



Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University/Organization - Example URGE Deliverable

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

- **UMN/CSE/ESCI policies and procedures**

UMN Admission policy for undergrad: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/admissions>

UMN Admission policy for grad: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/maphdadmission>

CSE undergrad/major: <https://cse.umn.edu/college/application-major>

CSE grad: <https://cse.umn.edu/college/graduate-school>

ESCI Grad Application Procedures and Admission Policy:

<https://www.esci.umn.edu/programs/gradprospective>

UMN Hiring policy: <https://policy.umn.edu/hr/hiring>

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

- Standard EEO statement: “The University of Minnesota values a diverse faculty, which fosters a richness of perspectives and an inclusive environment, and whose members serve as role models for a diverse student body. The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The University supports the work-life balance of its faculty.” – From the last search. Is this the required language by the university? Can we add EEO statement within the main body of the advertisement?
- Other inclusion statements and resources publicly available:

¹ R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eoo-statement-samples, (2017).

² <https://careers.who.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/>

³ K. Cobb, #GRExit Resources, <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13215461.v1>, (2020).

⁴ J. Posselt, Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvjghw8s>, (2016).

⁵ <https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html>

⁶ K. Griffin, J. Bennett, T. York, Leveraging Promising Practices, Washington DC: Aspire Alliance, (2020).



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- **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**
 - Faculty advertisements posted/sent to:
 - Email lists and other professional networks by faculty
 - Paid advertisements in publications
 - Postings on job boards
 - The department maintains a list of sites to target, including professional organizations that are focused on supporting scientists who are members of underrepresented groups (e.g. AISES, SACNAS, NABG, AWG). We should ask for the list from the department's administrator.
 - Undergraduate/graduate student advertisements currently used:
 - Additional strategies for reaching faculty applicants:
 - Additional strategies for admissions: Admission process is decentralized; Visit/communicate with tribal and community colleges (North Star STEM Alliance conference at the U) in addition to high school; National name exchange program for underrepresented undergraduate students for grad admission (We should take advantage of this more); Individual faculty seeking out potential students; UMN booths at various National Conferences specifically for underrepresented groups (some are specific to geoscience); We should also take advantage of social media for underrepresented groups (e.g., Black in Geoscience); We (grad studies committee / DEI committee?) should compile these social media groups/listservs and distribute to anyone (dept and MGS) who is recruiting.

- **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?**
 - U of M Student applicant requirements:
 - Undergrad applicant requirements, as found [here](#):
 - Letters of recommendation: not required for admission
 - Fees: \$55
 - Test Scores: not required for admission
 - Grades: must submit self-reported academic record; transcript not required for admission
 - Essay: not required for admission
 - To apply to the geology major:
 - Automatic admission with completion of necessary technical courses with a 3.2 or above technical GPA
 - Consideration with completion of necessary technical courses with a 2.0 or above technical GPA



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- Graduate applicant requirements (ESCI Department):
 - Bachelor's degree: usually in geology, but chemistry, physics, biology, or environmental science are strongly encouraged
 - "Outstanding academic record"
 - Faculty member must agree to act as advisor
 - Letters of recommendation: yes, 3
 - Fees: International (\$95.00)
 - U.S. citizen/permanent resident (\$75.00)
 - Test Scores:
 - GRE: We no longer require a GRE score for our graduate program applications. Please do not include your GRE score in your application. We will not consider GRE scores that are sent. They are removed from the application.
 - For international students: TOEFL: 79 or above with section scores of 21 on writing and 19 on reading; IELTS: 6.5
 - TOEFL is used to gauge the grad students' language proficiency for the purpose of acquiring TAs. Based on the score for the speaking section, the students' role is determined (TA, facilitator, or no position). The university/CSE hosts another test (SETTA) to evaluate students' English proficiency. If the students cannot demonstrate sufficient proficiency, the advisors are financially responsible for the students.
 - Grades: unofficial transcript required to apply, official transcript required if admitted
 - Essay: Statement of Purpose required, Diversity statement optional
 - Additional materials: Optional to upload CV, abstracts, teaching/research experience list, publications
- Are any of these barriers that could be removed: Fee can be waived for domestic students through some scholarship and mentoring programs, but requires to meet some requirements (e.g., GPA); The department also waives the fee with the explanation of the circumstances.
- Problematic questions asked?
 - No problematic questions identified at this time.
 - Potentially uncomfortable demographic information requested, but these questions are optional



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- Faculty applicant requirements:
 - Cover letter
 - CV
 - Statements regarding teaching, research, and diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - Names/contact info for three letter-writers
 - Three letters of recommendation are requested from the applicants who make the 'long list'
- **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?**
 - Applicants evaluated by?
 - Grad applicants: Decentralized process, almost entirely up to PI who will be taking the student on. Lots of room for improvement
 - Faculty applicants:
 - Search committee (various member roles described below) does the work of organizing the search and creating long and short lists.
 - Very transparent process in ESCI where all faculty are able to see all applicants and ask for letters of recommendation from any applicants and provide input on the composition of long/short lists
 - Department uses a holistic review of applicants as opposed to a rubric or systematic approach. Traditionally, the department has valued interesting ideas and potential over numbers of publications for example
 - Applicant evaluation process public?
 - Faculty: No
 - Grad Student: No
 - Potential biases in current application evaluation?
 - Grad student hiring:
 - Evaluating applicants: up to individual discretion as opposed to systematic process
 - Reaching out to applicants: currently biased to personal networks of faculty members
 - Faculty hiring: Process is clearly intentional, and has less potential bias, but still the opportunity to improve outreach to candidates



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- Current strategies used to reduce bias?
 - Faculty Hiring:
 - The search committee meets with the Associate Dean and undertakes training related to implicit bias in hiring. Unless there is a lot of lead time, it may be difficult for all committee members to have formal training in an Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) workshop, but there are many online resources. The search committee chair is responsible for making sure that all members have some training, and that the topic of implicit bias has been discussed, with some oversight by the department head to confirm that this has occurred.
 - Oversight at the College level regarding all decisions made, specifically from the short list onward
 - Grad student hiring:
 - No unified, explicit strategies because it is a very decentralized process
- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**
 - **FACULTY HIRES**
 - Search committee is appointed by the department head in consultation with the search committee chair, and is also discussed with the CSE Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to assure a diverse committee.
 - Committee members:
 - Committee chair (usually full professor but can be associate professor),
 - ~3 ESCI professors of any rank/tenure-status, representing disciplines close to and not-close-to the search field
 - Graduate student representative, typically senior PhD student in a field somewhat related to that of the search field, with interest in pursuing an academic career
 - Faculty member or researcher from another department or a senior scientist from the MGS; may or may not be a member of the ESCI graduate faculty, but typically has some point of contact with the department and expertise related to the search field; e.g., faculty from various CBS or CFANS departments for a geobiology search, faculty from CEGE/SAFL for a geomorphology or hydrogeology search.
 - Final decisions:
 - Following the interviews, the search committee solicits feedback from all who participated in the process by attending talks and/or meeting with



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candidates. The graduate student member of the committee organizes feedback from the rest of the students and presents the results and recommendations at the faculty meeting at which the candidates are discussed. The search committee meets to discuss the candidates. The committee then discusses the candidates with the rest of the faculty at a special faculty meeting. In rare cases the committee proposes that one or more candidates no longer be considered at this point, but typically all candidates are discussed. The recommendation of the faculty is made to the department head, who then decides on a recommendation to the Dean. Depending on the Dean's preference, the final recommendation may be discussed in a meeting or worked out via email.

- Who interacts with applicants:
 - Candidates interview over ~2 days: they meet with individual faculty, meet with students as a group (typically during lunch), meet a CSE Associate Dean, give two talks (one general talk to the entire department; one 'vision' talk to faculty and other members of the search committee), and meet with the department head. Meals are also interview events, and these typically involve the search committee and other faculty, researchers, students.
- **GRADUATE HIRES**
 - Committee makeup/Final Decisions:
 - Decentralized process, almost entirely up to PI who will be taking the student on, in consultation with DGS.
 - Who interacts with applicants:
 - Before offer: Potential advisor and DGS
 - After offer: Other faculty and other students
- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**
 - Outside hiring consultant used? No use of a hiring consult in recent memory, just a facilitator to help define hiring priorities
 - Outside admissions consultant used? no
 - Process for changing hiring process: conversation between faculty. CSE does not need to be involved
 - Process for changing admissions process:
 - Graduate level: discussion that initiates within graduate studies committee and then is elevated to faculty. CSE is not involved
 - Undergraduate level: unknown, but probably at the College level



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- **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?**
 - Strategies considered/used:
 - **FACULTY**
 - Cohort hiring? No, our department is too small to hire a faculty cohort. However, there is a cohort program in the University of MN (SUPER DOVE) that allows multiple DOVE fellowship nominees to be hired together. DOVE nominees are underrepresented backgrounds of all kinds (race, economics, etc.)
 - Mentoring (aka support after hiring)? Formal support after hiring for all assistant professors, and some support for associate professors. No formal mentoring by the time you reach full professor level
 - Not related to diversity at all
 - Dual career support/partner hires? Yes
 - Re-visioning work culture? no
 - Pre-search activities:
 - When a field of potential hiring is identified and time permits, faculty and others are encouraged to invite seminar speakers in this general field. Speakers may encourage applicants from their networks and or be potential applicants
 - Current ESCI faculty encouraged to explore professional networks and be proactive
 - To select the “long list” of candidates:
 - The demographics of the applicant pool must be compiled and considered in crafting the “long list.” The demographic data are reported to the Dean’s office when requesting approval for the slate of interviewees (see below). It is important at each stage of the process to be aware if the pool of candidates being advanced to the next level has deviated significantly from the demographics of the entire applicant pool.
 - **GRADUATE STUDENTS:**
 - Mentoring and peer support: talks are ongoing to develop something along these lines to develop individual support and mentoring beyond that offered by the advisor