

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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

This is what was found by ETH-GFZ at GFZ and ETHZ on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

- **What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement¹ is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available²?**

GFZ: Statements address women and disabled people without considering other forms of diversity.

E.g.. “It is the goal of the GFZ and the Helmholtz Association to promote females in leadership positions. In this respect, applications from women are specifically welcome.

Applicants with a disability or equivalent (f/m/d) with equal qualification and aptitude will be given preferential consideration in accordance with the Code of Social Law IX.”

ETH: In the department of Earth Sciences there is an Equal Opportunity Statement for faculty job advertisements, but none for PhD or postdocs. There is also no formal requirement for including this in the job descriptions.

Faculty advertisement statement: “The Department of Earth Sciences at ETH greatly values diversity among its faculty, is committed to building a diverse intellectual community, and strongly encourages applications from women and other underrepresented minorities. ETH supports numerous family friendly initiatives such as [maternity benefits](#), [childcare facilities](#) in the university area, [family allowances](#), and [dedicated assistance to dual-career couples](#).”

However, most of these benefits mentioned (e.g., maternity benefits, childcare benefits), vary greatly between oberassistants, postdocs, and faculty.

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

GFZ: Job advertising seems very broad through many channels.

- GFZ website
- job websites: EarthworksJobs.com, www.stellenangebote.de, nature.com (by admin)
- social networks: LinkedIn, Twitter (by admin for LI?, by PI on Twitter)
- Listservs: GilberClub, Geotectonics (by PI)
- Job fairs like Helmholtz (Virtual) Career Day (by admin)

ETH: Job advertisements are posted through various channels as well. The most comprehensive list is on the ETH Zurich Earth Sciences website:

erdw.ethz.ch/en/department/jobs.html

However, jobs are also posted on :

- Job websites: jobs.ethz.ch, academicpositions.ch the website for each Research Institute (e.g., Petrology: <https://geopetro.ethz.ch/institute/jobs.html>)
- Social networks: Twitter, ResearchGate
- Listservs: Geo-Tectonics, Geo-Metamorphism

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores³/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**

[in most European universities, undergraduate student admission criterion is solely based on successful highschool degree. Hiring requirements mostly concern PhD students and above]

GFZ: Required documents are flexible. Standard jobs on webpage: CV, cover letter, degrees, job depending statements (e.g. technical skill statement). However, section heads have freedom over their hiring procedures and usually form small committees within a section. The equal opportunity officer can veto decisions, if they do not comply with gender balance goals and laws as well as disability antidiscrimination laws. The equal opportunity office does not provide guidance for writing ads.

ETH: Required documents vary per level of applicant.

For PhD students: a CV, 2-3 references, a motivation letter, and a picture of the Bachelors or Masters Diploma.

For postdocs: a CV, 2-3 references, and a statement of research interests.

For faculty: unsure....

- **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?**

GFZ: No public evaluation. Applicants within sections get evaluated by self-formed evaluation committees. Section heads get appointed by the board in a non public process. There is no guidance/requirements regarding the composition of the committees. The gender equality officer has a veto right.

Appointments for professor positions are done by universities and have to follow the German Berufungsordnung.

Hiring processes at GFZ do not follow any standard procedure, are intransparent, and may therefore be subjected to biases. Gender equality and/or equal opportunity (disability antidiscrimination) may participate passively in the interview.

No systematic process is followed to specifically address (unconscious) bias, but the gender equality and equal opportunity officers have to first authorize the short list of candidates before the interview stage to ensure compliance.

Candidates with serious disabilities that have fitting skills (very loosely defined) are automatically invited for interviews.

After the interview a written justification for every candidate is sent to equal opportunity officers for verification. The justification should rank the candidates based on elements taken from the ad. A candidate cannot be eliminated or picked based on a characteristic absent from the ad. In case of equal qualification, preferential hiring of female candidates is to be followed. [would need to check if this is explicitly written up somewhere, or diffuse institutional knowledge picked on the way]

ETH: This depends on the position. Initial faculty applications are evaluated by an internal committee. Once invited to interview, more public input is considered, but ultimately it is the faculty's decision on who gets hired.

Now, in the Earth Sciences Institute, they are trying to collect gender data on faculty, phd, postdoc, and oberassisant applications, to have an idea about who their advertisements are reaching.

No current practices are in place to limit biases during the initial application, but more effort is taken to limit biases for faculty applicants (typically to limit biases against female applicants). Once potential faculty is invited to interview, an external committee member is assigned to help try to minimize internal biases.

In initial applications, it is possible that multiple biases exist.

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

GFZ: For section intern positions the section heads often form a committee. However, this is not necessary. The section head has full power to hire without a committee or against the will of a self appointed committee. The gender balance and equal opportunity officers can veto the hiring decision.

Section heads get appointed by the board with a veto right of the equal opportunity officer. For all positions the “Kaskadenmodell” has to be fulfilled, which aims to diminish the effect of the leaky pipeline for gender imbalances (this model forecasts gender (in-)balance on a 5-10 year horizon, setting soft targets for hiring).

ETH: The selection committee is constituted by the President, who also elects the chair of the committee. The chair of the committee comes from a different department, than the department that is hiring the potential faculty. The head of the department is also on the committee. One representative of the scientific staff, and a student representative. In every selection committee, one committee member takes over the role of being the gender and diversity advocate. Every selection committee should include 3 female faculty members (a general rule, but not enforced).

4-6 people must be invited for the position (if possible), and at least 2 female candidates. Public lectures are given, interviews with the committee, and the committee ranks the candidates for the president. Short list should include (if possible) one female candidate. The President decides if he would like to accept the candidate or not.

Further details can be found on the [ETH Zurich website](#).

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

GFZ: No.

ETH: Kind of. The Earth Sciences Institute at ETH has created a Gender Equality Group that has offered advice on how to frame job advertisements to better attract women and minorities in the department.

- **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?**

GFZ: The GFZ has put a lot of effort into creating a family friendly environment to address gender balance issues. The GFZ has also been awarded a certificate for family friendliness. Again, all measures are targeted at gender balance and not diversity.

ETH: Dual career and partner hires do happen, and there is effort in improving work culture and family care/leave. It’s unclear if mentoring practices are in place.

Recommendations:

- establish hiring procedure guidelines, especially for the beginning of the process (GFZ)
- include diversity statement in job advertisements
- require diversity statements for job applications
- no help with drafting of faculty advertisements, and help with phrasing advertisements. Guidance can help find candidates.

- more transparent job application statements in terms of what is expected/required in job application documents?
- rubric graduate student application evaluation system?
- a non-related person helps evaluate graduate student applications?
- Application "rubric" ideas. Create an application that highlights student skills, e.g.:
 - 1) Highlight a time when you could multitask