.edu](mailto:ssvairo@mtu.edu)) and Elena Busova ([ebusova@mtu.edu](mailto:ebusova@mtu.edu))
- If someone will be hosting the guest for a meal, inform Shannon Vairo and Elena Busova so it can be added to the itinerary. Please send the host an email with the Host Guidelines for Meals with Guests, Appendix E.
- Depending on the reimbursement option chosen, you may complete a budget transfer for reimbursement from Partner Engagement up to \$500 of expenses. (Index A11813)
- Provide a copy of the budget transfer with journal number to Shannon Vairo in the Office of Partner Engagement.

## APPENDIX C: CAMPUS TOUR INFORMATION

Admissions hosts daily campus tours in both the morning and afternoon. If the candidate would like a campus tour, please contact the admissions office directly to schedule a tour as times may vary depending on the season and staffing. <https://www.mtu.edu/admissions/visit/plan/> or call 906-487-2335.

## APPENDIX D: CANDIDATE INTEREST SURVEY – SAMPLE

Human Resources sends the survey. All answers regarding this survey are confidential and will be addressed at a meeting with Human Resources and/or Partner Engagement.

### FACULTY RECRUITMENT SUPPORT SURVEY

*During your visit time will be set aside, separate from your host department time, to explore your interests in our community. The information you provide will **not** be shared with your host department and will **not** be used in any way in the hiring decision.*

- The Copper Country Intermediate School District serves 13 local school districts over a three-county area. Are you interested in meeting with a representative from the school district?
- Benefits Services Overview: Would you like to meet with a representative that will provide a benefits package overview?
- Work Life. We take care of ourselves, family members, children, elders, and pets. Are you interested in knowing more about local care options?
- The Office of Partner Engagement is dedicated to helping the partners of new faculty connect with employment opportunities at Michigan Tech and in the community. Also available is the opportunity to discuss non-employment options. Would you like to meet with the Office of Partner Engagement?
- Affinity Groups and International Communities. Michigan Tech University and its surrounding communities support many affinity groups and international communities! Please tell us your interest.
- Would you like printed information about the following areas: Center for Diversity and Inclusion, International Programs & Services, NSF ADVANCE?
- Community Involvement. Our community has many activities including arts, music, recreation and wellness, places of worship, and more. Are you interested in learning more?
- Are you interested in learning more about youth activities?
- Is there anything else with which you are interested?

## APPENDIX E: HOST GUIDELINES FOR MEALS WITH GUESTS

During an upcoming faculty interview, you will be meeting a faculty candidate's guest. Some guidelines have been established to make the guest feel welcome and included, while avoiding gray areas.

A candidate's guest is invited to visit so they can experience the campus and community through their own eyes. They are here to learn about resources and begin to imagine themselves working and living in our community. We want the guest to be part of an informed decision about accepting a position at Michigan Tech.

We strive to be welcoming and friendly; however, personal subjects should be handled carefully. It is not illegal to talk about personal subjects, but it is illegal to make hiring decisions based on this; therefore, avoiding personal subjects is best.

Guests will meet with the Office of Partner Engagement during their visit; that information will remain confidential and is not shared with the search committee in any way. This confidentiality should be adopted in all meetings.

Meals and other interactions with the guest are **not** employment-networking events. Conversations may develop around a guest's career and that is ok if they are leading the discussion. Beware of raising a guest's expectations of easy or guaranteed employment. Each case is unique! Again, we do not create positions for guests, and we do not promise employment at the university.

Encourage the guest to ask you questions instead of vice versa. For instance, "What can I tell you about Michigan Tech (or the community)?"

At no time should the guest's interest in the area, suitability and/or need for employment be evaluated. An evaluation of a guest's circumstances should not be discussed before, during or after a visit. Comparisons between guests is inappropriate too.

For more detailed information please visit: <https://www.mtu.edu/eo-compliance/equal-opportunity-hiring/hiring/inquiries/>

**The above information should be shared with anyone who may host a guest for a meal or activity.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please let me know if you have any questions! I would be happy to help.

*Michigan Technological University is an Equal Opportunity Educational Institution/Equal Opportunity Employer that provides equal opportunity for all, including protected veterans and individuals with disabilities*

## APPENDIX F: GUEST TRAVEL GUIDELINES



# Michigan Tech

## Guest Travel Guidelines

Due to the nature of guest travel, these will be classified as a taxable reimbursement to the candidate's guest per IRS rules and regulations. Michigan Tech's Financial Services and Operations (FSO) has worked with the Partner Engagement Program to provide a list of guidelines and tips to assist with this process.

### Reimbursement Options

Guests opting to travel will be required to pay for their own travel. To allow guests flexibility, there are two options available for receiving travel reimbursements.

1. Guests may be reimbursed by Michigan Tech up to \$599 for travel costs. Itemized receipts will be required (i.e., flight and meal receipts).
  - a. While this option is considered a taxable reimbursement, it will not trigger tax reporting by Michigan Tech. Therefore, no 1099-MISC form will be sent to the guest at the end of the calendar year.

*If itemized receipts are not received within two (2) weeks, Michigan Tech will **not** process any travel reimbursements.*

2. Guests may be reimbursed by Michigan Tech for full travel costs. Itemized receipts will be required (i.e., flight and meal receipts). The guest will be required to complete a W-9<sup>1</sup> upon their arrival on campus.
  - a. This option is considered a taxable reimbursement and if it is \$600 or greater, it will trigger tax reporting by Michigan Tech. Therefore, a 1099-MISC form will be sent to the guest at the end of the calendar year.

*If itemized receipts are received within two (2) weeks, but no completed W-9 is submitted, Michigan Tech will process a travel reimbursement of up to \$599.*

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<sup>1</sup> Non-residents will need to complete a W-8 form and 30% federal income tax will be withheld from the reimbursement.