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Use Equitable Hiring and Evaluation Practices

Our past experiences and cultural norms form implicit biases that we may not recognize and that often conflict with our personal and institutional belief systems. It is important to take actions that help mitigate the implicit biases that may influence how we view others in various settings, especially hiring and evaluation practices. We can use our awareness of implicit bias to develop and support practices that create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus environment.

Recruiting Diverse Staff, Faculty, and Leaders

Creating a system that ensures fair hiring and evaluation procedures includes reviewing all aspects of the process. A deliberate and well-planned review of each of these procedures will help mitigate biases and ensure fair and equitable practices. You may find it helpful to provide implicit bias and diversity training to all team members who are a part of any aspect of the hiring and evaluation processes. Awareness of how implicit biases are formed can help us understand why we need to take actions to reduce how they might influence our decision-making. Additionally, a greater understanding and appreciation of how diversity enriches our campus environments will also benefit everyone involved in the process.

The following are strategies that you may consider using in discussion with members of your institution's hiring and human resources personnel.

Create Equitable Job Descriptions

- Include the institution's DEI statement as part of the job description so that all applicants and campus members are reminded of the importance of ensuring equity and diversity at your institution.
- Review the description to ensure that it does not have offensive language and is gender neutral (Try this free [Gender DeCoder](#) tool).
- Use conversational language that avoids unnecessary technical jargon that may only be familiar to internal candidates and not to a broader audience.
- Focus on the duties and responsibilities of the position and consider including equivalent experiences without a focus on preferred high-level education requirements, which may discourage a wide range of applicants who may believe that they are underqualified to apply.
- Highlight the importance of working with diverse groups, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, religious affiliation, sexual identity, etc.
- Include detailed instructions on how to apply and what information is needed in the



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cover letter or statement of interest (Gaucher et al., 2011; Harvard University, 2022; University of Washington, n.d.).

Conduct Diverse Searches

- Target recruitment activities to historically underrepresented communities.
- Advertise with professional organizations and ask if they have recommendations for candidates.
- Use databases such as LinkedIn to search for potential candidates or to post openings.
- Make recruitment an ongoing activity and follow up with potential candidates for other opportunities that may arise.
- Allow opportunities for potential candidates to tour your campus or attend functions so that they can see evidence of the institution's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (University Health Services, 2013).

Review Applications Without Bias

- Use practices that ensure anonymity when reviewing applications and creating a pool of potential candidates. For example, you might want to use a blind review process by excluding each applicant's name, address, university, and date of graduation to reduce biased assumptions based on this information. This is important as highlighted by a 2014 study conducted by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences that showed both male and female interviewers were twice as likely to hire a male candidate over an equally qualified female candidate (Bortz, 2018).

Conduct Structured Interviews

- Organize an interview team that is diverse and trained in implicit biases and the benefits of a diverse workforce.
- Assign specific roles to each interview member.
- Design specific interview questions that are aligned to the job description, highlight the institution's commitment to diversity, and assign specific questions to each team member to be used consistently with each candidate.
- Incorporate interview questions aimed at emphasizing the importance of a diverse workforce. For example, "Explain how diversity has played a role in your career. What efforts have you made or been involved with to foster diversity and inclusion? Have you ever seen any bias against someone from a different background? If so, what did you do?"



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- Highlight positive steps that your institution uses to onboard, support, promote, and retain new employees such as mentoring programs.
- Ensure that all candidates have video interview protocols ahead of time with advice on software, lighting, and sound along with the choice of a phone interview (Bortz, 2018; University of Washington, n.d.).

Evaluating Candidates

- Create objective measurements such as rubrics for evaluating candidates.
- Gather feedback from interview team members that is aligned with the objective tool.
- Include assessments of the candidate's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.
- Remind interviewers that they are assessing the candidate's alignment with the job description and not their "fit" or "likeability" (Harvard University, 2022; University Health Services, 2013).

References

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