Equitable Recruitment and Selection Practices

*For Hiring Managers*
Introduction
This hiring guide was created to address the absence of a standardized protocol for the interview process at University of Waterloo. This manual will provide guidance to hiring managers and committee members to support the completion of as an objective candidate evaluation as possible to decrease the probability of inaccuracy, unfairness, or subjective assessment of candidates.

Additional resources, including a flowchart of the recruitment process, supporting forms and documentation can be found on our website: https://uwaterloo.ca/human-resources/support-managers/hiring.

Commitment to Equitable Hiring
The University of Waterloo is committed to implementing the Calls to Action framed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

The University values the diverse and intersectional identities of its students, faculty, and staff. The University regards equity and diversity as an integral part of academic excellence and is committed to accessibility for all employees. The University of Waterloo seeks applicants who embrace our values of equity, anti-racism, and inclusion. As such, we encourage applications from candidates who have been historically disadvantaged and marginalized, including applicants who identify as First Nations, Métis and/or Inuk (Inuit), Black, racialized, a person with a disability, women and/or 2SLGBTQ+.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Intersectionality Definitions

- **Equity** is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, by identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. In an equitable community, all social identity groups would have outcomes, access and opportunities proportionate to the dominate group\(^1\). Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances\(^2\). Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society, and an understanding of intersectionality.

\(^1\) Kike Ojo-Thompson, CBC Radio
\(^2\) National Association of Colleges and Employers
• **Diversity**

Describes the ways in which groups or individuals differ, and in an equity context it is typically used in relation to lived experience or identity. This includes but is not limited to race, gender identity and/or expression, sexuality, (dis)ability, age, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It’s important to recognize that all individuals have multiple intersecting identities, that there is diversity within groups (one person cannot speak for everyone who shares their identities), and that ‘diverse’ is not a euphemism for ‘racialized’ or any other identity. The term therefore should not be applied to an individual (e.g., “we’re looking to hire someone diverse”) as every individual is diverse, and one person cannot be more diverse than another; but there can be diversity within a group or team. It’s also important to note that diversity does not equal either inclusion or equity – the presence of a ‘diverse’ team or staff does not automatically mean that the space is inclusive, anti-racist, equitable etc.

• **Inclusion**

Is a commitment to creating environments in which any individual or group is and feels respected, supported, valued and able to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It’s important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group is not always inclusive.

• **Intersectionality**

Is a term coined by Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw and is a framework that explores the interconnected nature of identit(ies) such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group; and the overlapping and interdependent experiences and systems of privilege, or discrimination/disadvantage that are created. It’s important to think intersectionally when considering equity initiatives, as when goals are created in silo (e.g. advancing gender equity), if the initiatives are not intersectional they can inadvertently perpetuate other systems of oppression (e.g. advancing only white, cis-gendered, able-bodied women, and not advancing racialized and Indigenous women, trans women, non-binary folks, women who identify as having a disability etc.)

The utilization of the talents of people with different identities can propel the University’s growth and development towards its strategic goals. The engagement of diverse perspectives, experiences and identities can contribute to:

✓ Increased sense of belonging within the campus community

✓ Reduction of groupthink and offering of various perspectives to foster innovative ideas and solutions

✓ Increased understanding of the unique needs and perspectives of others to improve communications and positive relationships

✓ Provision of better service to internal and external clients across faculty, staff, and students

✓ Promotion of equity, inclusion, anti-racism and accessibility and the value of individual differences

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3 UBC Equity Office
4 Ontario Human Rights Commission
5 Columbia Journalism Review
Equitable Hiring Practices

The University of Waterloo respects, appreciates, and encourages diversity. We welcome and encourage applications from all qualified individuals regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or disability.

Recognizing and incorporating equity into our recruitment practices is a critical step towards fairness, inclusion, and equity of all our candidates. Each step of the recruitment process is guided by University policies and best practices to ensure all groups and individuals are included, treated fairly, and no less favorably, and have equitable opportunity. These practices include comparing applicants against the posted qualifications and not to each other, asking consistent and relevant interview questions, being aware of personal biases, etc. Together, we will ensure an objective candidate evaluation is conducted to decrease the inaccuracy, unfairness, and subjective assessment of candidates.

We encourage you to adopt the following practices:

1. Compare applicants against the posted qualifications. When reviewing resumes remember you can only objectively assess human skills via an interview.
2. Use an interview guide to ensure the same questions are asked of each candidate. You may ask probing questions to get a complete answer.
3. Create your interview guide before reviewing your candidates. This ensures you are asking questions related to the job qualifications and not your candidate pool.
4. Use a rubric to ensure you are evaluating answers consistently. Please see Appendix: Rubric at the end of this guide
5. Take thorough interview notes so you can provide good feedback.

Policy 18—Staff Employment

This is the staff employment policy of University of Waterloo. This section will only highlight general information pertaining to the interview process. If you wish to view more details, please refer to Policy 18 on the Secretariat website.

1. We encourage the career growth of our UW staff by giving them the opportunity for development and to explore other departments within the University to expand their knowledge, skills, and abilities. We encourage applications from women, Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) peoples, persons with disabilities, as well as members of the SLGBTQ2+ communities, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas for both internal and external applications. Under Policy 18, Internal candidates will be given priority, unless Appendix G is declared, as described below.

2. External candidates will only be available for viewing after hiring managers have reviewed all internal applicants, and internal applicants are verbally declined. Exception is when Appendix G is declared before the job is posted and/or if the position is USG 16 or higher.
3. Any internal candidates who meet the core qualifications must be interviewed, keeping in mind that human skills can only be fully assessed through an interview.

4. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to contact unqualified internal candidates or those who are unsuccessful in the interview process. The communication must be delivered verbally. Hiring managers should provide candidates with information about the most significant qualifications they don’t meet and provide guidance to the candidates about areas they should improve in or training/development they should consider for future opportunities. Human Resources is available for consultation if needed.

5. Hiring Managers do not have access to the performance appraisals of prospective incumbents. They may request Human Resources to give them a general overview of the candidate’s performance evaluation within the last 2 years including if any warning letters are present.

Protected Grounds
The Ontario Human Rights Code law is based on the concept of discrimination. The law prohibits discrimination where a person is acting in an unfair or prejudiced manner. Regardless of whether the act was intentional or unintentional, discrimination is prohibited. The following grounds are illegal to ask in an interview as it is subject to discrimination.

- Race
- Ancestry
- Creed (religion)
- Place of Origin
- Ethnic Origin
- Citizenship
- Sex (including pregnancy, gender identity)
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Disability
- Receipt of Public Assistance


Addressing protected grounds during the interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Status</th>
<th>Prohibited Questions</th>
<th>Preferred Questions</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• number of children or dependents</td>
<td>• if candidate would be able to work the required hours and possibly overtime</td>
<td>• contacts for emergencies or details on dependents can be determined after selection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• child care arrangements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Disability</td>
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<td>• specify Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. on an application or anything that asks the candidate to identify their gender</td>
<td>• whether candidate has received workers’ compensation</td>
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<td>• Interviewers can provide an opportunity for the candidate to disclose which pronouns they’d like to be referred to by during the interview, and should lead by example when introducing themselves; but should not mandate the sharing of pronouns. Pronouns do not equate to gender identity, it is not appropriate to assume you know the gender of a candidate because of their pronouns. If the candidate does not share their pronouns, it is appropriate to proceed with ‘they/them’ pronouns, and not to assume gendered pronouns based on appearance of the candidate.</td>
<td>• whether applicant has ever received psychiatric care or been hospitalized for emotional problems</td>
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<td>• (e.g. Please introduce yourself with your name and pronouns if you’re comfortable sharing – and tell us how your qualifications and experience have prepared you for this position.</td>
<td>• employer should disclose any information on medically related requirements or standards early in the application process</td>
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• whether candidate drinks or uses drugs
• a list of all disabilities, limitations and health problems
• ask whether the applicant has any conditions that could affect his or her ability to do the job
• a disability is only relevant to the job ability if it threatens the safety or property of others or prevents the applicant from safe and adequate job performance even when reasonable efforts are made to accommodate the disability

Creed
• if candidate will work on a specific religious holiday
• about religious affiliation
• references from a clergy or religious leader
• explain the required work shifts, asking whether such a schedule poses a problem for the applicant
• employer’s responsibility to provide accommodation for employee’s religious belief

Accommodations
• It is illegal to ask questions or discriminate a candidate/employee based on these grounds unless it is a bone fide occupational requirement.
• Employers are expected to accommodate the employee and candidate to the point of undue hardship.

Source: http://www.bcit.ca/files/hr/pdf/guide_to_screening_and_selection_in_employment.pdf

Preparing for the Interview

This is an opportunity to critically evaluate the candidate’s suitability for the position by exploring their qualifications to uncover the hidden layers beyond what is shown in the resume. It is also the responsibility of the hiring committee to ensure the candidate makes an informed decision whether this is the right role for them.

1. Understand what you’re looking for

✓ Review job description and be familiar with the accountabilities, working conditions, and specific tasks performed in the role
✓ Recognize the essential knowledge, skills and assets for a person to be successful in this role and within the department they will be working in. What assets are preferred that would make them a better candidate for the role? What are the current and future needs of your department? What skills are missing on your team?
Consider how the candidate might best demonstrate their skills and aptitude for the position. A typical interview process often assesses a candidate’s ability to immediately respond orally to unknown questions; but might not provide the panel an opportunity to assess critical thinking, or written aptitude. If these are important to the role, consider adding a pre-assignment portion,
presentation, submission of previous written work (etc.) to assist in the decision-making process, and to create enhanced opportunity for access, for those with alternate ways of processing and producing knowledge.

2. **Review Your Candidates**

✓ Always review the candidate’s application and be familiar with the information they provided in their cover letter and resume (in advance of the interview)
✓ Take notes of any areas you would like clarity on – but aim to be consistent with your questions across all candidates being interviewed
✓ Both parties save time; candidates feel respected and appreciated when you show that you are familiar with their application

3. **Know the job and your department well**

✓ Providing a realistic job preview will ensure candidates are fully aware of the requirements, goals and objectives of the role to help them make an informed decision on whether this is a role for them, and it will ensure that the answers they are giving relate to the position they are applying to. This will help with retention and growth in the future.
✓ Ask yourself: What is special about your department? What motivates you to come to work each day? Is the department hitting some rough patches?
✓ Be honest with the candidate when informing them about the job role, the culture of the department and just the average day on the job

4. **Create a representative hiring panel**

✓ A panel with a diversity of identities and roles on campus can capture different perspectives to help decrease the effects of unconscious biases
✓ Consider stakeholders who will interact with this position including those within the team, outside of the department or student representatives. If the hire is for a leadership position, consider whether anyone on the panel has the lived experience or expertise to assess if the candidate will be able to advance equity or anti-racism initiatives.

5. **Discuss with Panel Members**

✓ Meet with the hiring committee prior to the interview to cover the expectations, and uncover unconscious/implicit biases (refer to the HR 101 presentation)
✓ Establish clear objectives regarding the qualifications and experience the panel is looking for in an ideal candidate
✓ Review rubric with hiring committee
✓ Plan which member will run the introductions and who will ask each question; coordinate with each other to ensure interview runs smoothly
✓ Address any final concerns or questions members may have
✓ Prepare the candidate’s application package and your interview questions to bring to the interview
Common Interviewing Mistakes

1. **Incomplete and inconsistent coverage of specific competencies needed for success in the job**
   - Hiring committee should share a mutual understanding and definition of the specific competencies required by the position
   - All candidates should be evaluated against the same agreed-upon criteria

2. **Inaccurately interpreting the ability of the candidate because assumptions were made or beliefs, motives and feelings were reflected onto the candidate**
   - Never make assumptions because subjective factors are discriminatory, and they can put you at a legal risk.
   - Probe or follow-up with the candidate’s response for more details to get a clearer picture of the depth of their knowledge, skills, and experience

3. **Ignoring the candidate’s motivation and not clarifying expectations**
   - A highly qualified individual may not be motivated to do the job if the position does not meet his or her expectations or if they feel incompatible with the University culture and values
   - Give the candidate a realistic job preview—talk to them about what it’s like to work at the University and in the department

4. **Selection criteria that are not clearly defined put the University at risk of legal challenges**
   - Create a consistent process with well-defined decision points to ensure all applicants who reach the same stage are all treated equally and fairly
   - Panel members and interview questions should remain consistent throughout all interviews to avoid skewed results

5. **Insufficient interview notes cause interviewers to form their own impression of the applicant, rather than basing the hiring decision on evidence**
   - Ensure your notes are objective and thorough enough to justify the suitability of the applicant to make an accurate hiring decision
   - Ensure you have solid behavioral examples to qualify the candidate’s skills and knowledge. If not, clarify these areas before ending the interview. More information on page 9.

Be aware of your biases

Did you know there are over 200 cognitive biases that affect our everyday decisions and thoughts? We all have unconscious biases, and it is important for us to be aware of them, and work towards eliminating them so that they do not influence or impact the decisions we make about prospective candidates.

An effective technique to minimize the impact of unconscious biases is to engage in conversations about them with your hiring panel. Bringing the biases to the surface increases our awareness of them and provides insight on how they may impact hiring decisions. We must continue to educate ourselves about, and acknowledge any preconceived notions, stereotypes, and biases that we may hold. Harvard University offers an effective implicit bias assessment that is designed to raise self-awareness of unconscious biases and preconceptions.
Common Biases in Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bias</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halo Effect</td>
<td>The interviewer allows one strong point that they value highly to overshadow all other information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horns effect</td>
<td>Interviewer judges the potential employee unfavorably in all areas based on one trait</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Impression Error</td>
<td>The interviewer makes snap judgments and lets the first impression cloud the entire interview.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Emphasis</td>
<td>The interviewer is likely to give unfavorable information roughly twice the weight of favorable information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contrast Effect</td>
<td>Strong candidates who interview after weak ones may appear more qualified than they are</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rescuing</td>
<td>Interviewer fills silence with conversation when candidate may be using silence to gather their thoughts and frame their answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfairness to the first</td>
<td>First person interviewed is least likely to get the job. Use same objective criteria for all candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation Bias</td>
<td>The tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information that confirms one’s prior beliefs or values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Bias</td>
<td>When prejudices and attitudes such as stereotypes, lifestyles, and personalities affect the rating of candidate responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar to Me Bias</td>
<td>Inflating the evaluation of candidate whose interests, background or experience is similar to the interviewer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.uncsa.edu/mysa/human-resources/recruitment/docs/InterviewerBiases.pdf

During the Interview

Professionalism and Logistics

- **Inform** the candidate of their interview date, schedule, location and directions, and other interview requirements (e.g., Presentation or skills test) Ensure there is opportunity for candidates to inform you/the panel if there is anything they need to make the interview more accessible.

- **Provide Directions**—send parking pass, campus map and provide directions to the entrance where you will be meeting the candidate. Can a candidate with a disability access the building?

- **Location**—ensure the interview location is spacious enough for the panel, the temperature is comfortable, there are comfortable chairs and lighting, and that the room supports equipment required for the interview (see virtual interview tips below)

- **Hiring Panel**—prepare interview questions and candidate’s application package, and plan with other members to ensure the interview runs smoothly (e.g., who will greet the candidate, who will be asking the questions?)
✓ **Questions in Multiple Formats** – consider providing the candidate with the questions in writing, as you ask them verbally - either printed or in a virtual chat form. This can provide opportunities for candidates with different ways of processing information to access the interview more fulsomely and can help all candidates best ensure they are answering each aspect of the question. It’s appropriate to ask for the list of questions back at the end, or to delete them from the chat if there are concerns about the candidate having permanent access to the written form of the questions.

✓ **Travel & Accommodations**—is the candidate travelling from out of town? There are many local accommodations available including our residences on campus. Frederick Travel is UW’s preferred travel agency and they can help you plan. More information is available on the Procurement webpage.

✓ **Refreshments**—make the candidate feel comfortable. Provide water to help the candidate feel relaxed.

✓ **Accommodations** — all individual needs are unique and must be addressed individually. Ensure you’ve provided candidates multiple opportunities to ask for accommodations, or opportunities to make the process more accessible to them. The Human Rights Commission recommends employers to accept all accommodation requests to the point of undue hardship so all candidates feel comfortable and can fully participate in the interview. Failure to do so may put the employer at risk of legal action. Contact HR if your candidate asks for an accommodation and you are unsure of next steps.

**Tips and Considerations When Conducting Virtual Interviews on MS Teams**

✓ **Send Separate Invitations**: If you are scheduling back-to-back interviews, send separate calendar meetings to each group of participants to create separate meetings. This keeps confidentiality intact.

✓ **Test run with your candidates**: When sending interview invitations to prospective candidates, offer to schedule a trial run to confirm their audio/video capability and to minimize technical issues during the interview.

✓ **Plan a clear & structured process with your hiring panel**: Setting the parameters and expectations beforehand will help the interview run smoothly. Discuss ahead of time with your hiring panel:

1. Who will ask each question?

2. What you will do if one of the panel members experiences technical difficulty. Will you continue with the interview or reschedule?

3. Complete each question by asking if anyone has any follow up questions.
✓ **Decide the best location for the interview:** Try to find a quiet, well-lit space where you’re unlikely to be disturbed, and where you have a strong Wi-Fi signal. Give candidates a positive impression by testing out your video/audio before the interview to avoid potential challenges in the scheduled meeting.

✓ **Closed captions (CC):** Occasionally, internet signal strength may be an issue, or you may have instances where an attendee requires auditory assistance; MS Teams has the option to [turn on closed captions](#) to automatically generate running text of the dialogue.

✓ **Connect with your candidate:** All panel members should turn on their video during the interview. This improves the human connection between the candidate and hiring panel. Act professional and personable, the same way you would for an in-person interview.

✓ **Minimize distractions:** Mute your microphone when you are not speaking to minimize any background noise. You can also eliminate your MS Teams notifications by setting your status to “Do not Disturb”. This allows the candidate and panel members to focus on the interview without distractions (ex. typing noises, or notifications).

✓ **Blur or change your background:** If you wish to hide your surroundings, you can [blur or change your background](#) to your desired image. You can also download [UW Themed Backgrounds](#).

✓ **Lobby area:** As the meeting organizer, you may decide if you would like your candidate to go directly into your meeting, or have them [wait in the lobby](#) until all panel members have joined the meeting. Once you are ready, you can admit the candidate into the meeting space.

✓ **Spotlight candidate:** When you [spotlight](#) the candidate, their video will be enlarged on everyone’s screen while the panel member’s videos will be smaller. This allows everyone to focus on the candidate. From the candidate’s perspective, everyone’s videos will be the same size.

✓ **Bear in mind:** All messages shared in the Chat function of a meeting are visible to all participants, including the candidate, even after the meeting has ended. It is recommended to debrief with your committee in a separate meeting, rather than the interview meeting itself.

**In order to maintain privacy and confidentiality, DO NOT record interviews.**

**Behavioural Interviewing**

Behavioural interview questions are highly recommended. This interview technique asks candidates to give specific examples of how they have performed in past situations. A person’s behavior does not significantly change over the course of their life. A person’s prior behavior is a strong predictor of how they will perform in similar circumstances in future.

✓ Create your interview guide before reviewing your candidates. This ensures you are asking questions related to the job qualifications and not your candidate pool.

✓ Ground your questions in the posted qualifications. Avoid ‘opinion-based’ questions (ex. “How do you feel about...”), as they are not likely to produce answers that would measure a candidate’s job-related abilities.
Asking hypothetical questions of what the candidate would do in the future leaves room for an open response. The candidate may be able to convince the interviewer that they possess a particular skill without providing any evidence.

Asking one or two scenario-type questions, allowing a candidate to demonstrate knowledge and/or skill (ex. problem solving) is allowed, and sometimes highly beneficial, but bear in mind that questions grounded in previous behaviors will be the strongest predictors of future job performance. Therefore, ask questions that require the candidate to tell you how they have previously behaved rather than how they think they will/would behave.

Create a scoring matrix or rubric that reflects the core competencies and qualifications to ensure the panel evaluates answers consistently. Complete this while you are refining your interview guide questions, so that you include all the relevant skills you would like a candidate to demonstrate in the interview. See Appendix: Rubric at the end of this document.

### Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example Question</th>
<th>Elements of a Strong Answer</th>
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| **The University is committed to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. Can you tell us about your experience working with equity deserving groups and the impact of those experiences?** | ✓ May use language that acknowledges their social location/identities  
✓ Ideal responses will cite relevant work experience where the candidate interacted with equity deserving groups in a similar role, and proving transferable skills to the current position  
✓ Leverage understanding of their own intersectionality, power, and personal experience with equity-deserving groups  
✓ Language that acknowledges power/privilege  
✓ Recognition of the difference between equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism as concepts  
✓ An explanation/exploration about the shift in the candidate’s systemic thinking  
✓ Recognition of individual experience within equity deserving groups.  
✓ Understanding that each has separate and distinct identities, unique challenges and experiences- both at personal and group levels  
✓ Comprehension of the concept of intersectionality  
✓ Answers should also be specific about the equity deserving groups the candidate worked with in past experiences, and use language that is reflective of current best practices (e.g. using person-first language, referring to specific groups such as racialized, Black, Indigenous, , trans etc. Instead of using outdated terms, or grouping all equity deserving folks together)  
✓ Candidates’ responses should not contain ‘saviour’ narratives. Strong responses will credit equity deserving group’s power, resiliency, and labour  
✓ Weaker answers may focus on individual learning and lack reference to tangible actions |
| **Describe your professional experience with embedding principles** | ✓ Ideal responses will reflect on past professional experience and may speak to how they applied learning or intend to embed equity & anti-racism principles moving forward |
Candidates should be able to speak to how they actively embedded principles of equity & anti-racism:

- In their interactions with colleagues
  - When issues of equity and anti-racism arise reactively
  - Proactively created an inclusive environment
- In their interactions with students/service users
  - How they have responded when students/service users brought forward a concern about inequity or racism
  - Promoted equity (e.g. using chosen names, ensuring correct pronoun usage, person first language etc.) in processes or interactions
- Tangible examples of how the candidate embedded equity in the systems/processes under their scope of influence
  - Strong answers may provide examples of items within their position’s scope, and/or indicate a willingness to explore existing operations and proactively make recommendations about equity
  - Candidate speaks about feedback they received from students/service users and things they implemented as a result of that feedback

Ideal responses may also include:

- Examples of how candidates’ past work experiences have shaped their equity knowledge both interpersonally and systemically
- How the candidate might consider universal design when creating something new in their role
- How they might engage in continued learning/educational opportunities
- Strong answers will include a nuanced understanding of equity, anti-racism, decolonization, disability justice, gender equity, 2SLGBTQ+ advocacy – or a breakdown of other elements of equity specifically.
- Weaker answers might substitute diversity instead of equity, and not explore anti-racism in their answers

Tell us about your experience creating inclusive team environments, specifically related to equity and anti-racism.

Strong answers would include actions the candidate has taken to proactively create inclusive team environments

- E.g. using chosen names, consideration of pronouns, thinking about needs of employees with disabilities/alternate working styles, acknowledging different family arrangements, spiritual and cultural practices, responding to situations that may compromise an inclusive environment appropriately and thoughtfully (e.g. addressing microaggressions)
- Potential past examples might include how the candidate helped to create spaces for reflection, encouragement of colleagues, adapting standard operating practices to make the team more inclusive, providing education to colleagues around equity/inclusion etc.

Strong answers might also include:

- Demonstrated understanding of the difference between a diverse team environment (e.g. a team comprised of people with differing
lived experiences) and an inclusive team environment (e.g. a team in which everyone feels valued, respected, heard, and able to fully participate).

- Understanding of the importance of colleagues being able to bring their whole selves to work
- Recognition that an inclusive team environment is a journey and not a destination
- Holding space for different ways of being, knowing and working
- Equity deserving team members may have different ways of engaging in work, recognizing that there often not one ‘correct’ way
- Candidate speaks to the importance of language – how are they holding space for language that resists accidental ableism, transphobia, racism etc. – gendered language, pronouns, assumptions around partners and children (etc.)
- Acknowledging and owning mistakes as a colleague
- Giving and receiving feedback non-defensively
- Actively creating space for voices, ideas and suggestions of equity deserving team members

✓ From candidates who are being considered for positions of authority or management:
  - Demonstrated understanding of power/privilege
  - Awareness of the responsibility to create an inclusive team environment (e.g. leading from the ‘top’, using humility, active listening, vulnerability, openness to co-creating inclusive environments)
  - References occasions where they have modelled inclusive behaviour
  - Accountable- able to speak about how they will engage if actions, words, or incidents occur that compromise an inclusive team environment
  - Recognizes the responsibility as a manager to work with the team to define and promote an inclusive work environment
  - Evidence in their answer of introspection or reflection; acknowledges mistakes as a leader, and how they solicited feedback, personal/professional growth
  - Names equity, anti-racism, disability justice, decolonization, gender equity etc. to the team as priorities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you see as the fundamental characteristics of organizations that create an inclusive, equitable and/or anti-racist environment?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Strong answers might include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reference to goals and priorities grounded in equity and anti-racism – equity is embedded in their strategic plan, with active commitment to resourcing work and mechanisms for follow-through (accountability)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Principles of inclusion are evident across the institution – not just in one department - equity is known to be the responsibility of every member of the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The organization focuses on balancing systemic change with interpersonal growth</td>
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</table>
- Presence of robust mechanisms (formally and informally) for addressing incidents of harm (e.g. racism, ableism, sexism, transphobia etc.), and microaggressions
- Responds quickly and effectively to concerns, and prioritizes the safety of equity deserving employees
- Staff members have easy access to thoughtful accommodation processes and feel supported
- Beyond accommodations, there are transparent practices, processes, policies and facilities that demonstrate awareness of the diverse needs of equity deserving groups (e.g. celebration and recognition of varied spiritual/faith practices, inclusive washrooms, spaces that are accessible)
- Organizational culture is one of learning, openness, and dedication to growth. One that is constantly seeking feedback and willing to embark upon difficult change
- An organization that recognizes and celebrates diverse identities authentically and not as token actions

Presentation Questions
Presentation questions can be a useful tool during the interview process to assess the candidate’s communication style, presentation skills and relationship building skills. They can also show the candidates’ industry knowledge, research skills, and to determine how they perform under pressure. Not all roles require a presentation question; think about whether a presentation would add value to your decision-making.
If a presentation question is desired:
✓ Ensure the presentation topic is directly related to the role
✓ Ensure the candidates have ample time to prepare
  o All candidates should be given an equal amount of time to prepare their presentation
  o Ask the candidate to send any audio-visual materials the day before the interview, in case technology becomes an issue

STAR Interview Method
The STAR method is a popular technique for interviewees to thoroughly answer interview questions in a brief, narrative structure. As a hiring manager, you can also use this method as a guide to help you gather the relevant information you need. When a candidate’s response is vague or unclear, they may not cover all the STAR areas sufficiently. In this case, you will have an idea of where you need to probe to get the details.
**Situation**

A brief description of a specific situation and context the candidate was involved in (who, what, when, where and why)

**Task**

The goal or challenges that needed to be completed or the expectations that needed to be met

**Action**

The action taken to address the situation, pay particular attention to the steps the candidate took and their own contributions. Pay attention to their reasoning and listen carefully to the pronouns used such as ‘I’ or ‘we’. Drill down to the specific details by asking probing questions: Why did they do it? How did they do it? What skills or tools did they use?

**Result**

The outcome or the impact of the action; how did it end? Was the goal met? What was accomplished? What was learned? What would they do differently to improve?

**Probing Tips**

Probing is an important technique to retrieve more information from the candidate, so that you have accurate and detailed information to make an informed decision. Knowing the position well and understanding the skills, knowledge and experience you are looking for is vital. Here are some questions you can probe with:

- What steps did you take?
- What action did you take?
- What happened after that?
- What did you say?
- How did they react?
- How did you handle that?
- What was your reaction?
- How did you feel about the outcome/result?
- What was the outcome/result?
- What do you wish you had done differently?
- What did you learn from that?
- How did you resolve that?
- How did x affect your relationship with...?
- Why did you decide to do that?
- What was your reasoning?
- Who else was involved?
Tell me more about your interaction with that person.
What was your role?
What were the circumstances surrounding...?
What obstacles did you face?
What were you thinking at that point?

Note-Taking

- Interview notes serve as a formal record of the interview process.
- Each panel member should take notes on the candidate’s responses so that all candidates are consistently and fairly evaluated – also consider the use of a rubric mentioned above.
- Aim to be objective (factual) and specific with your notes. This will help you evaluate the candidates accurately in the selection process.
- Do not record subjective or generalized notes as this information can lead to inaccurate assessment.

Stop: If a candidate voluntarily provides information that is irrelevant to the job, it is important that your notes do not contain any discriminatory or inappropriate information. Your notes are permanent records that may be recalled for feedback or reference. Furthermore, if legal action were ever initiated, written notes may become evidence.

Red Flags

- **Lacking motivation**—motivation is a huge determinant of how successful the candidate will be on the job and potentially how long they will stay with the University. People with intrinsic motivation are usually more driven than people with extrinsic motivation. Find out from your candidate what will make them happy and motivated on an ongoing basis, not just when they possibly obtain the position.
  - Intrinsic Motivation: the desire to do something because it is enjoyable and there is a sense of personal meaningfulness
  - Extrinsic Motivation: the desire to do something because of external rewards, or outcomes

- **Employment gaps/many short roles on the resume**—the period and number of roles a person has held in the past could be an indicator of their commitment level or that they have been terminated from their previous positions. However, it is important to note that the appearance of gaps on a resume could also be because of factors outside of the candidate’s control, that are protected grounds. Verify dates of employment on the resume and the reason the candidate left the employer.
✓ **Weak Examples**—candidates who seem unwilling or unable to share information may not possess the required level of skill or experience the question aims to discover. Alternately, they may provide a vague response, or try to mask the details of a prior situation if they feel it may paint them in an unfavorable light.

### Interview Process

#### Opening the Interview (~5 minutes)

✓ **Take time** to make the candidate feel comfortable. It is important to put the candidate at ease (especially those who are naturally nervous in interviews) by making small talk with them or by offering them refreshments.

✓ **Create** a comfortable and informal but business-like environment. This provides a positive candidate experience and sets the tone for the interview.

✓ **Introduce** the members on the interview panel, invite panelists to share their names, pronouns, role in the department, and how their roles relate to the position being hired.

✓ **Go through** the anticipated timeline and structure of the interview and assure the candidate that if they need extra time to think about their response to a question, they can take it.

#### During the Interview

✓ **Use** the 20/80 rule as a guideline to allow candidates to do most of the talking.

✓ **Silences** may occur while the candidate tries to format an answer, but time will hopefully allow them to formulate a thoughtful response. It may feel uncomfortable, but avoid the temptation to jump in.

✓ **Listen** attentively and take clear, thorough notes to help you with the selection process later. Do not be afraid to ask the candidate to repeat themselves. Record only *factual* information, and avoid documenting anything besides the candidate’s verbal answer. Note taking tips on page 11.

✓ **Vague responses**—probe the candidate, if necessary, to understand the details of their answers, and the depth of their knowledge, skills and experience. Probing tips on page 10.

✓ **Body language** such arms crossing, narrowing your eyes or checking the time may project the wrong message to the candidate and set a negative tone during the interview. Try to maintain eye contact with the candidate, smile and keep a neutral body posture to show you are listening and genuinely interested in their experience.

#### Closing the Interview

✓ **Give a realistic job preview**. Let the candidate know the responsibilities of the role and provide a realistic description of the department they will be working in. What are some of the challenges they can expect to face? What is their anticipated working environment? Transparency increases employee retention.
✓ **Leave some time** for the candidate to ask questions

✓ **Thank the candidate** for their interest in this position and attending the interview. Let them know what the next steps are and when they will hear from you

✓ **Escort the candidate** to the exit (if applicable). To maintain privacy and confidentiality of the interviewees, candidates should not encounter each other before or after the interview for example, if they enter and exit through a common waiting room. Allot time between interviews if necessary

   *Remember, candidates are your customers. If you set the expectation that you will contact them regardless of whether or not they are successful in the interview, make sure you follow through! It is a professional courtesy and candidates will appreciate your effort to keep them informed.*

   *This also preserves the positive reputation of the University.*

**After the Interview**

- Use this time to expand on your notes while the information is still fresh on your mind; talk with other panel members to fill in the areas that may have been missed
- Ensure you’re using the pronouns the candidate shared, or that you’re using gender neutral pronouns if they were not shared with the panelists. Do not make assumptions about the identities that the candidate holds.
- Evaluate and compare candidates only after all prospects have been interviewed; avoid comparing candidates between interviews to maintain objectivity in the hiring process
- Speak with your Talent Acquisition Specialist about the hiring decision before communicating with candidates

**Document Retention for Hiring Managers and Hiring Committee Members**

**Hiring Managers** Please retain documents for 1 year after the appointment process has been completed. After 1 year, please securely delete or dispose these documents.

**Hiring Committee Members:** Please securely dispose of the documents immediately after the appointment process is completed.

   *Documents are defined as advertisements, candidate application materials, hiring committee records, interview questions and notes, rankings, references, and related correspondence.*

**Additional Resources**

- [Hiring Manager Toolkit](#)
- [Starter Interview Guide](#)
- [HR 101 – Overview of Talent Acquisition](#)
- [Policy 18](#)
Appendix: Rubric

Use the role’s job description and qualifications as the basis of your rubric. The rubric can be used as a complementary document, alongside your other assessment tools (interview guide, notes, tests etc.), to evaluate the skills and competencies demonstrated in the interview. Here is a sample:

Candidate Evaluation Form

Name of Candidate: ____________________________    Candidate Pronouns: ____________
Position: _____________________________________    USG: _______
Name of Evaluator: _______________________   Date: _________________________
Type of Position: _______________________________   Department: ________________

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewed candidate’s CV</th>
<th>Interviewed candidate one-on-one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended candidate’s research seminar</td>
<td>Interviewed candidate with a panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended candidate’s teaching seminar</td>
<td>Other (please describe)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criteria for Evaluation: Grand Total Score /20

1=significantly below requirements, 2=below requirements, 3=meets requirements, 4=exceeds requirements, 5=significantly exceeds requirements

A. Demonstration of Job Specific Knowledge and Required Competencies (ex. Communication, Organization, managing priorities, Teaching, Specific Technological Skills)

Score: 1  2  3  4  5

B. Demonstration of Constructive Relationships and Collegiality (ex. Diplomacy, Tact, Conflict Resolution, Maintaining Esteem of Others)

Score: 1  2  3  4  5

C. Demonstration of Principles of Leadership & Initiative (ex. Problem-solving, Planning, Experience with Process Improvement, Strategic Thinking, Analytical)
D. Demonstration of Knowledge and/or Experience Related to Equity (ex. Sensitivity to Diverse Groups, Fair Assessment of Others, Empathy, Respect and Promotion of Inclusive Practices and Principles)

Score: 1  2  3  4  5