

Hiring and Admissions Policies for Department of Geology & Environmental Earth Science (GEES), Miami University

This is what was found by Miami University Pod at Miami University on Hiring and Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

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

EO/AA Statement/Clery Act included at the bottom of job postings:

“Miami University, an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, encourages applications from minorities, women, protected veterans and individuals with disabilities. Miami University prohibits harassment, discrimination and retaliation on the basis of age (40 years or older), color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, military status, national origin (ancestry), pregnancy, race, religion, sex/gender, status as a parent or foster parent, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status in its application and admission processes, educational programs and activities, facilities, programs or employment practices. Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities related to employment should be directed to

ADAFacultyStaff@miamioh.edu or 513-529-3560. As part of the University’s commitment to maintaining a healthy and safe living, learning, and working environment, we encourage you to read Miami University’s Annual Security & Fire Safety Report at:

<http://www.MiamiOH.edu/campus-safety/annual-report/index.html>, which contains information about campus safety, crime statistics, and our drug and alcohol abuse and prevention program designed to prevent the unlawful possession, use, and distribution of drugs and alcohol on campus and at university events and activities. This report also contains information on programs and policies designed to prevent and address sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Each year, email notification of this website is made to all faculty, staff, and enrolled students. Written notification is also provided to prospective students and employees. Hard copies of the Annual Security & Fire Safety Report may be obtained from the Miami University Police Department at (513) 529-2223.”

Graduate programs are not advertised besides on our own webpage (see below) and that of the Miami University Graduate School.

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

Job positions are advertised on GEES department webpage, Miami University Human Resources page, and more broadly in the geoscience community on the Geological Society of America (GSA) jobs page, and Inside Higher Ed jobs page.

Graduate program is advertised at the Annual GSA meeting with a table, hosted by Department Chair Liz Widom, Lab Manager Dave Kuentz, and other current faculty and students.

What are the requirements for an applicant? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?

Job postings require status as a US citizen, a lawful permanent resident, admitted for residence as applicant under the 1986 immigration amnesty law, refugee, or asylee. Other application materials required depend on the type of position, but for academic positions the position and salary level are dependent on degree achieved (for example, a recent search for a teaching-focused position required a completed PhD at Assistant Teaching Professor level and a completed MS for Assistant Lecturer). Application materials requested were a letter of application, curriculum vitae, evidence of effective teaching, and names and contact information for three referees.

On February 19, 2020, our department approved dropping the GRE requirement for graduate program applications. Application requirements for Geology PhD, MS, MA programs: CV, Personal Statement, three letters of recommendation, proof of English proficiency (score of 80 or above on TOEFL, or 6.5 or above on IELTS)

Graduate Admission page on GEES webpage:

<https://www.miamioh.edu/cas/academics/departments/geology/admission/graduate-admission/index.html>

Scholarships and Funding information on GEES webpage:

<https://www.miamioh.edu/cas/academics/departments/geology/admission/scholarships-funding/index.html>

Program requirements on GEES Graduate program webpage:

<https://miamioh.edu/cas/academics/departments/geology/academics/graduate-studies/requirements/index.html>

Miami Graduate School requirements:

“We require all international applicants who studied in a non-English speaking country or institution to submit proof of English proficiency. Students applying for conditional admission must submit proof of English proficiency at the time of application.

We accept unofficial copies of transcripts and test scores at the time of application and require official final copies before the start of the first term of study.”

How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?

University-wide search and appointment policies for faculty positions are available here:

<https://www.miamioh.edu/policy-library/employees/faculty/employment-of-faculty/search-and-appointment-procedures.html>

Policies for searches and appointments of unclassified administrative staff (UAS) are available here:

<https://www.miamioh.edu/policy-library/employees/unclassified-administrative-staff/search-and-appointment-procedures.html>

Within the department, rubrics for evaluating job candidates vary among positions and are not publicly available, but follow Miami University and College of Arts and Sciences guidelines for the hiring of state employees.

For graduate positions, the Graduate School sends completed applications to the Department Administrative Assistant, Cathy Edwards. The faculty are then notified of the applicants who are applying to work with them, and those interested faculty review those particular applications. MS program applicants are evaluated only by their prospective advisor; PhD program applicants are evaluated by their prospective advisor and the Graduate Admissions Committee members Mike Brudzinski, Claire McLeod, and Carrie Tyler.

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

Selection committees for open job positions vary based on the nature and subdisciplinary area of the position. Department Administrative Assistant Cathy Edwards is the contact person listed in job postings for inquiries, and Accounting Technician Gail Burger works with candidates for travel-related reimbursements after a campus visit. Department Chair Liz Widom communicates with job candidates about the plans and logistics of campus visits. During the visit, all available faculty interact with the candidate in some form, as well as groups of graduate students and undergraduate students.

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

Our program was last evaluated externally in 2017 and admission and hiring processes were not included in the evaluation (MS will check on this).

Considerations and Plans for Policy Modifications

1. We will pursue establishing rubrics/sets of criteria for search committees to use to help evaluate the initial set of faculty candidates more equitably.
2. Recognizing that successful graduate applicants are typically those faculty have met in person or talked to beforehand, we should consider strategies for more broad recruiting efforts, and depending less upon the established professional networks of faculty to recruit students.
3. Guidance on what we are looking for in a personal statement could be helpful to some students who aren't receiving good guidance in their application process, but our faculty expressed concern that it could make personal statements too uniform and make it

harder to evaluate internal motivation, which is a common quality among successful graduate students.

4. Previous research experience is a fundamental thing our faculty look for in prospective students as a hallmark of understanding what research is and an indicator of future success; however, not all prospective students have access to research experience, so faculty should consider evidence of research skills too. Previous research experience can act as a gatekeeper in the graduate admissions process.
5. Zoom interviews with prospective grad student candidates could be helpful given the limited information in the application, but we need to recognize that it can introduce implicit bias and some candidates may not connect as well via Zoom, may live in a distant time zone, and/or may not have access to reliable internet capabilities.
6. We recognize work needs to be done to ensure equity across internal and external applications for our graduate programs; it appears that prospective students who have completed an undergraduate degree within our department have a less involved graduate admissions process, and that may not be equitable.
7. We recognize that the existing review process for graduate program applicants has few checks on potential faculty biases, particularly for MS program applicants whose application might only be reviewed by the faculty advisor to whom they are applying. We will reevaluate this process.