Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for
University of California, Merced and University of California, Davis

This is what was found by UC Central Valley at the University of California, Merced at UC Merced on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

Note: We acknowledge this information is not always accessible to students and even staff. If you do not have access to this information, please reflect on your own experience and outline what admissions and/or hiring should be like to foster a diverse and inclusive community.

I. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available?

For faculty and postdoc job advertisements at UCM include these details as footer.
- The University of California, Merced is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. You have the right to an equal employment opportunity.
- For more information about your rights, see the EEO is the Law Supplement.
- The University of California, Merced is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities.

For graduate student positions,
- There is no formal process. It likely varies by faculty and program.

Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?

For faculty and postdocs,
Typically, there are extensive discussions between search committees and faculty equity advisors to ensure that the venues of advertisement will reach diverse pool of applicants.

Graduate student positions vary widely.
Typically follow the PIs networks and listserves of professional societies.
What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?

For faculty and postdoc positions:
- Cover letter, CV, and statements of research, contributions to DEI, and teaching (faculty only). A guide on how to write diversity statement is available on the application website.

For graduate students:
- Application fee (can be waived for US citizens and permanent residents on need or program participation basis; the parent school of Environmental Systems waived fees for all domestic applicants for Fall 2021 to alleviate pandemic-related hardships)
- Transcripts
- Statement of purpose
- Personal history and achievements/contributions
- Three letters of recommendation
- GRE (optional)
- TOEFL/IELTS for anyone whose preparatory education was not in English

How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?

For faculty positions:
Search committees develop position-specific rubric. These are not public and typically developed at the start of review of applications. Generally good practice, but lacks consistency and likely varies with committee membership. There are check for diversity of the applicant pool before review starts. Feedback from full faculty gathered as the pool is narrowed. Feedback from students and postdocs is collected for candidates who reach the interview stage.

For Postdocs:
It varies greatly. If joining individual lab, most review process is contained within the group. PI may seek feedback from their groups. In some case, PIs invite candidates for campus/zoom interview and seek feedback from attendees. Postdocs who join multi-PI projects are evaluated by larger pool of reviewers. Generally, there is lack of consistent process.

For Graduate student recruitment
The review is done by a committee of faculty. In ES and part of the QSB program, students are directly admitted to individual labs. Therefore, the potential advisor or co-advisors have the final say on who is admitted. The evaluation criteria vary widely but includes prior training in related fields and experience in specific methods; availability of funding; match of research interests.

**Biases:** Search committee members typically participate in implicit bias training. Biases can still be introduced at all levels. Rubrics are not public and often the published position descriptions may not reflect the full nature of the position that is to be filled. Applicants with familiarity of UCM or UCM faculty may have an advantage of tailoring their applications to meet these expectations. Applications are not typically anonymized (except for senior administrative positions).

**Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**

*For faculty positions*
The chair of the search committee is typically the face of the search. The committee is appointed by the department chair in consultation with the faculty. The committee is responsible for narrowing down the pool to a long list. The full department weighs in narrowing down to short list and selection of the final candidate.

*For students and postdocs*
The PI is the main face and responsible person for most of the process. Admission committee plays a role in checking basic qualifications and connecting students who did not apply to specific labs with potential advisors.

**Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**

No. The faculty in the department or program can change the process relatively easily within the framework of the academic personnel manual and graduate handbook. The process is to engage enough people to come to an agreement about what needs to be changed.

**Has your university or company implemented or considered strategies like cohort hiring, mentoring, dual career support and partner hires, re-visioning your work culture, or other considerations outlined in “Leveraging Promising Practices”6?**
UC Merced has good track record in dual career support and partner hires. It also has some success in targets of opportunity hiring. Both practices have been used multiple times in the home department of the UCM participants of this pod.

II. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available?

- No EEO on job listing, but EEO is included on CWS recruitment page
- Only resource linked to is UCD’s DEI page (link) to give explanation of why a written DEI statement is required for the job

Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?

- Tends to depend on the project lead and where they decide to post

What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?

- Request for CA driver’s licence might be limiting and unnecessary
- Written work requested:
  - Curriculum Vitae - Your most recently updated C.V.
  - Cover Letter
  - Statement of Research (Optional)
    - Potentially problematic as previous research experience was likely not accessible to all applicants
  - Statement of Teaching (Optional)
  - Statement of Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Could encourage people to apply even if they don’t meet every single qualification listed

How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?

- The process of application evaluation is not publicly available
- Bias: Tend to hire people who have already worked for CWS

Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?

- Unclear? Inconsistent?
- Just the PI?

Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is
the process for changing it?

- Hiring practices have not been examined by outside source
- Process for changing admissions depends on the change:
  - To make significant changes (like implement a score card) to the admissions process, we would have to change the entire JMIE
  - To change interview questions or the group of people that conduct interviews, need to convince CWS Ex-Com

Has your university or company implemented or considered strategies like cohort hiring, mentoring, dual career support and partner hires, re-visioning your work culture, or other considerations outlined in “Leveraging Promising Practices”?

- UC Davis does do cohort hiring, but CWS does not

Recommendations:
Investigate how job postings are circulated, and determine if there’s bias in how we promote openings. Expand our outreach based on what we find. Create a job-posting outreach document with various listservs and places to post CWS job opportunities.

Include specific language regarding DEI work in the job description, possibly under the “professional activities” section. Since we require DEI statements and use them as an evaluation tool, we should include it as an expectation of job duties. Otherwise, it seems like a hollow formality.

Change the language about a CA driver’s license because it seems limiting. Potentially add “or the ability to obtain one”

Investigate the application evaluation process, who interacts with applicants, and see if those evaluating applications have bias training (or see if this training can be provided).

Create a prospective applicants page with some resources. Especially for entry level job postings, this may be people’s first time applying somewhere and offering resources could widen our applicant pool.

Providing a few published paper pdfs that give an idea of the work we do could help applicants better understand our work, especially if they aren’t currently in school and may be behind a paywall.

Links to writing centers at UC Davis for students, or helpful links online for those outside UC Davis could be helpful for CV and cover letter writing.

Encouraging applicants to reach out if they have questions or want to tour CWS before applying.

Include a CWS diversity, equity, inclusivity statement in the actual application and encourage people to apply even if they don’t meet every single qualification listed.