

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCES

Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University of Montana

This is what was found by The Geosciences Department pod at University of Montana 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?**

The University of Montana has the following EEO statements included in job advertisements and on their employment website:

“We are an equal opportunity employer. Employment selection and related decisions are made without regard to sex, race, age, disability, religion, national origin, color or any other protected class.”

“The University of Montana is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and has a strong institutional commitment to the principle of diversity in all areas. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of qualified people who would assist the University in demonstrating its five **priorities for action**: Place student success at the center of all we do; drive excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, and research; embody the principle of “mission first, people always”; partner with place; and proudly tell the UM story.”

“**ADA/EOE/AA/Veteran's Preference** Reasonable accommodations are provided in the hiring process for persons with disabilities. For example, this material is available in alternative format upon request. As an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, we encourage applications from minorities, veterans, and women. Qualified candidates may request veterans' or disabilities preference in accordance with state law.”

¹ R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples, (2017).

² <https://careers.who.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/>

³ K. Cobb, #GRExit Resources, <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13215461.v1>, (2020).

⁴ J. Posselt, Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvjghw8s>, (2016).

⁵ <https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html>

⁶ K. Griffin, J. Bennett, T. York, Leveraging Promising Practices, Washington DC: Aspire Alliance, (2020).



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FAQs section: “What preferences does the university offer? As an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, we encourage applications from minorities, veterans, and women.”

The graduate school which oversees policies for all graduate programs lists the following EEO statement in its policy document:

“The University of Montana is committed to a program of equal opportunity for education, employment and participation in University activities without regard to race, color, sex, age, religious creed, political ideas, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, national origin or ancestry, or sexual orientation. (Section A3.000 – Equal Opportunity)”

The graduate school also offers this statement in its academic policies:

“The University welcomes applicants regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status or physical disabilities, and does not discriminate on those or other nonacademic bases.”

The Geosciences department does not have an EEO statement in the portion of its web site that details the graduate application procedures. A statement is currently being drafted.

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

We do not advertise our graduate school program except on our own website. Job advertisements are made on various geoscience listservs, the UM silk road portal, LinkedIn, and AGU websites.

- **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?**

Geoscience Graduate program applicant requirements: Statement of Purpose (describing your background and future goals), \$60 Application Fee (which has been waived upon request), GPA of 3.0 or higher in science related courses, Official Transcripts, 3 letters of recommendation, Form A (which is a summary of science curriculum taken in the applicant’s undergraduate degree).

- **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?** The selection committee reviews all



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candidates for minimum entry requirements. The process and rubric for selecting candidates and applicants are not entirely public. Selection committee deliberations and comments are kept confidential. The selection committee reviews all application materials (names are not redacted) in a first cut, removing from the candidate pool any application that does not meet the minimum standards. All faculty of the department who are interested in taking on graduate students then review the pool of qualified applicants. Admissions decisions are communicated, advisors then communicate directly with their admitted candidates to negotiate potential funding sources eg – teaching and research assistantships.

- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?** Selection Committee changes every year and is composed of three tenure track faculty members, one member from the previous year stays on as chair. Applicants are encouraged to contact their potential advisor prior to applying. Department administrative assistant and potential advisor interact with the applicants.
- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?** As a public University, the hiring process and admissions process is determined by the State government, policies developed through consultation of various faculty and administrative bodies, and a board of Regents. It is unknown if an evaluation by outside consultants has ever occurred. Changing the process???
- **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?**
No