Founded on September 30, 1953 by Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira, and attaining the level of federal university on December 17, 1960, The Diamantina Federal Dentistry School (Fafeod) became Integrated Federal Schools of Diamantina (Fafeid) on October 4, 2002, raised to the level of Federal University of Jequitinhonha and Mucuri Valleys (UFVJM) on September 06th, 2005, by Federal Law nr 11.173 from September 08, 2005, published in the Union Official Diary.

This Institutional change not only represented the redefinition of the academic organization, but also allowed it to reorganize the university’s courses offered to the Brazilian great cultural diversity and to the new features of the labor market, consequently attending to the progress and new production technologies.

The Federal University of Jequitinhonha and Mucuri Valleys comprises three campuses. Campuses I and II are located in the city of Diamantina, in Minas Gerais (MG), which have four schools and thirteen undergraduate courses. Mucuri’s Advanced Campus is located in the city of Teofilo Otoni, also in Minas Gerais, which has one school and five undergraduate courses. Regarding graduate courses, UFVJM offers both lato sensu and strictu sensu Master’s courses besides research and extension courses projects.

The University counts with 351 servants, divided into 200 faculty members and 161 technical-administrative people. Since its creation, the Federal University of Jequitinhonha and Mucuri Valleys has developed prominent activity in teaching, research and extension, always prioritizing the rendering of services for Jequitinhonha and Mucuri Valleys’ communities.

First steps

The Diamantina Dentistry School was created in 1953, by Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira, who was native of that city as well as governor in charge of Minas Gerais at that time, by a State Law nr 990, from September 30th, 1953.

Once elected governor, Juscelino was concerned about helping his native state somehow. Among some projects were a higher-education school and the first idea was to create a
Mineralogy course, which would meet this region’s primarily mineral characteristics. It was then that Professor Pedro Paulo Penido, a dentist and the governor's great friend, was provost in charge of the University of Minas Gerais at the time, suggested the creation of a Dentistry School, due to Juscelino's designation and support.

Hence the idea of creating Diamantina Dentistry School, which would meet one of that period's goals: moving higher education to the Brazilian countryside. At that time, there were Dentistry Schools in Minas Gerais' cities of Belo Horizonte, Juiz de Fora, Alfenas and Uberaba only. Diamantina Dentistry School came to meet the needs of a large area, which mainly comprised the north and northeast of Minas Gerais.

The Dentistry course started at the beginning of May 1954, with 15 students enrolled in the first year. For some time that year, the course was temporarily held in a primary school building, the current location of Júlia Kubitschek State School. When this school needed its place back, the Dentistry School was moved to the house of “Mr. Neco Mota”.

Simultaneously, the Dentistry School main building was constructed on a place located at Rua Glória. The author of the project was Oscar Niemayer and the building was inaugurated in 1955. There was a polyclinic with 15 dental chairs installed, and another room with five dental chairs for Orthodontics and Pedodontics practice. The dental offices were the most modern for the time, and there was also an X-ray unit, three rooms intended for theoretical classes and individual rooms intended for practicing the 12 course subjects. Besides that, rooms were designed for the administrative staff.

The course was planned to be taught in three years only and most of the faculty was from Belo Horizonte. The professors were selected among the best Dentistry professionals at the time, mainly those who were successful at their offices. Consequently, they would go to Diamantina weekly. Not only did they have to leave their families and offices temporarily, but also they had to face arduous and exhausting trips, notably because the road from Pedro Leopoldo up to Diamantina was not tarred.

At that time, two faculty groups were distinguished: cathedratics and assistants. The former group was composed of professors Gudestey Medeiros (who was the first School Dean, from 1954 to 1956), Enyr Arcieri, Guilherme Armond, Rubens Guzella, Fausto de Paula Pinto, Walter José de Carvalho, Marciano Ribeiro Vianna, Roberto Rocha, Pedro Luiz Diniz Viana, Arnaldo Marques de Souza and José Severiano Brasil de Lima. Regarding the assistant professors, two
of them were from Belo Horizonte, Silvio Lourenço Strambi and Osmir Luiz de Oliveira.

The others were from Diamantina, and they were as good in their specialties as the former professionals: Augusto César, José de Araújo Flecha, Evandro Souza Couto, Algemiroy Duarte Neto, João Antônio Meira, José Aristeu de Andrade, João Antunes de Oliveira, Giovanni de Miranda Pereira and Dirceu Antônio dos Reis. Fafeid's Dentistry course has already awarded 1,876 degrees from 1956 to 2003.