



Admissions Policies for UNH Earth Science

This is what was found by UNH Earth Science at the University of New Hampshire on Hiring/Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

1. **What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement¹ is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available²?**
 - a. We do not regularly advertise openings for graduate students at the department level so there is no regular statement on those announcements. Individual faculty may add the statement that UNH provides if advertising.
 - b. This is the statement that the department used in its last faculty hire about 3 years ago: *The University seeks excellence through diversity among its administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The university prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, or marital status. Application by members of all underrepresented groups is encouraged.*
 - c. We do have a [department diversity and inclusion statement to communicate our commitment to empowering everyone to be successful.](#)

2. **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**
 - a. The department participates in recruitment activities at the Fall American Geophysical Union meeting, and materials are posted on our website.
 - i. **We strongly recommend** that the department expands recruitment at conferences to SACNAS, working across the ESCI, NRESS, and Oceanography graduate programs to do so.
 - b. For undergraduate and graduate recruitment we have open houses and admitted visiting student days. Department faculty and staff are also active

¹ R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-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).



in collaborative bridge programs with Minority-Serving-Institutions, like the NSF GEOPaths Program [CLOSES-GAP](#).

- c. We wish to explore stepping up our presence with enhanced recruitment materials that include short, student-focused video clips talking about why and how they came to UNH.
- d. Faculty hire: Need an advertising plan to send to AAEO Office to get approved to initiate a search; have to articulate your plan to bring in candidates from underrepresented groups.
- e. Faculty and staff positions are posted via local newspapers as well as locations that the department can choose like EOS, es_jobs.net and other locations.

3. 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?

Graduate Admissions:

- a. Application requires a personal statement, 3 letters of recommendation, and any past undergraduate/graduate transcripts.
 - i. **We could provide better guidance on the content faculty are looking for in the personal statement.** The current prompt is brief and somewhat vague.
- b. ESCI has joined many other geoscience departments in dropping the GRE requirement for graduate admissions
- c. We recommend that online materials are amended to make clear that fees for application can be waived if the fee is a barrier to applying.
- d. There is no minimum GPA for admissions, but currently 3.0 is the minimum for TA offers.
- e. Our department recommends that applicants have taken at least 1 year calculus, and 4 semesters total in chemistry, physics, and/or biology. These prerequisites can (and have been) a barrier for admission.
 - i. The physics and calculus requirements can be met during a student's first year at UNH by taking undergrad courses for no credit.
 - ii. We strongly feel that ESCI graduate students should be able to take undergrad math and physics courses for graduate credit. Some undergrad courses for math/physics majors are graduate



level courses in the geosciences. We have recommended this to UNH leadership and gotten little support for the idea in the past.

Faculty and post doctoral positions:

In the past, most faculty and research staff positions required a cover letter, CV, teaching statement, research statement and three letters of reference.

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

Graduate Admissions:

- a. For graduate admissions, the graduate committee and faculty as a whole formally decide; but advisor with funding de-facto can choose who they will.
- b. Current graduate students sometimes interact with prospective students if the prospective student and/or PI arrange meetings. There is no department-sponsored event for meeting current students until after admission is offered.

Faculty and research staff:

- a. For faculty hires, the department selects a search committee. Department Chair pulls a committee together, assigns a chair of the committee. 3-6 people on committee. Committee's role is to (1) pick the best qualified candidate, and (2) attract the candidate to UNH. Committee includes any potential collaborators (EOS, ESCI, CEPS, EPSCoR).
- b. The search committee reviews all the applications and selects 10-15 for initial interviews (phone/Zoom). This list is also reviewed with the full faculty. After these initial interviews, the search committee selects 3-4 for campus interviews and presents this list to the full faculty for feedback. The full faculty have opportunities to review the candidates applications and meet with the 3-4 that are selected to come to campus. The undergraduate and graduate students get opportunities to interact with faculty candidates at job talks and student-focused Q&As.
- c. Postdoctoral researchers and research staff are generally hired by specific faculty who run those searches.



5. 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?

Graduate Admissions (MS programs)

- a. A standing committee consisting of three faculty members meets to determine which applicants meet the minimum requirements for admission (see above).
- b. If students did not specify a potential advisor in their application materials, the committee informally “shops around” for faculty that could advise students that meet minimum requirements.
- c. Potential faculty advisors rate applicants on a numerical scale (x/10 points), which the admissions committee then uses to determine priority for admission. However, in our group discussion it became apparent that some faculty members usually rate most of their applicants as 15/10 points, so these ratings are not especially useful for the committee.
- d. There is no official - or perhaps even unofficial - rubric for graduate admissions as far as we know. Faculty rate applications using somewhat nebulous criteria that vary widely depending on their subfield (e.g., some look primarily at the recommendation letters and personal statements for “red flags” or “green flags” while others mostly focus on relevant coursework).
- e. **We strongly recommend the ESCI department develop a consistent rubric for assessing graduate admissions applications.**
 - i. Our pod notes that the requirements for being offered a TA are more strict than admissions requirements, and could add additional bias/barriers in the application process.

Faculty:

- a. Search committees develop rubrics for candidate evaluation. All members of faculty search committees meet with the EEO Dr. Nadine Petty before the search process begins. All search committees have to undergo search committee bias training developed by our ADVANCE office:
<https://www.unh.edu/advance/gear-faculty-search-committee-training-program>
- b. Approval for search from Dean CEPS/EOS Director/Carsey Director/EEO Office.
 - i. A hiring plan is submitted with the definition of what a diverse pool means in our discipline (qualified candidates from URM groups).



Historically this process has focused on BIPOC but not resulted in a diverse pool, perhaps because we cannot directly ask. EEO will approve the pool as being diverse or not. If not approved, recruitment continues before proceeding to the next step.

- ii. Previous searches generally have not resulted in offers to BIPOC candidates.
- c. Once pool is approved, candidates are invited for a campus or phone interview. Undergrad and grad students, faculty, etc. meet with candidates to provide feedback to the search committee.
- d. How is the search committee decided? Department Chair wrangles committee together, assigns a chair of the committee. 3-6 faculty members on the committee. Committee's role is to (1) pick the best qualified candidate, and (2) attract the candidate to UNH. Committee includes any potential collaborators (EOS, ESCI, CEPS, EPSCoR).
- e. Have all faculty in UNH ESCI taken the Implicit Bias Training from ADVANCE (as recommended in the [2021 Hiring Plan for DEI](#) (see slide #5). **We recommend requiring this each time there is a search announced.**
- f. Search committee does not have demographic info during the first round of review where candidates for interviews are selected. AAOEE office oversees demographics through the entire process.

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

Graduate Admissions:

- a. To our knowledge, the graduate admissions process has not been evaluated by outside consultants at the department nor university level.
- b. Our pod recommends our department seek resources for an equity-focused audit on our graduate admissions procedures. While resources for this audit are being secured, **we strongly recommend the department build in “equity checks” into our internal graduate application review processes** to ensure that the proportion of BIPOC in the original applicant pool is *at minimum* retained at each step.

Faculty:

- a. To our knowledge our search process has not been evaluated.



7. 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?

Graduate Admissions:

- a. We are curious about what a cohort approach to admitting BIPOC graduate students could be like. The [CLOSES-GAP](#) program is a great model for forming BIPOC student cohorts, and has cohorts already who may consider UNH for graduate education.
 - i. Could we create a tighter link between CLOSES-GAP and the ESCI graduate programs (i.e. preferential admission?)
- b. Peer mentoring program first launched fall 2020 designed to “foster community, networking and support for underrepresented graduate students by connecting them with peers who can complement their academic program mentors”.
 - i. There is not information online for how prospective graduate student mentors or mentees can get involved in this program. We are aware of it through an email from the UNH Advisory Board for Underrepresented Graduate Students to one of our pod members.

Faculty Hiring:

- c. Possibility for opportunity hires to work towards UNH’s DEI Strategic Initiatives including increasing faculty diversity. Need to send a proposal to the college Dean. Guidance for this process [here](#).
 - i. ESCI submitted a proposal to CEPS for an opportunity hire.
- d. UNH Postdoctoral Innovation and Diversity Scholars Program is somewhat a cohort hiring model - goal is for this to be a postdoc-to-faculty feeder program. Unclear how these positions are allotted across colleges/departments
 - i. Again, departments need to pitch to their respective Dean that they want a junior faculty in a specific area - if Deans allow proposals to go forward that means they are committing to opening a search in that same department in 2-3 years
 - ii. For this past search, ESCI did interview potential postdocs for the Diversity and Innovation Scholars Program. ESCI was not allotted a position this past application cycle. The selection process is not transparent and the department was not formally notified why we were not given the chance to hire a postdoc through this program.