



Admissions and Hiring Policies

This is what was found by Our Union with Purpose, an unaffiliated pod on Policies for Hiring and Admissions.

Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod.

Table of Contents:

1. Personal reflection: Graduate School Admission circa 2008 pg 1
2. King County, Washington response to deliverable prompts pg 2
3. Personal reflection: geoscience software job application process pg 4

Personal reflection: Graduate School Admission in Oceanography circa 2008

Homophily was definitely a factor in my graduate school admission. My advisor selected me because of my similar career background. I also previously attended a relatively prestigious university, so I imagine that that prestige only helped my admission. GRE exams were a part of the admission process. I was unable to find published records regarding admission statistics for my graduate school.

King County, Washington Department of Natural Resources and Parks response to deliverable prompts (non-academic government organization that employs geoscientists, engineers, and other scientists from entry-level to regional leadership positions.

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

1. King County is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Employer. No person is unlawfully excluded from employment opportunities based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy), age, genetic information, disability, veteran status, or other protected class. Our EEO policy applies to all employment actions, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, selection for training, promotion, transfer, demotion, layoff, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation.

2. Guided by our "[True North](#)", we are making King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive. We value diversity, inclusion and belonging in our workplace and workforce. To reach this goal we are committed to workforce equity. Equitable recruiting, support, and retention is how we will obtain the highest quality workforce in our region; a workforce that shares and will help advance our guiding principles--we are one team; we solve problems; we focus on the customer; we drive for results; we are racially just; we respect all people; we lead the way; and we are responsible stewards. We encourage people of all backgrounds and identities to apply, including Native American and people of color, immigrants, refugees, women, LGBTQ+, people living with disabilities, and veterans.

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

County website. Personal networks. Local universities. LinkedIn and other online job sites. Outreach is being expanded and new groups are added all the time.

I passed on three of the Native American networks that were described in URGE session 4 to my HR manager for outreach and recruiting both staff and interns.

- **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?**

Resume, cover letter, online application, short answer responses to questions about the job.

- **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?**

- A rubric is used.

- Anti-bias training is provided to hiring panel participants prior to engagement. Anti-bias training video is included on Countywide hiring home page.
- Redacting names, school names, gender references is becoming more common but is practiced on a unit basis.
- Subject matter experts review portions of resumes and score them based on preset guidelines.

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

A hiring manager and HR representative are assigned. The hiring manager is the supervisor for the position. Together they create a hiring committee to review resumes and applications and interview candidates. Diverse hiring committees are encouraged and can result in over reliance on a too-small pool of current employees to serve on multiple committees.

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

Yes, several times. We have organizational development consultants both in-house and outside. Changes may be developed at the Section level and then moved up through the Division to Department. Review must be completed by HR managers and leg

- **Has your ~~university or company~~ local government organization 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?**

We have developed Special Duty Assignments and Term-limited positions to allow staff to “try out” positions and provide career advancement opportunities. We have internship programs for high school through college students and provide STEM career outreach programs to local schools. These practices provide good experience for the people who take these positions but do not often enough lead to real advancement, especially for younger people of color. But it does happen and we are working on how to increase the temporary to permanent career transition.

Personal reflection: geoscience software job application process

As a cis-gendered white male searching for a job in geoscience software this year, the concept from this week's reading which most impressed me was that of "homophily" as it relates to hiring decisions. Geoscience and software engineering are two fields in which people who share my socioeconomic, racial, and gender identities have been historically overrepresented. Thus it is not surprising that many of the interviewers I encountered looked like me. I found that in the interview process, I reflexively sought out points of personal connection to build rapport with the interviewer. This is a networking habit I've often employed in professional settings, and the points of personal connections I've learned to seek are often ones which are specific to my socioeconomic, racial, and gender identity: shared hobbies, geographies, and educational backgrounds. I am not aware of the specific criteria by which candidates for the various roles I applied to were evaluated (including, whether or not rubrics were used by the employers). From the applicant's perspective, job applications can be a highly opaque process. Regardless, completing the reading for this week's session revealed to me the ways in which my reflexive social habit of homophily-cultivation is one of the mechanisms by which racism is perpetuated in hiring decisions. Were I to be in a hiring capacity in the future, I commit to introducing methods for mitigating unconscious bias, such as rubric-based evaluation. The desire (conscious or otherwise) to find a "cultural fit" goes both ways, however. That is, as much as a potential employer may have evaluated me based on perceived homophily, I found that I too was looking for signs that I'd be able to "fit in." Perhaps it's worth mentioning that in my own experience, the search for homophily in an employer is certainly more nuanced than simply sharing an identity as "college educated white males." Indeed, there are many people who share that identity with whom I do not perceive a "homophilic" connection. Reflecting on what does trigger a perception of homophily is beyond the scope of this reflection, but beginning to consider it does bring to mind my own life-historical, place-based senses of belonging. In reflecting on these nuanced identities, I am left with a deep sense of the racial, socioeconomic, and cultural fragmentation which characterizes so many of our life experiences in the 21st century USA.