



Hiring and/or Admissions Policies - Georgia Institute of Technology

This is what was found by GT-EAS URGE at the Georgia Institute of Technology on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies (text in red), as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve (text in blue).

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

Georgia Tech is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any classification protected by federal, state, or local law. Consistent with its obligations under federal law, each company that is a federal contractor or subcontractor is committed to taking affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified women, minorities, disabled individuals and veterans.

Source:

<https://ohr.gatech.edu/employment/careers/EEO#:~:text=Georgia%20Tech%20is%20an%20equal,%2C%20state%2C%20or%20local%20law>

From EAS faculty job ads: Georgia Tech is an equal education/employment opportunity institution dedicated to building a diverse community. We strongly encourage applications from women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. Georgia Tech has policies to promote a healthy work-life balance and is aware that attracting faculty may require meeting the needs of two careers.

Proposed Improvement: our pod discussed that, when faculty write their own statements for ads for postdoctoral or graduate student positions, they are changed to match the text from EEO statements created by Georgia Tech. It may be beneficial to allow faculty the freedom to write their own statements if their statement promotes diversity and inclusivity in a manner that supersedes that of the institution's statement(s).

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

Advertisements for faculty and staff positions seem to be posted on highly-visited academic job websites, such as “HigherEdJobs,” “Indeed” as well as more geoscience-based web resources such as AGU Pathfinder Career Centre, AMS Career Center

Informal communication between faculty, staff and prospective hires occurs as well - this can lead to hiring issues (e.g., people may want to hire colleagues that are “friends,” however this prevents others from having a fair chance at a position)

External communication with geoscience email listservs

Proposed Improvement: With respect to improving diversity and inclusion, it’s important to make sure that advertisements for faculty and staff positions are shared as broadly as possible. It’s also important that, once the hiring committee starts looking through applications, personal biases (i.e., selecting “favorites” based on previous work connections or connections with friends) do not intervene. This could be potentially tackled by setting department guidelines for hiring that promote objective analysis of faculty and staff applicants so that candidates are selected as fairly as possible.

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?

Faculty hires: typically required to submit a cover letter, resume/CV, a statement of research interests, a description of their teaching interests and their advising/mentoring philosophy, letters of recommendation (typically 3)

Proposed Improvement: Require statement of diversity with an emphasis on having applicants provide action items they would take if hired to directly improve diversity and inclusion

Staff hires: cover letter, resume/CV, letters of recommendation

Proposed Improvement: Require statement of diversity with an emphasis on having applicants provide action items they would take if hired to directly improve diversity and inclusion

Graduate students: Personal statement, resume/CV, letters of recommendation; we no longer require GRE scores; TOEFL required for international students whose native language is not English (not required for international students that have attended U.S. college or university for a minimum of one academic year), academic transcripts

More information: <https://eas.gatech.edu/graduate/graduate-application-requirements>

There is a \$75 fee for graduate applicants. There is a possibility to waive this *upon request.*

Proposed Improvement: We should work to reduce or eliminate this fee, even if it requires reallocating replacement funds from another source.

The following application materials are required to be submitted by all graduate applicants. Most of these items will be submitted via the online application.

- The Personal Statement is your opportunity to clearly establish your research interests and career objectives, in approximately 300 to 400 words (the online system permits a maximum of 4,000 characters). In your statement, indicate past research and professional experience and your reasons for wishing to pursue your particular program of interest in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Georgia Tech, as opposed to another university. It should also discuss your training and experience, and should mention honors, memberships, and extracurricular activities. Specifically you should indicate research experience, fellowships (NSF, DOE, EPA etc...) and any scholarship applications you might have in process. A resume is not required, but can be submitted to concisely document your background and credentials.
- The letters of reference represent key sources of information. Select references who know your strengths, interests, and abilities to excel in academic and professional environments. If you are currently enrolled in a graduate program, at least one of your recommendations should be from a faculty member who supervises your work.
- Interview is optional and applicants will be specifically invited by individual faculty members. This interview provides additional opportunity to express your research interest and background and to ask questions about academic programs, potential research projects, facilities, financial aids, etc.
- Application Form: Submitted online. Complete all requested information. This is a standard document for the entire Institute.
- \$75 Application Fee (\$85 for international applicants): Payment is made at completion of online application.

Proposed Improvement: Work to reduce or eliminate this fee, even if it requires reallocating replacement funds from another source. The statement should offer immediate exceptions (so students don't have to ask about it)

Example: How School of Mathematics at Georgia Tech has addressed above (source: <https://math.gatech.edu/graduate-admissions>):

“NEW: In order to promote more diversity within the PhD applicant pool, the School of Math will waive the PhD application fee for members of underrepresented groups in mathematical sciences who are US citizens or

permanent residents (Green card holders). To apply for a PhD fee waiver, please send a copy of your resume or transcript to dgs@math.gatech.edu. In the message, please mention your citizenship and the aspect of your identity that is underrepresented (such as gender or racial/ethnic group). We recognize that diversity comes in many forms, and can also grant a limited number of waivers due to financial hardship. Requesting a fee waiver will have no bearing on admission decisions.”

- Application for Georgia Residence Status: You must complete this form only if you claim Georgia residency. Georgia residency implies that you have lived in Georgia for at least twelve months, with a primary purpose other than attending an educational institution in the state. The residency decision is made at the institutional level and has no bearing on your admission to the graduate program, only on the level of tuition that you would be charged as an enrolled student.
- For Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the required minimum total score on the internet-based TOEFL exam is 90. The paper-based TOEFL exam is still accepted with a minimum score of 577. Before an application package is reviewed by the faculty, a passing TOEFL score must be on file. Georgia Tech's Institute Code for TOEFL registration is 5248.
- International applicants who have attended a U.S. college or university for a minimum of one academic year are not required to provide a TOEFL score. However, a transcript from the U.S. college or university must be provided in order to qualify for this exemption.

Undergraduate students: “Holistic” review process for first-year and transfer students; includes submitting materials within the context of the following categories below:

First-Year Students:

- Academic Preparation - based on high school transcript; GPA weighted on 100 point scale; AP and IB courses, AICE program, dual-enrollment taken into consideration

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/first-year/academic-preparation>

- Standardized Testing - This is from the GT admissions website regarding standardized testing for Summer and Fall 2021 applicants:

“Due to the uncertainty of scheduling standardized tests during Covid-19, the University System of Georgia (USG) announced a temporary adjustment to admission requirements for USG institutions.

First-year applicants to Georgia Tech will not need to submit a SAT or ACT score to be considered for admission in 2021. We hope this will bring you some relief

and reduce any pressure you may have felt to schedule or sit for an exam during a global pandemic.”

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/freshman/standardized-tests>

- Contribution to Community

From the GT admissions website:

“Students often ask what makes a good record or they believe there are certain things they need to list on their record. In reality, we are most interested in learning what you are passionate about, and we value the different interests our students bring to Georgia Tech. Some of the traits we value in this portion of the application include:

- *Commitment*
- *Self-motivation*
- *Personal Responsibility*
- *Compassion for Others*
- *Initiative*
- *Leadership*
- *Entrepreneurism*
- *Intellectual Curiosity”*

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/first-year/contribution-to-community>

- Personal Essays

Original purpose: assess student writing ability and to learn more about the student; help to assess “mutual fit”

Fall 2021 change (from GT admissions website): *“For 2021 applicants, we have assessed the most important aspects of the long and short essays and have decided that we will no longer utilize the long essay portion of the Common Application. If submitted, we will not consider this essay as part of your application review.”*

New “personal essay” policy: 50-300 word responses to two short answer questions:

1. *“Why do you want to study your chosen major specifically at Georgia Tech?”*
2. *All applicants must choose one of the two questions below:*
 - a. *Georgia Tech is committed to creating solutions to some of the world’s most pressing challenges. Tell us how you have improved or hope to improve the human condition in your community.*

- b. *If you feel that your personal or community background can provide additional insight to your application that we have not already seen elsewhere, please take this opportunity to share that information with us.*

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/freshman/personal-essays>

- Recommendations

“Recommendations are optional and not required with your application. Should you choose to submit recommendations, we will only accept one (1) recommendation from your high school or college counselor and one (1) from the teacher of your choice. Any additional recommendations will not be considered with your application.”

“Counselors and teachers may provide an external perspective on you as a person and applicant to Georgia Tech. We expect you to provide us with all information pertinent to your application, and your recommender may provide additional perspective and insight on that information.”

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/freshman/recommendations>

- Interview

“Georgia Tech is a lively and collaborative atmosphere, and it is imperative that students have the ability to contribute to classroom discussions and engage in the Georgia Tech community outside of the classroom.

Applicants who are non-native English speakers have the option to participate in a third-party, unscripted interview. Interviewing in this format allows you the opportunity to personally discuss your academic and personal background and demonstrate your English language proficiency.

Companies providing these services include InitialView and Vericant. Interviews must be completed and submitted prior to November 15 for Early Action consideration and February 1 for Regular Decision.

We do not conduct alumni, in person, phone or online interviews with applicants to Georgia Tech.”

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/first-year/interview>

- Major Selection

“Undergraduate Admission seeks to ensure an academically diverse first-year class, which means during our holistic review process we consider many factors,

including the major listed on your application. In our review of your application we expect to see evidence of your interest in and preparation for the major/college that you list on your application.”

Students are allowed to change their major - “Georgia Tech's official major change policy states admitted first-years may change their major during the fall of their first year on campus.”

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/freshman/major-selection>

- Institutional Fit

“If you are applying to Georgia Tech, you will be reviewed through a holistic admission process where we consider every single element of your application and weigh that in comparison not only with the applicant pool, but also with institutional priorities.

This type of evaluation means that every piece of your application is important – course rigor, GPA, test scores, contribution to your community and essays. We have outlined what we look for in each portion of the application, but it is important to remember that all of these factors, not one, help us determine not only if you are an excellent student, but whether or not you would be an excellent fit here at Georgia Tech.

Holistic admission is utilized to ensure enrollment of a first-year class who will be diverse, innovative thinkers and problem solvers. A diverse class of students from many backgrounds has proven to be fertile soil for creativity. We also want a class who studies a variety of disciplines, so the major you put on your application and evidence of your interest in this major is an indicator of how you would fit in the upcoming class. These are examples of institutional priorities, and how factors outside of your GPA and test scores will affect your admission decision.”

Source: <https://admission.gatech.edu/freshman/institutional-fit>

Transfer Students

Holistic process is similar to that of first year students. Transfer students, depending on the major they apply for, must complete a minimum number of courses (link to [course requirements by major](#))

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?

Undergraduate Admissions - this is out of our control in EAS; even when we have had department representatives invited to help make decisions for students on the “wait list,” we have no input with respect to the “holistic” review process described above

Our department acceptance rate with respect to Underrepresented Minority (URM) students was ~35% during the last admissions cycle

Proposed Improvement: while undergraduate admissions is out of the control of individual departments, it may be advantageous to have a representative from each department be part of the application review process to provide insight and their expertise based on what they have observed in terms of accepted first-year and transfer students’ successes and failures. For example, an academic advisor may be a good representative from each department to participate in the application review and decision process.

Graduate Admissions - there have been holistic grad admissions workshops offered to GT grad program chairs and rubrics circulated and encouraged this year but not required yet. Here is the rubric that GT grad program chairs have been using:

Category	High	Medium	Low	Notes
Academic Preparation	A- or better in core STEM OR significant improvement in grades over undergrad career AND concerning grades are explained in the statement	B- or better in core STEM OR moderate improvement in grades over undergrad career AND concerning grades are explained in the statement	C+ or below in core STEM OR no improvement in grades over undergrad career OR concerning grades are NOT explained in the statement	
Research potential	Expressed interest/ commitment in chosen research area AND significant research experiences	Expressed interest/ commitment in chosen research area BUT lacks significant research experience	Vague/generic interest in research AND lacks significant research experience	Examples of significant research experiences include upper-undergrad research credits, internships, REU and senior thesis
DEI and community building	Multiple records of engagement in diversity/equity/inclusion/ community building in thoughts or in action OR sustained leadership in DEI activities	One record of engagement in diversity/equity/inclusion/ community building in thoughts or in action	No record of engagement in diversity/equity/inclusion/ community building in thoughts or in action	
Non-cognitive competencies	Multiple positive evidences of non-cognitive skills (3+) in the statement and reference letters	A few evidences of non-cognitive skills (~2) in the statement and reference letters	Limited evidences of non-cognitive skills (~1) in the statement or reference letters	Examples of such skills are: curiosity, confidence, perseverance, organizational skills, self-awareness, teamwork, work ethic, etc
Alignment with the program	Stated research interest overlaps with multiple groups in EAS	Stated research interest overlaps with one group in EAS	Research interest does not overlap with EAS	

Our department was recently accepted into the AGU Bridge Program!

Faculty and Staff - Usually, someone on the hiring committee derives a rubric for assessing faculty and/or staff candidates; not sure if this rubric is consistent

Proposed Improvement: making sure rubric used for hiring faculty and staff is consistent

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

Undergraduate Admissions - admissions personnel not directly tied to our department; only interact with prospective students through department and campus tours, IAASM (It's All About Science and Math) recruiting events, outreach events (e.g., Atlanta Science Festival, school visits, summer camps)

See "Proposed Improvement" above regarding evaluation of undergraduate students

Graduate Admissions - faculty mentors; faculty interact with prospective graduate students accepted into program during prospective student event every Spring semester

Faculty and Staff - committee created; committee members usually have similar research, teaching and/or service interests relative to candidates being considered; for faculty hires, usually all faculty, staff and graduate students are invited to meet with candidates that make "final round" of interview process; for staff hires, faculty sometimes invited (but not always)

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

Our department recently completed an "Academic Program Review" facilitated by a review panel composed of external members. For changing hiring and/or admissions policies, these decisions would have to be considered by the President of the University and ultimately the University System of Georgia (USG), which controls the public colleges and Universities within the state of Georgia.

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?

At the faculty level, GT does have options to hire as ToO ("Target of Opportunity") and does consider dual-career requests.

Also, it is difficult to get any demographic data on faculty hiring (e.g. applications, offers, acceptances). This issue was raised in the Pod 3 deliverable. The data is either not collected or not made available.

Proposed Improvement: We should strive to collect demographic data on faculty hiring and share it at least internally, if not also externally.