

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Deliverable - Admissions and Hiring Policies Harmful Algal Bloom Pod, WHOI

For our deliverable, we carried out an audit of different types of position postings at our institution (<https://careers.whoi.edu/>). These positions spanned multiple categories (e.g. technical staff, MIT/WHOI joint program students, marine crew, etc.). For each posting, we summarized the following:

1. Position and department
2. 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?
3. Is equal opportunity/inclusion language included? If so, please include or summarize here.
4. What improvements could be made to increase the diversity of applicant pool as well as retention of these individuals (e.g., cohort hiring, mentoring, professional development).

Additional comments and information related to the suggested deliverable questions are included where appropriate in response to the audit questions.

MIT/WHOI Joint program

1. <https://mit.whoi.edu/admissions/apply/how-to-apply/>
2. Requirements: 3 letters of recommendation, unofficial transcripts for college/university, Statement of Objectives (2 pages), support from a prospective advisor, and TBD GRE scores. Typically they do require the GRE, but they eliminated this requirement due to COVID-19. A decision has not been made for

the 2022 admissions cycle regarding the GRE requirement. In the Biology department, MIT/Joint program applications are first screened by a few faculty who create a short list of admissible candidates based on analysis of interests and opportunities over the weekend and are subsequently reviewed and discussed by a larger faculty group. Increasing diversity is a priority and is part of this discussion.

- a. Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Requiring standardized tests such as the GRE is exclusionary, and I would recommend eliminating this requirement to lower the barrier to entry. Support from a potential advisor may also create a barrier to entry because of future advisors are more likely to select students who are like them.
3. Equal opportunity/inclusion language? Yes: *Increasing representation, having a diverse student body, and advancing inclusion are critical to the MIT-WHOI JP's mission, and to the missions of both MIT and WHOI. "A diverse student body is and has long been critical to the educational mission of MIT. We are committed to providing our students "with an education that combines rigorous academic study and the excitement of discovery with the support and intellectual stimulation of a diverse campus community.""* From <https://mitadmissions.org/policies/#diversity>
4. Improvements for retention?
 - a. Expanding cohort hiring, mentoring, and professional development would certainly help retention. Required microaggression training for everyone would also help prevent a hostile work environment. A larger BIPOC community that is actively supported by the MIT-WHOI would also help retain BIPOC employees. Allowing students to live in Cambridge during all years of their graduate studies would also help because it is much more diverse than Woods Hole.

Postdoctoral Investigators

1. **Postdoctoral Investigator position, Biology Department**
2. Requirements: Cover letter, complete curriculum vitae, and names and contact information for three references.
 - a. These are pretty standard requirements for a postdoc position and provide important info to a hiring committee. I don't think any of these are particularly exclusionary.
3. Equal opportunity/inclusion language? Yes, *"WHOI is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer/Disabled/Veterans/M/F. We encourage Veterans and those with Disabilities to apply. Applications are reviewed confidentially. Applicants that require accommodation in the job application process are*

encouraged to contact us at (508) 289-2253 or email eeo@whoi.edu for assistance.”

4. *Improvements to increase diversity and retention:*
 - a. This is a posting for 2 postdoctoral investigators so is sort of a cohort hiring situation, which is great! It specifically states that formal mentoring and career guidance will be provided which is also great.
 - b. Cohort hiring, mentoring, and professional development would certainly help retention. Required microaggression training for everyone would also help prevent a hostile work environment. A larger BIPOC community that is actively supported by WHOI would also help retain BIPOC employees.

Marine Crew

1. **Position 1: Able Body Seaman; Position 2: Ordinary Seaman** (similar requirements for both so they will be combined below...)
2. *Requirements:* high school diploma, sea experience, USCG/DOT/TWIC certifications, long list of physical requirements (including the ability to lift >50 pounds)
 - i. Some certifications listed may not be known to the applicant, clearer instructions or resources should be provided for where/how to take the necessary exams or courses
 - ii. No college education required, widens the applicant pool
3. *Equal opportunity/inclusion language?* Text at bottom of posting “*WHOI is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer/Disabled/Veterans/M/F. We encourage Veterans and those with Disabilities to apply. Applications are reviewed confidentially. Applicants that require accommodation in the job application process are encouraged to contact us at (508) 289-2253 or email eeo@whoi.edu for assistance.”*
 - a. However, the job-listing is for an “Able Body Seaman,” and the description heavily implies that certain disabilities are not compatible with this job
4. *Improvements to increase diversity and retention:* Both of these positions are temporary and do not come with benefits, but require the applicant to be prepared to work at sea for 3-5 months continuously, specifically listing the possibility of 12+ hour days and 7-day per week work. There are many people who, on socioeconomic basis alone, will not be able to take on such a significant time commitment *without* the guarantee of benefits. Marine jobs are strenuous and inherently dangerous, and providing benefits (even for temporary positions) could help increase both diversity and retention.

Technical/Research staff positions

1. **Research Assistant, Biology Department**
2. Requirements: Bachelor's Degree, some experience with molecular techniques (pipetting, PCR), resume, 2 letters of recommendation, (cover letter recommended), unofficial transcripts
3. Equal opportunity language included? Yes, boilerplate: "*WHOI is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer/Disabled/Veterans/M/F. We encourage Veterans and those with Disabilities to apply. Applications are reviewed confidentially. Applicants that require accommodation in the job application process are encouraged to contact us at (508) 289-2253 or email eeo@whoi.edu for assistance.*"
4. Improvements to increase diversity and retention: Share more broadly not just on WHOI careers

Engineering staff positions

1. **Engineering Assistant - AOPE**
2. Requirements: HS diploma plus 1-3 years progress toward an engineering degree; Working understanding of several specified software/scripting languages; writing/communication skills; highly desirable experience includes: Quantitative analysis of system performance, Control systems, Robotics nav and planning, Fundamentals of electronic systems, Embedded processor (Arduino, RPi or similar), RS232 serial communication, TCP/IP networking.
 - a. Must be able to obtain TWIC, be US citizen
 - b. Significant physical requirements and sea duty requirements
3. Equal opportunity/including language included? Yes. Boilerplate at bottom of ad.
4. Improvements to increase diversity and retention: This is an example of an ad that must be written for a specific individual. The requirements are very extensive, especially for potential applicants who may have only completed 1(!) year of post secondary training. It is not inclusive.

1. **Robotics Engineer (Electrical) - AOPE**

2. Requirements: Engineer II - Bachelor's degree in engineering or appropriate field with 3-4 years of related experience or Master's degree in a relevant Engineering or science environment. Research Engineer: Ph.D. in related engineering field, or Master's degree in an Engineering or appropriate field with several years of related experience, or Bachelor's degree in an Engineering or appropriate field with more than seven years of related experience.
 - a. Special Requirements: TWIC; Must be a US Citizen; Ability to acquire Security Clearance; Must have a valid driver's license; Significant physical and sea duty requirements outlined.

3. Equal opportunity/including language included? Yes. Boilerplate at bottom of ad.
4. Improvements to increase diversity and retention: At minimum this ad could include language asserting that the group values diversity and cultivates a work environment where wide ranging opportunities and solutions are considered.

IT Positions

1. **Principal Systems Administrator & Data Manager**
2. Requirements:
 - a. Cover letter and resumé/CV
 - b. Bachelors and/or Masters in computer science or relevant field, relevant experience (Sys Admin advertised as 10+ years of experience)
 - c. TWIC card or ability to obtain one for Data Manager (OOI)
 - d. More emphasis on scientific literacy & familiarity with oceanographic data for Data Manager position
 - e. Experience with programming, computing, and server maintenance emphasized over education
3. Equal Opportunity language? Yes. *“WHOI is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer/Disabled/Veterans/M/F. We encourage Veterans and those with Disabilities to apply. Applications are reviewed confidentially. Applicants that require accommodation in the job application process are encouraged to contact us at (508) 289-2253 or email eeo@whoi.edu for assistance”*
 - a. Physical requirements are worded in a way that potentially includes accommodations for disability
 - b. Data Manager position requires annual sea time and lists more intensive physical demands
4. Improvements to increase diversity and retention: Postings could be listed more broadly to attract candidates that may not search the WHOI site or be aware of IT opportunities. No salary range is suggested