



## URGE Admissions and Hiring Policies for UBC Department of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences (EOAS)

The following document consists of an audit of the hiring and admissions processes in the Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences (EOAS) department at University of British Columbia (UBC)--as well as recommendations to increase equity in hiring and admissions. This document also includes the available and/or existing **University of British Columbia EOAS** departmental demographic data (public and internal facing). At the time of Session 3, we were not allowed to share this data publicly. Each section consists of current policies and URGE recommendations. We aim to revise our recruiting and hiring practices so that they explicitly value EDI.

### EOAS Admissions Policies

#### Current Policies:

Undergraduate admissions are entirely dictated by the general requirements through UBC admissions. These include (for Canadian citizens): english proficiency, which is evaluated through years of education in English and [eight other ways](#); having a high school diploma; 70% in Grade 11 or 12 English. Requirements are the same for International students with the exception that they require “graduation from a university-preparatory program at a senior secondary school”. The policy on course-specific minima for high school applicants can be found [here](#).

Students choose their specializations in 2nd year, and entry into an EOAS specialization is based on academic performance in their 1st year. Detailed policies on admissions equity on a University-scale are not available or do not exist. UBC and EOAS do take into account aboriginal/indigenous status, however. Otherwise, EOAS does not have any degree-specific requirements, nor does it have EOAS-specific policies on admissions equity.

For graduate student admissions, EOAS recommends browsing faculty, degree options, and research opportunities. Eligibility dictated by UBC includes:

- Master’s or equivalent for PhD program; Bachelor’s for a master’s
- Overall grade of B+ for PhD applicants (in master’s I presume?)
- For Master’s: Bachelor’s, overall grade of B+ (76% at UBC) in 3rd and 4th year courses (or equivalent)
- English competency and transcripts must be provided

For EOAS, the students’ application package should also include 3 reference letters. The only EOAS-specific admission requirement is that the potential supervisor can commit to the minimum annual stipend (\$25 000).

In our research, we have found that given the UBC criteria is not extensive, the process of admitting a potential graduate student depends largely on contacting a potential supervisor and expressing interest

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in a specific project. Interactions like this can disadvantage potential students as it can depend largely on an existing foundation of “who knows who” and networking. That network is often not available to every student for a variety of reasons. Informal admissions standards can make it difficult for persons of underrepresented groups to gain access. In addition, potential advisors are not required to take any supervisory training, even though optional training is available. There is no EDI-specific training either, although it was indicated that the faculty often participate in the EDI training session for faculty hiring and that the ‘same principles apply’. There is similarly no training for reviewing letters of reference, which are often heavily weighted and can introduce biases from both the letter writer, and the potential advisor reading it.

The final admission decision lies with the potential advisor, who will judge the student on the basis of ‘academic achievements and research promise’. However, this will inevitably include their own, personal criteria and any implicit or explicit biases they may have. There is a Graduate Advisory Committee, but they do not review all applications. One member of the committee will review a singular application for ‘red flags’ (undefined) before sending it along to Graduate and Postdoctoral affairs for final approval based on UBC admissions guidelines. The Graduate Advisory Committee membership changes every few years but not on a regular basis.

Without explicit admissions processes, the basis for comparing applicants can introduce preference and biases. If acceptance is at the discretion of the potential advisor, many different biases can come up such as a prestige mindset, judging the student based on where they did their Undergraduate education, whether they have things in common with the student (homophily), etc.

### Recommendations:

We recommend the following changes:

- (1) EOAS revisit the admissions processes and make them explicit. Following a rubric can make this process more transparent and fair, and safeguard against biases.

Table 10 Example Rubric

	Academic Preparation	Potential for Scholarship	Contributions to Dept., Cohort, Discipline	<i>(Insert additional evaluation standards)</i>	Basis for Ratings
Rating	Weak-Acceptable-Strong	Weak-Acceptable-Strong	Weak-Acceptable-Strong	Weak-Acceptable-Strong	
Applicant 1					
Applicant 2					
Applicant 3					
... and so forth					

- (2) Strengthen recruitment and align it with admissions. EOAS should strengthen outreach and recruitment early in the admissions cycle. It can build a more diverse pool by developing relationships with departments at institutions whose undergraduate alumni from

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underrepresented groups go on to earn doctoral degrees (Table below). EOAS can assemble a list of colleges and universities within Canada and internationally that produce the most doctorates for each racial/ethnic group. These informal recruitment relationships can become institutionalized over time.

- (3) If the final admission of a potential graduate student is at the discretion of the advisor, and no guidelines exist to ensure fairness, we recommend that the department requires mandatory training to negate bias.

*Table 11* Top 30 Institutions Producing African American, Latina/o, and Asian/Pacific Islander PhDs

	Top 10 African American	Top 10 Latina/o	Top 10 Asian/Pacific Islander
1	Howard University	University of Puerto Rico–Piedras	University of California–Berkeley
2	Spelman College	University of Puerto Rico–Mayaguez	University of California–Los Angeles
3	Florida A&M University	University of California–Los Angeles	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
4	Hampton University	University of Texas–Austin	Harvard University
5	Southern University A&M College	Florida International University	University of California–San Diego
6	Jackson State University	University of Texas–El Paso	Cornell University
7	Morehouse College	Harvard University	Stanford University
8	University of Michigan–Ann Arbor	University of Florida	University of Hawaii–Manoa
9	North Carolina A&T University	University of New Mexico	University of Michigan–Ann Arbor
10	University of California–Berkeley	University of Arizona	University of California–Davis

Sources: Lundy-Wagner, Vultaggio, and Gasman 2013, 158, citing Survey of Earned Doctorates 2009.

- (4) GRE scores are currently optional at UBC EOAS. **We recommend** removing this as a metric of evaluation completely. If one student does not submit these, when students do, is that taken into account and then disadvantages the student who did not? Below are references to why the GRE should be removed.
  - (a) <https://eos.org/opinions/geogrexit-why-geosciences-programs-are-dropping-the-gre>
  - (b) [https://figshare.com/articles/presentation/GRExit\\_Resources\\_oct20\\_small\\_pptx/13215461](https://figshare.com/articles/presentation/GRExit_Resources_oct20_small_pptx/13215461)

## EOAS Hiring Policies

### Recommendations:

If applicable or necessary, recommendations for adjustments and changes are included under each heading under ‘Current Policies’ in blue. Recommendations outside of these specific headings are included below.

## (1) Large-scale recommendations to increase diversity:

- The provost has signaled willingness to do targeted hiring for underrepresented groups as of last year. This is case-specific to the field and applications are made to the BC Human Rights Tribunal, who can restrict the search to BIPOC (specifically Black and Indigenous) individuals. **We recommend** EOAS do this for an upcoming search.
- Goal 6, Action 25 of the [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#) is to “develop Indigenous recruitment, retention and advancement policies, which strategically increase Indigenous faculty and staff numbers on both campuses.” **We recommend** EOAS apply for approval to do an Indigenous cluster hire within our fields. Cluster hiring reduces tokenism, isolation, and creates a cohort for new faculty.
- *We are waiting for further details on both of these initiatives from our Faculty of Science.*

## (2) Develop Consistent and Fair Rubrics:

- **We recommend** redefining excellence and merit. Flawed proxies such as where the candidate has trained or published are subject to bias ([Link](#)).
- **We recommend** re-evaluating our rubrics so as to (1) remove potential areas that introduce bias and/or disadvantage underrepresented groups, and (2) explicitly value contributions to EDI.
- **We recommend** providing the rubric ahead of time to all applicants. This increases transparency for all parties.
- **We recommend** the search committee follow separate rubrics for evaluating DEI statements from the applicants. Example rubrics can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- **We recommend** “keeping a healthy skepticism towards the concept of ‘fit’ in hiring. When circumstances are uncertain, we tend to gravitate toward the familiar for safety and assurance. This goes against the principles of diversity and equity and can effectively act to reproduce the current profile of the department at the expense of historically under-represented candidates. Consider the concept of ‘stretch’ instead of fit. Look for a candidate who is aligned in their values or approach to others in your department, but also provides a healthy extension, intellectually, methodologically, or culturally, that can enrich the life of the department and the work of the unit.” (*UBC Equity and Inclusion Office, linked [here](#)*)

## (3) General Search-Related Recommendations:

- Moving away from CV’s is one of the best ways to counter implicit bias. **We recommend** virtual interviewing of the longlist for every search. This was done for the most recent faculty search (Discipline Based Education Research position; 2021).

## (4) Changes to the Candidate Interview Schedule:

*"How the day is **scheduled** can also have a powerful impact on how women and men of color view the campus and their thinking about whether they want to become a member of the campus community. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) recounted the negative experience a woman had interviewing at one campus, where she was not given any breaks in her schedule or opportunities to*

*engage with other women at the institution. While the institution made her a competitive and attractive financial offer, she chose to accept a faculty position at another institution with a hiring process that was warm and collegial, with more opportunities to rest and connect with future colleagues."* Griffin, 2020

- [In person] **We recommend** creating a standard interview schedule that includes small breaks during the day. An extremely busy interview schedule with no breaks may be unappealing to candidates, especially if they are visiting from another time zone. It may also be disadvantageous to some candidates and favour those that are more extroverted. The candidates that may need or want small breaks to recharge may not feel comfortable asking for them, thinking that it will put them at a disadvantage and make them less competitive.
- [In-person or virtual visits] **We recommend** allowing the candidate to eat lunch alone, therefore providing graduate students and postdocs with their own meeting slot at a separate time.
- [In-person] **We recommend** holding the candidate dinner on the second night of the interview. This provides the candidate an evening to slow down, recharge, and prepare for the next day. This is especially important for candidates travelling from different time-zones who may be jet-lagged.
- [In-person] **We recommend** providing funding for candidates who wish to arrive a day early (optional)--so as to adjust to a different time-zone. We also recommend providing funding for an optional day at the end of their visit. This gives the candidate the opportunity to explore Vancouver off-campus--as they are considering relocating their life to this area.
- [In-person] **We recommend** during 1-on-1 meetings with faculty, offering a walking interview or taking them to get a coffee. It would be tiring if every faculty offered this, but this is an excellent opportunity to show them a little bit of the campus and provide a break from sitting and offices.
- [In person] **We recommend** explicitly listing at the top of the candidates schedule who is taking the candidate to the next meeting--so both the candidate and the interviewer know who is coming to take them to the next meeting. Leaving the candidate to find their way around three different buildings can be confusing, stressful, and inefficient. This can be a single person responsible for escorting to every meeting, of the person the candidate is meeting with next. This person will come and knock on the door when it is time for the meeting to be over--preventing meetings from running long AND letting the candidate and interviewer enjoy the conversation without checking the time often. In the past, it is unclear to the candidate who is responsible for this.
- [In person] **We recommend** providing pictures of the people the candidate will be meeting with ahead of time with the schedule.
- [In person] **We recommend** during meetings with multiple people, providing name tents--so the candidate is not trying to memorize multiple people's names.

**(5) Equity considerations in virtual interviews:** *From the UBC Equity and Inclusion Office ([here](#))*

- The best way to ensure fairness is to create a respectful, consistent, structured process centered around explicitly agreed upon criteria.

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- Balance the consistency and structured approach with attending to the needs of individual candidates that require accommodation in order to be able to participate in the interviews.
- Convene your search committee ahead of time to coordinate how the interviews are to be conducted under the current conditions.
- Choose the most accessible remote technology and provide information on its use to all interviewees ahead of the interview.
- Consider privacy issues and whether you need to record interviews or presentations.
- It is important to separate ‘style’ from ‘content’ when you are listening to and observing candidates virtually.
- Make real-time captioning an option for every candidate and interviewer
- Provide some questions ahead of time -in written form.
- When possible, write the question in the chat for the candidate
- Consider time differences when scheduling meeting times
- Have one zoom room, where the committees and other interviewers join the meeting via a waiting room.
- Provide multiple breaks throughout the interviewing process

#### (4) Evaluation of Hiring Policies:

- *[Internal]* **We recommend** assigning an Equity Monitor leadership role to someone on the search committee, whose role it would be to monitor the interviews and deliberations with an eye to possible bias. This person should be a senior member or Chair of the search committee. They can make selection committee members aware of the emergence of bias, and open a conversation that could protect the committee from falling into their biases. We recommend resisting assigning this role to a junior colleague or someone who themselves may identify as marginalized, as having to call in their colleagues can be risky.
- *[External]* **We recommend** that our hiring processes be evaluated by an external party to ensure they are as equitable as possible.

#### (5) Considering Contributions to EDI in Promotion and Tenure Decisions: Following

- In order to incentivize work on EDI issues within EOAS, **we recommend** adding contributions to EDI initiatives in annual review, promotion and tenure decisions. We recommend changing “relevant language in personnel documents so that the workforce contributions to EDI are valued, expected, assessed, and rewarded.” ([Link](#))
- **We recommend** that “student evaluations of instruction will include at least one question related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.” ([Link](#))
- **We recommend** the creation of a faculty and staff excellence award category specifically geared toward EDI efforts. The following links consist of example awards and criteria: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

## Current Policies and Recruiting Guidelines:

This section is based on the [Faculty of Science Faculty recruiting guidelines and checklist](#).

### 1.1 Review of job search plan and advertisement

**Advertisement:** Should be written to attract as diverse an array of qualified applicants as possible, using the guidelines in Section 2.

**Job search plan:** outlines how the committee composition and search procedures will ensure that all qualified applicants are considered fairly.

### 1.2 Tracking of applicant pool

The UBC Faculty of Science provides an online diversity/equity survey, which is made available to all applicants upon their submission of application. *“These data are critically important to help us understand where the challenges are in the recruiting process in achieving our diversity goals. Under UBC Policy 2 (Employment Equity), we aim to track demographic data on under-represented groups (equity groups) which include women, racialized people (members of visible minorities), persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, and sexual orientation and gender identity minorities.”* The survey results are provided to the committee 1-2 weeks before and after the closing date to allow the effectiveness of the recruiting strategies to be assessed. This survey adheres to Canada’s Employment Equity Act ([link](#)), the Federal Contractors Program ([link](#)), and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ([link](#)).

### 1.3 Recruiting committee orientation sessions

EOAS and the FoS requires that all committee members who will review the CVs of job candidates (and have a role in ranking, or selecting long-list/short-list candidates) have to attend a 90-minute EDI training session with the Assoc. Dean, Equity & Diversity each season of hiring (if the last training session was over a year ago, they need to attend it again). Topics discussed include: unconscious bias and gatekeeping in the hiring process, conflict of interest, confidentiality, active recruitment, defining the search criteria, and other processes involved in a faculty search.

### 1.4 Shortlist review

Candidate shortlists must be provided to the Dean’s office and approved prior to inviting candidates. Each shortlisted name must be accompanied by: female/male, other equity group information if available, Canadian citizenship or permanent residency status, 1-2 sentences in justification for each individual. Shortlists need to have five or more candidates with the aim of having more than one under-represented group candidate on the list but avoid token placement.

**\*If the representation of women and/or visible minority candidates is lower than that in the applicant pool, an explanation must be provided which will include 2-3 sentences of rationale for the top women and potential visible minority candidates who did NOT make the shortlist, based on the selection criteria used by the committee.** Meeting the university’s strategic goals of equity and diversity should be one of the criteria used.



\*\*The Dean or Associate Dean reserves the right to interrupt the search if necessary to address specific concerns. Such a decision would only occur after a full discussion with the Department Head and recruiting committee chair.

### **1.5 Meetings with the candidates**

One of the Associate Deans will meet with all short-listed interview candidates. This meeting gives candidates an opportunity to bring up questions with the Dean's office such as partner accommodation and tenure expectations. It also provides an opportunity to highlight the resources available at UBC to facilitate recruitment.

### **1.6 Authorization to make an offer to preferred candidate and terms**

Following candidate visits and Department vote, the EOAS Head provides a final ranking of the candidates to the Dean's office with a request to make an offer to the top candidate, along with a rationale for the ranking of the shortlisted candidates. The Dean's office must approve and provide authorization before sending an offer letter to the candidate.

## **Developing the search plan:**

### **2.1 Composition of the search committee**

A diverse search committee is one of the most important factors in increasing diversity of recruitment and hiring. Women and visible minority/racialized faculty, preferably post-tenure, should be included on hiring committees. **To increase diversity, it can be helpful to appoint some search committee members from outside the department.** Note, however, that women and minorities are often asked to do significantly more service, so it is important to ensure equal loads for service.

It is our observation that women do in fact carry larger committee work loads. **We recommend implementing explicit expectations for committee work that can be assessed and/or evaluated.**

### **2.2 Advertising and expanding the scope of the search**

Aim to define the search as broadly as possible to increase the chances of diversity in the application pool.

UBC and Faculty of Science recruiting policies require the inclusion of the following:

*"Equity and diversity are essential to academic excellence. An open and diverse community fosters the inclusion of voices that have been underrepresented or discouraged. We encourage applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds enumerated under the B.C. Human Rights Code, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, racialization, disability, political belief, religion, marital or family status, age, and/or status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person. UBC's strategic plan identifies inclusion as one of our key priorities. We welcome colleagues with the experiences and competencies that can contribute to our principles of inclusion, equity and diversity throughout campus life. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority."*



Ask candidates to include a diversity statement. These may be used to assess candidates abilities to address the university's strategic goals on equity, diversity and inclusion.

- Including a diversity statement in EOAS searches started in Fall of 2018. Its inclusion is now required by the Faculty of Science.

## 2.3 Creation of a diverse applicant pool

Effective recruitment produces diverse applicant pools. **Active solicitation** is an integral part of recruiting diverse applicant pools. Resources to assist in this include:

- U. of Michigan's [ADVANCE recruitment resources](#) and their [handbook](#) for faculty searches and hiring
- **(1) *Building on Success: Increasing the Percentage of Women Faculty in the Sciences:*** [www.winsett.ca/GetSiteFile/ProjectCatalyst.pdf](http://www.winsett.ca/GetSiteFile/ProjectCatalyst.pdf)
- **(2) U. of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Faculty Search Committee Toolkit:** <https://equity.ucla.edu/programs-resources/faculty-search-process/>  
<https://equity.ucla.edu/programs-resources/faculty-search-process/faculty-search-committee-resources/>
- **(3) U. of Michigan's Faculty Recruitment Handbook:** <https://advance.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Handbook-for-Faculty-Searches-and-Hiring.pdf>
- **(4) U. of Michigan's ADVANCE recruitment resources:** <https://advance.umich.edu/resources/>
- **(5) U. of Washington's Faculty Recruitment Toolkit:** [www.washington.edu/diversity/faculty-advancement/faculty-recruitment-toolkit/](http://www.washington.edu/diversity/faculty-advancement/faculty-recruitment-toolkit/)
- **(6) U. of Wisconsin's *Reviewing Applicants – Research on Bias and Assumptions:*** [http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure\\_3rdEd.pdf](http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_3rdEd.pdf)
- **(7) U. of Wisconsin's *Searching for Excellence and Diversity:*** <https://wiseli.wisc.edu/searching-for-excellence-diversity-guidebooks/>
- **(8) *Faculty Diversity: Problems and Solutions.* JoAnn Moody, Routledge 2004.** A copy of Chapter 4 of this book is available from the Dean's office. This chapter contains excellent suggestions for administrators as well as search committees.

**We recommend** EOAS create a database specific to our fields to identify faculty candidates from underrepresented groups.

## 2.4 Evaluation of applications and selection of the interview shortlist

Beware of unconscious bias or stereotyping and review literature on ways these may influence judgements. [Reviewing Applications: Research on Bias and Assumptions](#) is included in the tool-kit and should be read by all committee members.

## 2.5 During and after the interview

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The search committee should use a common evaluation form for candidates covering all objective criteria that will be used to evaluate ideal candidates--including how candidates will contribute to our principles of inclusion, equity and diversity in their application. Recommendations for these criteria can be found below. Consider, do the questions asked reflect the job search criteria? Do you expect broad participation by department members (including graduate students) outside of the search committee, in completing the evaluation form?

- *Publications*
- *Research proposals*
- *Training/Skill*
- *Fortitude/Determination*
- *Teaching/Presentation*
- *Contributions to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* [added to EOAS in Fall 2018]
- *Leadership/Departmental Service*
- *Letters of Reference*

### Past Search Rubrics in EOAS

- (1) Discipline-Based Education Research Search: [faculty search criteria](#) and [rubric](#)
- (2) Rubric from Atmospheric Search
- (3) [Placeholder]
- (4) [Placeholder]

## EOAS Faculty and Candidate Demographic Data

### Current EOAS Faculty

Classification Title	Sex (Male)	Count	%	Sex (Female)	Count	%
Lecturer	M	2	33%	F	4	67%
Assoc. Prof Teaching (tenure)	M	1	33%	F	2	67%
Professor, Teaching (tenure)	M	1	50%	F	1	50%
Asst. Professor (tenure-track)	M	5	63%	F	3	38%
Asst. Professor (tenure)	M	1	100%	F	0	0%
Assoc. Professor (tenure)	M	1	25%	F	3	75%
Assoc. Professor without review	M	1	100%	F	0	0%
Professor (tenure)	M	20	80%	F	5	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36%</b>

Self-reported lecturer and faculty demographic data for EOAS. All tenure-stream faculty in EOAS identify as white.

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## Representation of Racialized/PoC/Visible Minority (R/PoC/VM) persons

Unit	Representation of Racialized Persons								
	UBC Science Faculty 2020						Pool		
	Tenure-stream faculty	Educational Leadership	Research Stream	Research Stream by Rank			PDF (NSF)	Candidates	
	Total	Total	Total	Asst. Prof	Assoc. Prof	Full Prof		Re-search	Edu Lead
EOAS	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%	22%	42%
FoS	17% (53/304)	25% (13/51)	16% (40/253)	29%	n.s.	16%	32%	28% (2493/8950)	40% (529/1318)

- A suppressed number<sup>2</sup> of new hires were R/VM/PoC candidates out of 13 open-search hires in the past ten years.

## Representation of Women

Unit	Representation of Women								
	UBC Science Faculty 2020						Pool		
	Tenure-stream faculty	Educational Leadership	Research Stream	Research Stream by Rank			PDF (NSF)	Candidates	
	Total	Total	Total	Asst. Prof	Assoc. Prof	Full Prof		Re-search	Edu Lead
EOAS	31%	60%	27%	25%	75%	20%	38%	33%	30%
FoS	28% (120/425)	51% (33/65)	24% (87/360)	36% (20/55)	27% (18/67)	21% (49/238)	38%	22% (2077/9402)	29% (394/1370)

Six (46%) new hires were women out of 13 open-search hires in the past ten years.

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Faculty: UBC UBC Employment Equity Survey Survey, 1-Nov-2020 snapshot of UBC Science faculty respondents (tenure-stream survey response rate was 74% for Faculty of Science (FoS), 81% for EOAS); Pool – PDF (post-doctoral fellows): NSF, 2017. Pool – Candidates, FoS: 125 candidate diversity surveys conducted for open FoS searches in past 10 hiring seasons (2010/11-2019/20, average response rate: 68%) - 101 surveys for Research stream, 24 for EduLead. (135 candidates were hired in these 125 searches). Pool – Candidates, EOAS: 12 candidate-diversity surveys conducted for open searches in past 10 hiring seasons (2010/11-2019/20, average response rate: 58%) - 10 surveys for Research stream, 2 for EduLead. (13 candidates hired in these 12 searches).  
“n.s.” = number suppressed

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<sup>2</sup> Number suppressed if 1-3, for reasons of privacy

<sup>3</sup> Sources: *Faculty*: UBC HRMS, 20-Oct-2020; *Pool data*: as above.