

Hiring and Admissions Policies for UNH NREN

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

Note: We acknowledge this information is not always accessible to students and even staff. If you do not have access to this information, please reflect on your own experience and outline what admissions and/or hiring should be like to foster a diverse and inclusive community.

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?

The below is a standard statement included in job advertisements at UNH:

“The University System of New Hampshire is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action employer. The University System is committed to creating an environment that values and supports diversity and inclusiveness across our campus communities and encourages applications from qualified individuals who will help us achieve this mission. The University System 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, genetic information, and political orientation. Application by members of all underrepresented groups is encouraged. Hiring is contingent upon eligibility to work in the U.S.”

Diversity Resource Guide: <https://www.unh.edu/hr/diversity-resource-guide>

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. Faculty Recruitment plan: “Advertise our open position on websites and other listservs. Using these websites will ensure that our ad reaches the most diverse pool of applicants possible. We will advertise on the UNH website and work closely with our HR Partners, Pat McCabe and with Carrie Grube to ensure that the ad is placed on websites and listservs that will reach a diverse pool of applicants. Beyond the options listed in the PeopleAdmin system, we have identified particular sites that we feel are critical to our search to insure a diverse pool of applicants. This strategy should effectively target a wide-range of qualified candidates searching for employment opportunities. These include:”

Diversity in Education
Out and Equal
Veterans Connect
LBGT Connect
Diversity MBA
Diversity in Higher Education
Disability Connect

Diversity Connect
Hispanic Diversity

Other Advertising Sites:

HigherEdJobs
LinkedIn
Indeed
HERC
SAF Career Center

Current additional hiring procedures/goals:

- To have our ad distributed to the members of the following organizations: Any potential candidates with the required qualifications, including representatives of all minority or under-represented groups, would be searching for employment postings at the above-mentioned sites.
- To request all committee members to contact colleagues at two (2) schools/agencies requesting that they mention our recruiting efforts to appropriate faculty and PhD students emphasizing to them our efforts in faculty diversity.
- To use virtual conferences, as available, and direct personal communication with departmental leadership to foster relationships with schools granting degrees to members of traditionally under-represented groups and engage in targeted recruitment of diverse applicants.
- Position announcements will be posted and/or distributed at appropriate venues attended by faculty during the recruitment period. We will encourage all department faculty to also reach out to their peers at other institutions or when attending meetings.

b. Graduate students and postdoctoral research associates

- i. There are no formal requirements for where advertisements for graduate students and postdoctoral research associates need to be advertised. Faculty typically do their own posting and advertising for specific opportunities in their labs.
- ii. Advertisements for graduate positions are usually through listservs (Ecolog), twitter postings, research network distribution emails (e.g. LTER).

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?

a. Faculty Hire

- i. Required Documents
 1. Resume/Vita
 2. Cover Letter
 3. Teaching Philosophy
 4. Research Statement
 5. Diversity Statement
- ii. Optional Documents
 1. Scholarly Documents (1)

2. Student Evaluations
3. Teaching Evaluations
4. Transcripts

b. Graduate students

- i. Application requires:
 1. Personal Statement
 2. Transcripts
 3. 3 Letters of Recommendation
 4. GRE scores used to be a requirement for graduate applications. Most programs on campus have now made GREs optional.
- ii. *We suggest that in the future we provide more detailed information and guidance on the content that should be included in the personal statements. The current description is brief and vague.*

4. 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. Graduate students

- i. Individual faculty handle this differently. Often, applicants are recruited by individual faculty, and vetted by individual faculty prior to encouraging applicants to officially apply. This initial part of the process is not public, and there is no uniform rubric. Usually there are very few candidates for any given position that is posted or advertised that meet the minimum requirements (e.g. needed skills, seeking PhD vs. MS, course background). I think there is a lot of potential for individual biases to be influential. I personally don't think removing applicant names will make a difference for selection, but again that depends on the faculty members biases.

b. Faculty

- i. Prior to beginning the process of screening applicants, the search committee invites the direction of affirmative action and equity (DAAE) to meet and discuss affirmative action goals and compliance with laws and policies governing the hiring process.
- ii. It is recommended that search committee members use an evaluation rubric such as the Applicant Screening Matrix form (FS5) (p.23) to add objectivity to the screening process. All committee members should agree to the criteria and how different qualifications will be weighted. Committee members should review research on how unintended biases result in unfair evaluations for women and members of underrepresented groups and implement practices that will mitigate such biases (see Appendix III, "Debunking Assumptions in the Faculty Search Process," prepared by UNH ADVANCE, to learn more about social assumptions that affect searches). Further, members should beware of possible bias in support

letters. Referencing only vitas is more likely to result in biases than is assessing more extensive information such as references and publications. Identify the top 25 % of the candidate pool to review how each applicant's experience with diversity contributes to the committee's diversity goals and be flexible in the number of finalists. 10

- iii. Following initial screening, the search committee submits a list of all semi-finalists (i.e., applicants who have been chosen for phone, electronic [Skype] or airport interviews from which finalists will be selected) for approval by the division administrator or dean and the DAAE before any semi-finalists are notified or interviewed. Once semi-finalists have been selected and the division administrator or dean has approved the selection, the search chair will contact the director of affirmative action and equity (DAAE) via email and provide rationale as to why each was chosen. At that time, information will have been completed on PEOPLEADMIN indicating the status of each candidate and why they were not selected for advancement in the search process, giving particular attention to minority and female applicants. If PEOPLEADMIN has not been updated, such rationale is to be included in the email. The DAAE will contact the search chair, within two days, with questions she may have prior to giving approval to move forward with interviews.
- iv. The search committee conducts semi-finalist phone, electronic or airport interviews and identifies finalists for campus interviews. Federal law prohibits discrimination and certain questions from being asked during employment interviews. The UNH human resources website provides a concise overview of federal laws on interviewing with particular focus on those with greatest complexity. It also discusses special concerns in the recruiting and hiring of faculty (see <https://www.unh.edu/hr/hiringtoolkit>). It is recommended that search committee members use an interview rubric such as the Applicant Interview Evaluation form (FS7) (p.30) as a guide.
- v. Once finalists have been identified, the search committee submits its material for approval to the division administrator or dean and to the DAAE. Once finalists have been selected, and after the division administrator or dean has approved the selection, the search chair will contact the DAAE via email and provide rationale as to why each was chosen. If semi-finalists were interviewed from which finalists were selected, please also provide rationale for not moving the remaining semi-finalists forward in the search process. The DAAE will contact the Search Chair, within two days, with questions she may have prior to giving approval to move forward with campus interviews.

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

a. Graduate students

- i. Once the faculty member has identified a strong prospect, the faculty member will often host the student at UNH, meet others in the lab/dept/university (especially lab) and have them join a lab meeting. Meetings with other potential faculty and students are also often set up so they can learn more about the department/university. These may be through lunches or NRESS coffee hour. The faculty member will then seek feedback from others (especially their own lab) who met with the potential student to see what they think. The faculty member then decides whether to encourage the candidate to officially apply.
- ii. Once the student is asked to officially apply to the NRESS program (which includes a fee), then NRESS has a committee that decides whether the prospect meets the requirement. A funding source provided by the faculty member must be provided, along with a plan for how to fund the entire graduate period. For a master student, the faculty member will let the department know they have accepted a student with funding, then one or two other faculty must also review the application to ensure that minimum requirements are met.

b. Faculty

- i. The hiring unit or department and the unit administrator or department chair establish a search committee and the unit administrator or department chair appoints a search committee chair. Establishing a search committee should take into account diversity and sensitivity to diversity issues. Consideration should be given to factors that could affect group dynamics and optimal decision making, including rank, status, personalities, and token status, to ensure that all members feel free to speak and express their opinions. Search committees should include women and minorities who encourage women and minorities to apply. Once the committee has been formed, there should be conscious development of an awareness of bias in conversations and evaluation of potential candidates, especially gender bias and microaggressions

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

- a. We could not find information regarding any evaluations of the hiring/admissions process.
- b. Changing the hiring or admissions processes likely requires working with the provost's office, the affirmative action office, as well as HR.

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?

The University of New Hampshire has been implementing cluster hiring. The first cluster hires were first done in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture in 2011 and the approach has been used a few more times since then. Several of the faculty members in these cluster hires have been assigned to the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. The purpose of these cluster hires was to build depth of expertise in specific areas of study.