

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

[Insert Logo Here]

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Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University/Organization

The agenda for this URGE pod meeting: [Agenda](#)

### Discussion Questions:

- What was your experience like going through hiring and/or admissions, start to finish? (PollEv)
- Is there anything you wish was different in the recruitment/transition/etc phase? (PollEv)
- Who is on your hiring and/or admissions committees? Who interfaces with applicants?
- Does your organization make their hiring/admissions policies public? Are they reviewed?

### Questions for Eric:

- GO-MAP award
- Where are faculty positions typically advertised (listservs, websites, etc.)? Are there specific institutions that UW typically hires from (or begins its faculty searches at)?
- What is the future of GRE requirements at UW?
- What are legal considerations (i.e., ban on affirmative action)? Can faculty explicitly consider diversity in admissions/hiring decisions?
- How has advice from the DEI committee impacted hiring and admissions practices?
- How is the hiring/admissions committee selected?
- Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?
- 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”<sup>6</sup>?

### Poll everywhere:

- What was your admissions experience like?
- What do you wish had been different during the application/recruitment/ transition phase?
- Biases in the application/hiring process
- Any problematic questions in the application itself?

*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.*

<sup>1</sup> R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, [blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples](http://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples), (2017).

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

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

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

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

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

***This is what was found by ESS Graduate Student and Postdoc Pod in the ESS department at the University of Washington on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.***

**Q1: What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement<sup>1</sup> is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available<sup>2</sup>?**

- “The University of Washington reaffirms its policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran. This policy applies to all programs and facilities, including, but not limited to, admissions, educational programs, employment, and patient and hospital services. Compliance efforts at the University of Washington are coordinated by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, University of Washington, 231 Gerberding Hall, Box 351240, Seattle, Washington, 98195-1240, telephone 206.543.1830 or email [eoaa@u.washington.edu](mailto:eoaa@u.washington.edu).” See [here](#) for example.
- “The University of Washington is committed to providing access and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. To request disability accommodation in the application process, contact the Disability Services Office at least ten days in advance at: 206.543.6450/V, 206.543.6452/TTY, 206.685.7264 (FAX), or [dso@u.washington.edu](mailto:dso@u.washington.edu).”

**Q2: Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**

- Advertisements that could be found:
  - Example faculty posting (2): <https://geoprisms.org/listserv-11-01-17/>
  - Example Post-doc posting (3): <http://geoprisms.org/listserv-09-16-19/>
- **Postdoc positions:** faculty don't have to advertise.
  - Professors can just offer a position individually
  - If postdoc is not filled and funding exists, professors often publicize opportunities on listservs (e.g., cryolist).
- **Faculty positions:** required to advertise in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (which is across disciplines, US-based but international journal of education). People who usually read the journal usually are people who study higher education.
  - Faculty positions are advertised in all geoscience places like AGU, GSA; but never journals like Nature and Science (because it is expensive), and because advertising in AGU will catch people in geosciences
  - Requirement: demonstrate by stating in ad how broader populations will be reached (kind of vague ...), but have to include this so that there is a checkbox that forces them to think about this
  - ***Do we advertise to es\_jobs\_net?*** Unknown

- **Does the specificity of the job description deter people?** Yes. broader description encourages more diverse applications. Have had discussions about this but not addressed?
- **What is the current “vision” of the department makeup** (in the context of breadth of offers)? Curate staff hiring for specialty? Diversity of fields? Diversity of people? Eric sees major roles of his as “getting this right” + listening to grad students; keeping and building areas of excellence vs. specialty/expertise
  - have lost 20% of total numbers (and have been in crisis mode)
  - key areas of expertise are getting lost and just need to hire faculty to teach undergrads. Otherwise, without certain classes, undergraduates who graduate cannot get certified as geologists in WA
    - Hiring based on need rather than questioning what is the diversity of our group?
  - Also, tough because of financial uncertainty from the university. COVID-19 caused a stop of convo.
  - Future: intention of 2 new positions, but will have limited time to decide what those are

**Q3: What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores<sup>3</sup>/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**

Admissions information:

**(1) Graduate-student admissions:** -->Research admissions detailed [here](#). -->MESSAGE admissions detailed [here](#).

Tests required for grad admissions:

- (1) **TOEFL** - for international students, permanent residents, immigrants and transfer students, who are not citizens of the United States on the date of admission, and whose native language is other than English.
  - TOEFL exemptions:
    - <https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/graduate-school-memoranda/memo-8-graduate-school-english-language-proficiency-requirements/>
    - Unofficial transcripts for initial admissions review, official transcripts later on
    - “All applicants should take courses in these subjects before they apply at a minimum of the level we expect of students in our undergraduate program: one year of calculus with analytical geometry (UW MATH 124, 125, 126); at least two quarters of calculus-based Physics (UW PHYS 121, 122); and two quarters of general Chemistry (UW CHEM 142, 152).”
    - Fee: \$85
    - Fee waiver: <https://grad.uw.edu/admission/application-fee-waivers/>
      - Domestic applicants only (cannot have student visa)
      - No mention of fee waiver on the ESS admissions website
- (2) **GRE** (Graduate Record Examinations) - for all students

- exception: this year, due to COVID-19
- Not a formal agreement to abolish in future, but this has been suggested for years (esp. by Noell)
- Eric thinks that getting rid of it is a process but that it needs to be abolished
- Some push back about permanently abolishing it
- Faculty will discuss again this year, and because of political pressure, will probably get rid of it. Noell/Kate have worked on presenting this at at faculty meeting

GPA required for grad-student admissions:

- Unofficial transcripts for initial admissions review, official transcripts later on
- Have earned at least a [3.0 grade-point-average](#) (on a 4 point scale) from a regionally accredited college or university in the U.S. or its equivalent from a foreign institution for the last 90 graded quarter credits or 60 graded semester credits from a baccalaureate degree (for a Master's, doctoral, or professional degree, the total cumulative average may be used).
- If you earned additional credits from an accredited institution after your degree, you may include these credits in calculating your GPA.
- Graduate programs may consider an applicant with a GPA below a 3.0. Graduate programs must submit an admission petition to the Dean of the Graduate School and receive approval before an offer is made.
- Some graduate programs will have additional admission requirements and may require a higher grade-point-average.

Classes required for grad-student admissions:

- *For both Research and Message:* Math, physics, and chemistry are fundamental to the study of Earth and Space Sciences. All applicants should take courses in these subjects before they apply at a minimum of the level we expect of students in our undergraduate program. *All applicants should take courses in these subjects before they apply at a minimum of the level we expect of students in our undergraduate program: one year of calculus with analytical geometry (UW MATH 124, 125, 126); at least two quarters of calculus-based Physics (UW PHYS 121, 122); and two quarters of general Chemistry (UW CHEM 142, 152).*
- *For Message:* Admission into the program requires a Bachelor's degree in Geoscience or a closely related discipline, including Field Camp (ESS 400) and at least four upper division courses spread among the following categories: Structural Geology, Geomechanics (ESS 311 or ESS 463) Sedimentology, Stratigraphy (ESS 455 or ESS 456) Mineralogy, Petrology, Earth Materials (ESS 312) Geomorphology (ESS 326) Geochemistry (ESS 316) Geophysics (ESS 314)

Fees required for grad-student admissions:

- Take GRE (~\$205, \$20 to send scores to each institution)

- TOEFL (\$180 test fee, \$20 to send scores to each institution)
- \$85 to submit application
  - Fee waiver is available, but only for domestic students
  - [Fee waiver request](#) should be submitted at least seven (7) days before the posted application deadline.

Letters of recommendation for grad-student admission:

- 2-3

Two statements within admission application:

- research + personal statements

Other requirements:

- *International students*: temporary visas

**(2) Faculty applications:** could not find clear information on ESS website for hiring?

**(3) Post-doc applications:** could not find clear information on ESS website for hiring?

**Q4: How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric<sup>4,5</sup> public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?**

**Response from Roger Buick:**

*How are applicants/applications evaluated?*

“Applicant files are assigned by the admissions committee chair to individual committee members to manage based on their area of expertise and the principal interest area expressed by the applicant, typically 30-40 files per member. The committee member will then review each assigned applicant file in a holistic fashion for academic quality, assessing in particular whether the applicant would be likely to be successful in the ESS graduate program. They then rank the file on a 5-point scale ranging from "Exceptional" to "Deny" with most falling in the median "Admissible" category. If the file mentions that any faculty members have been contacted by the applicant, then they assign the file to them for further review. If the "Statement of Purpose" in the file mentions wanting to work with any faculty members, then the file is also assigned to them to review. If the managing committee discerns that the applicants interests match a faculty members research program well, then they also assign the file to them to review.

In parallel, the director of academic services compiles a list of applicants who either self-identify or indicate in their personal statements that they are a member of an under-represented minority community, whether within the university or within the ESS department. These files are streamlined for early processing and are circulated to potential faculty advisors first, partly because such applicants often get multiple competing offers from more prestigious universities if they are admissible or better and partly because there are early deadlines for incentives such as scholarships and fellowships for admitted URM applicants.

When a faculty member identifies an applicant as someone they wish to be considered for admission, the committee meets to discuss the whole file. The managing member presents a synopsis of all aspects of the file and the faculty reviews then 10-15 minutes of discussion

ensues, considering the academic quality of the applicant, the fit with the potential faculty advisor, the resources available for the applicants support during their first year, and particularly "how far has the applicant travelled with respect to the opportunities and resources available to them". If the potential advisor requires partial or total TA support for the applicant during their first year, then the department chair must approve this, assessing both the likelihood of the applicants success in the ESS graduate program and the advisors likelihood of obtaining grant support for the student in later years. After this discussion, the committee then votes to admit or otherwise. It is rare that the committee votes not to admit, as typically only applicants ranked as "Exceptional" or "Outstanding" are sponsored by faculty for admission. On some occasions, the committee admits with a recommendation to the potential faculty advisor that this applicant will need special mentoring or some other accommodation in order to succeed in the ESS graduate program."

*Is that process and/or rubric public? No.*

*What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?*

"The admissions committee has tried to minimize bias by holistic review of applicants files, by requiring at least three faculty reviews of files of applicants considered for admission, and by eliminating the previous requirement for GRE scores for at least this year and potentially for the future. The committee has also brought to the forefront of potential faculty advisors attention the files of URM applicants, whether they are considered such by the university or whether they are under-represented in the ESS community. However, because each admitted applicant requires a sponsoring faculty member prepared to act as advisor, the most obvious potential source of bias in the process is possible prejudice, whether conscious or unconscious, on the part of potential faculty advisors. This is not something that the admissions committee can address but would require action at a departmental level.

Removing applicants names from their files would be totally impractical, given that, along with their name on the cover page, there are usually at least 30 other places where their names are mentioned, in the 3 plus letters of recommendation (often half a dozen times per letter), on each page of their transcripts (often 5-10 pages), and in their CVs (often with half a dozen conference presentations plus publications referenced). Moreover, applicant files are managed in MyGrad by the Graduate School and we dont have authorization to alter them in any way."

*Can faculty explicitly consider diversity in admissions and hiring decisions?* Decisions can be made based on whether someone contributes to the goal of diversity, but cannot explicitly mention affirmative action. Opinions differ on what our policy is with respect to considering diversity in admissions/hiring decisions, and codifying a policy may put the department at odds with the law.

**(1) Graduate students:**

- Rubric is not publicly available (I don't think)
- Personal statement and research statement don't specifically require a DEI statement.

- Example: Stanford's diversity statement: "Stanford University regards the diversity of its graduate student body as an important factor in serving the educational mission of the university. We encourage you to share unique, personally important, and/or challenging factors in your background, such as work and life experiences, special interests, culture, socioeconomic status, the quality of your early educational environment, gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity. Please discuss how such factors would contribute to the diversity of the entering class, and hence to the experience of your Stanford classmates. 700 characters max"

**(2) Faculty evaluation**

**(3) Post-doc evaluation**

**Q5: Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**

- Roger Buick is the main point of contact for admissions currently for grad admissions
- Someone from the Dean's office gives training to search committees for diversity goals/best practices for hiring decisions, although this is technically not a written policy
  - Thanks to Kate, we have well laid-out guidelines about how to do this and that these are presented to search committees.
- Volunteers are solicited, and then the final search committee is chosen through a combination of expertise in relevant field and attention of diversity of hiring committee (gender, race, identity, and career)

**Responses from Roger Buick:**

*Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions?*

"The admissions committee typically consists of 5-6 faculty spanning the full range of sub-disciplines within ESS and, ex-officio, the graduate student advisor and the director of academic services Noell Kingsley-Bernard. The entire admissions committee excluding ex-officio members votes to admit each candidate for admission upon request from a faculty member wishing to advise them. The committee never admits an applicant without a sponsoring faculty advisor or without identified funding support for their first year, nor will they consider admission for an applicant who doesn't have at least three faculty reviews of their application."

*Who interacts with the applicants?*

"The only person on the admissions committee who interacts with applicants is the ESS Director of Academic Services Noell Kingsley-Bernard. Individual faculty members often interview applicants prior to requesting admission and frequently remain in contact with applicants after admission to encourage them to accept our offer."

**Q6: Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**

- It has been evaluated by outside consultants provided by the Dean's office.

- Process for change is through people raising questions/concerns. The DEI committee also informs the search committee about best practices
- Currently, Kate's position is volunteer-based and the diversity/committee chair position is not technically "formal" or "elected" - **would a more formal context implement these better?**
  - Eric: raised this idea, has come to think that this is a terrible idea (unclear why)
  - Eric: "This is just part of the job of tenured faculty"

**Responses from Roger Buick:**

*Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? No.*

*What is the process for changing it?*

"There is no formal procedure for changing the admissions process. Before each years admissions period, the new admissions committee evaluates the previous process and modifies it as needed."

**Q7: 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"<sup>6</sup>?**

- UW GOMAP fellowship for underrepresented minorities in doctoral programs
  - ESS Department was awarded? What was the application like?
  - [GO-MAP award](#) - offers minimum of 2 years of funding for graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds (recruitment tool) - international students may be ineligible(?)
- Colloquium series focused on early-career and scientists from underrepresented groups
- Grad student interviews and input of potential faculty hires?
- Implicit bias training (?)
- Recent partner hire, what has been the trend historically?
- First-year graduate student mentorship program

***What would be a good public forum to provide all of the kinds of information for the deliverables that we have been working on?***

1. Redesign ESS website soon to provide more information about policies

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**Our future potential recommendations:**

- Fix workday
- Make travel stipends standard part of admission offer
- Equity vs equality about travel fund
- Make faculty job solicitations broader, and standardize how postdoc solicitations are done
- Create doc about how we carry out recruitment (long/short term)
- Application process more transparent and codified
- Have a central source other than Roger where someone welcomes/advises



- Have some system for potential applicants to reach out to current students/questions (like a video)
- Waive grad application fee (if it is still around)
- Consider different conditions/situations of applicants/students, help make networks/support to find your space in department
- English courses for non-english speakers included within tuition waiver
- Permanently abolish GRE
- Make faculty advertise PhD through the website, listservs, so
- Diversity statement (for grad-student admissions)
- Stop requiring the GRE (for grad-student admissions)
- Specific required classes could be a barrier (for grad-student admissions)
- Need evaluation of diversity work for faculty (reward those who do it)
- Update [website admissions page](#) (make more user friendly):
  - Is there a way to highlight FAQ instructing people to email faculty that they are interested in working with?
- Is there a way to highlight FAQ instructing people to email faculty that they are interested in working with?
  - Good examples of how-to's:
    - <https://people.carleton.edu/~stitus/links/letters.html>
    - <https://tamarapico.github.io/join.html>

**(add more, include faculty + postdoc)**

First, another cost associated with admission is the enrollment confirmation deposit, which is \$250 for graduate students that we have to pay when we decide to accept the admissions offer. This gets credited back to student accounts in the fall, but ~6 months is still potentially a long time to be out \$250.

Also, it didn't come up in the meeting really but I saw there was a note about potentially recommending a diversity statement be added to the admissions requirements. It could be helpful to consider what the personal statement prompt is currently, since it kinda sorta seems to be leaning in the direction of a diversity statement already, and could probably be reworded a bit to fulfil that. This was the wording of the personal history statement prompt as of my applying in 2020 at least:

*Consistent with our goal of enhancing the intellectual and social enrichment of the University community, the University of Washington actively seeks and welcomes students from diverse backgrounds. Please provide a statement, no more than two pages in length, about your personal history, family background, and other influences on your intellectual development. The statement should address educational, cultural, and economic opportunities and disadvantages that you have experienced, and ways those experiences have affected the development of your special interests, career plans, and future goals. Please note that this is not an academic Statement of Purpose, but a personal statement that addresses your intellectual growth and development, both inclusive of and beyond your academic goals.*