Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University/Organization - Example URGE Deliverable

This is what was found by [Stable Isotope Ecology Group] 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.

- What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement\(^1\) is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available\(^2\)?

The UC Merced clearly states that is committed to prohibit and not engage in any discrimination and harassment during the evaluation and hiring of applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, gender transition status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services, including protected veterans. Four documents describe policies equally adopted by UC Merced for employers and applicants, which are in accordance with applicable State and Federal law:

1) University of California Diversity Statement, amended and approved in 2010 (https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000375/Diversity);
2) Discrimination, Harassment, and Affirmative Action in the Workplace, reformatted in June 2013 (https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/DiscHarassAffirmAction);

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\(^2\) https://careers.whoi.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/
\(^5\) https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html
Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?

Depending on the level of position, job posting advertisements are sent to different resources:

**Current Students**
UC Merced has recently adopted the Handshake tool for all student related positions, which can be found at this link:
https://ucmerced.joinhandshake.com/student_onboardings/new
https://hire.ucmerced.edu/students/jobs-internships

**External Staff and Faculty**
The University of California posts all their external positions to a collecting UC job postings site:

**Internal Staff and Faculty**
The University of California posts all their internal positions to UC Path, which has the same job board as the external job postings.

- 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?

Following the Graduate Division admission criteria ([https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/prospective-students/apply-now/requirements](https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/prospective-students/apply-now/requirements)), general application requirements at UC Merced are:

1) holding a bachelor degree with a minimum grade-point average of (GPA) of 3.0 (B); 2) application fees of $120 for domestic and $140 for international applicants;
3) three letters of recommendation;
4) statement of purpose;
5) Personal history and achievements/contribution;
6) International students have to file enclosed additionally TOEFL or IELTS results (minimum scores required here: 550 TOEFL or 6.0 IELTS).
7) Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores is now optional or not required for most of grad school programs. Currently, it is required only in the following graduate programs: Economics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences, Mechanical Engineering, and Public Health.

Based on the listed criteria above, potential barriers for graduate school applications are:
1) application fees may be drastically lowered or removed. Out-of-pocket payments may discourage applicants from a low-income family to apply;
2) Statement of purpose and personal history/achievement/contribution documents may be included into a single documents. The statement of purpose should already include personal information and personal details relevant to the application. This will facilitate the process and minimize redundancy of documents/info during the evaluation of candidates;
3) The UC Merced Grad Division have revised their evaluation criteria based on GRE scores for Fall 2021, and many grad programs do not mandate them to apply. However, this decision should be extended to any graduate school program. It is unclear what the options “optional” and “highly encouraged” mean. A wide literature argues the GRE scores as a metric to evaluate “skillful” candidates in specific topics. Moreover, the preparation and scheduling of tests can be expensive and source of mental stress for low-income applicants;
4) Similar to GRE, standardized TOEFL or IELTS tests do not evaluate properly language skills of international candidates. They are designed in a way that candidates should answer as quick as possible rather than evaluating their proficiency. Moreover, these tests are expensive. Fees are required to schedule a day to attend the test, which are likely set in cities far away from home. Moreover, to increase the chance of success, private schools or teachers offer specific lessons, but they are usually not affordable for all candidates. It will be easier if candidates prove their English skills simply with a preliminary interview.

- How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric\(^4\)\(^5\) public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?

Upon the Graduate Policies and Procedures 2020, applicant are evaluated not only from the minimum requirements mentioned above. The Graduate Group Admission Committee of each department select the “best candidates” based on their potential achievements and contribution to UC Merced community, but it is not clear what kind of rubric the Committee adopts to measure such qualities.

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

Upon the Graduate Policies and Procedures 2020, admission to specific graduate school programs are made by the Graduate Group Admission Committee of each department, but it not clear who take part in this committee. (https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/sites/graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/2020-21_gpph-gc_approved_6.30.21.a.pdf).

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

NA

• 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”?

To our knowledge, spousal hires have been implemented at UC Merced; however, little evidence has been found of other hiring practices listed above.