

Dunlap Institute Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Hiring Guidelines

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Introduction

These guidelines were prepared by the Dunlap Diversity Committee (DDC) to provide Dunlap Institute hiring committees and prospective supervisors with guidance about how to make new appointments **for Dunlap Fellows, postdoctoral researchers and other staff positions not covered by existing or external procedures** (e.g., faculty, graduate students, administrative staff are excluded from these guidelines). The purposes of these guidelines are:

- a) To ensure that basic standards of diversity, equity and inclusion are maintained when hiring.
- b) To inform hiring committees and prospective supervisors about what are considered “best practices” within the context of the Dunlap Institute.

This document does not presuppose any particular outcome from a hiring round. It does not seek to elevate diversity above other considerations, such as academic merit. It seeks only to prevent situations in which bias (conscious or unconscious) prevents the most academically meritorious applicant from being successful.

These guidelines are not intended to impose onerous extra work on hiring committees or prospective supervisors. Feedback on these guidelines would be welcome and can be addressed to director@dunlap.utoronto.ca.

Proposed Guidelines

The Dunlap Diversity Committee recommends that the following approaches be followed when hiring. Note that these guidelines **only cover issues relating to diversity, equity and inclusion**. They do not supersede any of the University of Toronto’s other applicable policies, such as those regarding hiring and sexual harassment. It is the responsibility of all prospective supervisors and hiring committees to make themselves aware of the relevant policies that apply in their particular situations. Most of these policies can be found on the website of the HR & Equity office:

<https://hrandequity.utoronto.ca/inclusion/>

For example, the University of Toronto’s [Careers web site](#) includes the following guidance to job applicants: *“The University of Toronto is strongly committed to diversity within its*

community and especially welcomes applications from racialized persons / persons of colour, women, Indigenous / Aboriginal People of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ persons, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.”

1. Preamble

- a. It is the vision of the Dunlap Institute to achieve diversity, equity and inclusion in hiring and admissions practices among all levels and categories of its members: faculty, staff, Fellows, postdocs, research associates, students, and Dunlap associates. As one step toward achieving this goal, the Dunlap Institute, on the advice of the Dunlap Diversity Committee (DDC), is implementing these guidelines to ensure that decisions regarding hiring are made fairly and equitably, with explicit attention always given to diversity issues (among many others).

2. Obtaining advice from the Community Climate Community (CCC)

- a. Anyone participating in the process of advertising or hiring is encouraged to seek advice where necessary from the Community Climate Committee by e-mailing joanna.baylon@dunlap.utoronto.ca.

3. Definition of “minority” and “woman”

- a. Throughout this document, the term “minority” should be interpreted to include visible minorities and Indigenous persons. Women are mentioned separately from minorities in this document.
- b. Dunlap Institute uses the definition of “visible minority” set out in [Canada’s Employment Equity Act](#), which reads “members of visible minorities means persons, other than aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour; (minorités visibles)”.
- c. Throughout this document, the terms “woman” and “female” should be interpreted to include all those who self-identify as female.

4. Advertising and soliciting applications

- a. All appointments must be made through a widely advertised public job search. “Widely advertised” necessarily entails posting the job beyond the Dunlap Institute and University of Toronto web sites.
 - i. Exceptions may only be made with the written approval of the Director of Dunlap Institute. The most likely exceptions would be a time-critical situation not of the employer’s making, or the continuation of an existing contract.
 - ii. Exceptions should *not* be made simply because a qualified applicant has already been identified, as this might afford an advantage to those who are part of an exclusive network.
 - iii. Applicants should be prompted to optionally provide demographic information about themselves on the approved University of Toronto demographic survey (as used for the 2017-2019 Dunlap Fellowships). Applicants must be informed that this information is being collected to help us ensure that our shortlist reflects the diversity of the applicant pool and that it will only be shared with the selection committee in aggregate form.

- b. All advertisements must satisfy the following:
 - i. They must include the University's Employment Equity statement inviting all qualified applicants to make application (see quoted text above).
 - ii. They must also include "Applicants should have a PhD awarded on or after January 1, 20XX (career interruptions or other extenuating circumstances will be accommodated, and should be noted in the cover letter) under the required qualifications section.
 - iii. They must meet all requirements imposed by the University or by agreements in force with the relevant unions.
 - iv. They must be advertised widely through the normal channels, such as the American Astronomical Society Job Register, CASCA's email list and the Dunlap Institute website.
 - v. They must be brought to the individual attention of highly qualified women and minority candidates, with encouragement to apply (as would be done for non-minority candidates).
 - vi. They should be advertised in venues that target diverse communities. The most relevant communities will shift over time, but may include Facebook groups and mailing lists for minority communities. Some sample communities include the National Society of Black Physicists Job Board, SACNAS Job Board, "Equity & Inclusion in Physics & Astronomy" Facebook group, the AAS women's list, the APS women's list, and the @womanastronomer Twitter account.
 - vii. Applications should be received exclusively by the Dunlap Business and Financial Manager or a secure web-based tool not accessible to committee members or individual faculty.
- c. Applicants should *not* be required to have some pre-existing connection to the Dunlap Institute. Applicants should not be required to have approached and identified a faculty sponsor before applying.
- d. The DDC encourages hirers to include explicit selection criteria in the job advertisement, which specify the minimum qualifications or attributes required to be appointed to the position.
- e. The DDC encourages hirers to consider including the following sentence in the advertisement: "Subject to immigration regulations, successful candidates will be given the option to take up their positions as part-time appointments (such a request need not be made as part of a candidate's initial application)."
- f. The final advertisement must be approved by the Director of Dunlap Institute before being posted or distributed.

5. Composition of the selection committee

- a. Hiring decisions should be made by a selection committee, not an individual. The selection committee must have at least three members, at least two of which are women and/or visible minorities. Committee members need not be members of the Dunlap Institute or affiliated with the University of Toronto.
- b. Whether hiring individually or as a member of a committee, everyone with voting privileges over hiring decisions must have:

- i. Read in full the following document:
https://web.archive.org/web/20181015151136/http://www.hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/right-people-selection.cfm#_secA1
 - ii. Completed at least two of the following implicit bias tests to become aware of their own biases:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>
 - iii. Read the following document on recognising biased language in reference letters:
https://web.archive.org/web/20181015151115/https://www.eswnonline.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/23-b28d66b6400f67d9648a049f8faf44e0/2015/05/Gender-Bias-in-Letters-Brown-ADVANCE-Cyr-and-Silver.pdf
- c. In order for the applications to be released by the Dunlap Institute Business Office to the committee, the following information must be submitted to the Director of Dunlap Institute:
- i. The proposed committee membership, providing for each proposed member their name, gender, institutional affiliation, nationality and whether they would be considered a member of a visible minority in Canada (see section 3).
 - ii. Whether or not interviews will be a part of the selection process.
 - iii. If interviews will be used, a list of any questions that will be asked in common of all candidates.

The Dunlap Institute Business Office will release the applications to the committee **only once the above submissions have been approved by the Director of Dunlap Institute**. Any subsequent change to the questions to be asked must first receive the approval of the Director of Dunlap Institute.

6. Evaluation of applications and development of long and shortlists
- a. Prior to viewing applications, the selection committee must discuss and agree on the approaches described in this document, acceptable and unacceptable evaluation criteria (see below), and current best practices for avoiding unconscious bias (as articulated above). All committee members should agree to abide by a common selection process before being given access to applications.
 - b. Selection criteria:
 - i. Applicants should be assessed based on criteria articulated in the publicly shared job advertisement, such as research experience, scientific background, possession of relevant skills, research plan, and communication skills (as demonstrated professionally through application materials, journal articles, and other professional communications).
 - ii. In addition to prohibited grounds for discrimination, applicants should not be assessed based on any of the following criteria:
 - 1. Reputation of their degree-granting institution
 - 2. Reputation of their thesis advisor
 - iii. Applicants should not be ruled in or out solely on the basis of their publication record. Selection committee members should be aware

that conference proceedings and posters are an important currency for applicants in the field of astronomical instrumentation.

- iv. The selection committee can divide up applications for review as it sees fit, but every application must be read and scored by at least two members of the committee before a longlist is made. The recommended procedure is to divide the applications into randomized pools such that each one is reviewed by two or more committee members, but so that no one person has to review all of the proposals (to avoid bias that can occur due to exhaustion).
 - v. There are no formal quotas for hiring women and minorities within the Dunlap Institute.
- c. In order to generate a longlist, each committee member should rank applications on a 0/1/2 scale or something similar, with each grade accompanied by a brief written summary or justification. This grade should be determined initially *without reading the accompanying reference letters*. The committee member should then read the reference letters, and decide if they wish to change their grade. A decision to change the grade after reading reference letters should be accompanied by an associated justification for this change.
 - d. When hiring, the faculty sponsor or selection committee must generate a shortlist, send the shortlist to the Business and Financial Manager, and **await approval prior to notifying applicants that they are on the shortlist**. The Business and Financial Manager will pass on the shortlist to the Director of Dunlap Institute, along with a single percentage summarising what fraction of the shortlisted applicants are part of any minority group (including women). In cases where disclosure of the names of shortlisted applicants to the Director of Dunlap Institute would produce some conflict of interest, names may be omitted.
 - e. Shortlists should include women and minority candidates at least in proportion to their representation within the applicant pool, which should in turn reflect the field of astronomy generally.
 - i. In circumstances where the selection committee or the sponsoring faculty member feel that this outcome is not achievable, a brief written justification must be supplied to the Director of Dunlap Institute. This justification should accompany the submitted shortlist.

7. Interviewing applicants

- a. It is the decision of the committee whether interviews should be conducted for a position.
- b. The questions approved in Section 5 must be asked of all candidates, without omitting or adding any questions for any candidates, and without varying the wording between candidates. Follow-up questions are allowed, provided they relate to the original question asked and focus on the need for additional clarification or information.
- c. No candidate should be subjected to unusual scrutiny. For example, if one candidate is asked a highly technical question, all candidates should be asked a similar question. If any committee member attempts to “grill” a

particular applicant in a way incommensurate with the interview style used for other applicants, the other committee members should intervene in real time.

- d. All applicants should be interviewed under similar circumstances. For example, if one candidate will be interviewed by phone, Skype, or Zoom, then all interviews should be done this way, even if some candidates could potentially attend in person.
- e. For interviews done remotely, appropriate accommodations should be made for time zones (e.g. to ensure that remote candidates aren't interviewed at times of day when they are likely to be exhausted), limited bandwidth (e.g. using the phone instead of Skype/Zoom if connectivity could be an issue), and other similar concerns.
- f. For interviews done in person, the following accommodations must be offered to all applicants, whether or not the applicant requests them and whether or not the selection committee is aware of a need for them:
 - i. Transportation to and from the interview location, accommodations, and child care for dependent children.
 - ii. The opportunity to be interviewed remotely (e.g. by Skype or Zoom) for applicants who are unable to travel easily (e.g. because of illness, disability or family care issues). Note that having one applicant interview remotely creates the obligation to interview all applicants remotely, as described in item (d) above.
- g. Wherever possible, applicants interviewed in person should be interviewed and entertained during their visits to Toronto by a diverse group of local hosts (because women and minority applicants may experience disadvantageous dynamics when hosted exclusively by male or non-minority hosts).
- h. Interviewers and local hosts should be mindful that the applicant's most comfortable milieu, in which the applicant will perform to their greatest capacity, might be very different from that of the selection committee, host, or from the norm within the astronomy group at the University of Toronto. Appropriate "neutral" meeting spaces include normal working spaces, such as faculty offices, labs, and meeting rooms. Meetings or interviews should not generally be conducted in bars, pubs, or other highly informal settings.
- i. All candidates to be interviewed in person should be made aware that the Astronomy Building is at present not generally accessible to persons with physical disabilities, and specifically that it lacks an elevator. Offers must be made to accommodate interview candidates in accessible locations (e.g. the McLennan Physics building).

8. Making offers to successful applicants

- a. The committee should develop a ranked / prioritised list from which offers will be made, incorporating a strategy for hiring applicants lower on the shortlist if the top choice(s) decline. The diversity throughout the shortlist and waitlist should be representative of the applicant pool.
- b. Before an offer is made, the name and application of the proposed appointee must be submitted to the Director of Dunlap Institute for approval, along with a short report providing a paragraph for each interviewed or shortlisted candidate, justifying the ranking and hiring strategy adopted (e.g. if multiple shortlists are developed, each for a different research area), and indicating

whether there were strong dissenting opinions amongst the committee (without necessarily naming specific committee members). This report must be seen by all committee members before submission to the Director of Dunlap Institute.

9. Feedback to unsuccessful applicants
 - a. Unsuccessful applicants for a position should be notified in a timely manner that their application was not successful. If practical and feasible, such applicants should be given a small amount of feedback as to the reasons why their applications were not successful. The feedback should be objective and constructive.

Useful Resources

- [“Strategies for Recruiting an Excellent and Diverse Faculty Complement”](#), Office of Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life, UofT
- [“UofT: Unconscious bias & challenges to fair assessment”](#) (very clear talk, non-judgmental, evidence-based talk about unconscious bias in hiring by UofT science professor Maydianne Andrade)
- [UofT Employment Equity Policy](#) (taken from: http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/Policies.htm#E)
- [“Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Guide for Search Committees”](#) - Handbook from the University of Wisconsin - Madison
- [Federal government diversity, equity, and inclusion guidelines for CRCs](#)