

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University of Wisconsin Department of Geoscience

This is what was found by UW Geoscience D+I Pod at University of Wisconsin-Madison on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

- **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 language in the last faculty posting for a the position of assistant professor of glaciology/ice flow modeling (posted October 10th, 2019):

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or protected veteran status. A criminal background check will be required prior to employment.

The post also included an “Institutional statement on Diversity”:

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background - people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

For more information on diversity and inclusion on campus, please visit: Diversity and Inclusion

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

Advertisements are posted on the jobs.hr.wisc.edu page, AGU, and emailed around members of the search committee.

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

² <https://careers.whoj.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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For admissions I'm not aware of department-wide strategies for recruiting, maybe check with Lisa or Eric.

- **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?**
 1. Application fee of \$75 paid directly to the Graduate School.
 2. A statement of purpose for graduate study.
 3. A CV or resume is also required.
 4. Three letters of recommendation are required.
 5. Uploaded copies of all transcripts.
 6. Indication of top 3 areas of interest and to list the faculty members with whom you'd like to work.
 7. TOEFL, IELTS, or METLAB Scores (for international students).

Potential barriers or areas for improvement:

1. GREs are not required but also are not redacted from applications if submitted
 2. Fee grant waiver information could be added directly to application page.
 3. Provide more specific information for statement of purpose to reduce the barrier that students with limited or poor mentoring may experience.
 - Cater prompts/questions to what the admissions committee views as indicators of success in grad school.
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- **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?**

Applications are sorted based on area of interest and faculty who potential students identify as people they would like to work with. Students are instructed to contact potential mentors somewhere on the application website. Applications are evaluated by individual faculty. No single approach, no public rubric or process. Final funding offers are made by the graduate studies committee.

The process is biased towards students who have good mentoring networks to guide them through the process. This could be improved by adding additional details to the department website and for faculty to list how they prioritize review applications.



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

For hiring process the search committee includes tenured and untenured faculty and a graduate student. This committee recommends candidates to the full faculty for hiring approval. The search committee chair is the main point of contact with the applicants. All members of the search committee must complete a University bias training..

For the admissions process the graduate studies committee makes the recommendations for funding based on information provided by the faculty and applicant. The full faculty discuss and approve of the committee recommendations.

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

No.

- **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?**

Cohort hiring is becoming increasingly popular. The last two faculty searches in the department were through cohort or ‘cluster’ hires. The outcome of these searches was an offer that was denied and an offer accepted by an international woman.

All new faculty have a three-person mentoring committee that is selected in consultation with the faculty member. These mentor committees help with preparation of tenure application and meet at least once per year.

Dual career support is handled on a case-by-case basis but requires applicant to negotiate, a process that many early-career academics have not been mentored or have limited skills.

Additional ideas and topics discussed by the pod.

- More bias training for faculty.
- Improved transparency of the admissions process via information on the department website.
- Potential course/seminar for undergrads to navigate entry into the workforce or continuing in academia. Professional development course. (e.g. CV vs resume, writing a cover letter, elevator talk, making a poster/figures, informational interview, etc.).