

Guidelines for Department of Medicine Search Committees Using an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lens

Rationale:

The Department of Medicine (DoM) is considered a leader within the Temerty Faculty of Medicine and beyond for our focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) for faculty members, trainees, and patients. There is copious evidence that diverse teams offer a variety of viewpoints and wider range of experiences, which improves decision-making & problem-solving, productivity, career satisfaction & retention, engagement, fosters innovation, promotes organizational values, and perhaps most importantly, has potential to reduce disparities in health care access and outcomes for our patients.

There are many aspects of people's identities that may result in inequities and/or discrimination, including (but not limited to) sex and gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, Indigeneity, self-identification as LGBTQ2S+, disability, childhood socioeconomic status, and immigration status. We are committed to ensure that the DoM is representative of the learners we educate and the communities we serve, and to aligning diversity in hiring with support and inclusion in the DoM community.

Goal:

To ensure equitable and inclusive search and recruitment processes in the DoM. Equity and inclusion are as much about the process as about the end result of the search process.

Advertise the Position

- Strive to identify a diverse applicant pool by:
 - Broaden the description of qualifications via a holistic* approach
 - Engage in active outreach to select societies/organizations and equity deserving groups
 - Use of broad, informal networks to advertise positions
- Aim for a diverse applicant pool; consider extending the search if this is not achieved
- Include a statement about the University's promotion of diversity and equity (mandatory at Temerty Faculty of Medicine)
- Request applicants to:
 - Submit a statement on how they have demonstrated commitment to EDI in their academic and scholarly work (must be done for leadership searches) – this can be further explored in the interview
 - State any impact of COVID-19 or other life circumstances on their career trajectory if applicable (optional)

Establish Search Committee:

- The chair of the search committee is responsible for ensuring a fair and equitable search, which should incorporate the following:
 1. Confidentiality of all discussions; and
 2. Awareness throughout the process of the phenomena of unconscious bias** and institutional reproduction***.
- Identify the stakeholder groups that should be represented on the committee, e.g., stages of career, hospital sites, position descriptions, hospital and departmental leadership
 - Ensure that the individuals invited to represent these stakeholder groups reflect the diversity of the DoM by gender (~ 40% women) and that at least 1/3 of committee members either belong to equity deserving groups e.g., Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) or individuals with expertise in EDI to reduce the so-called “minority tax” on faculty of colour.
 - Review the draft committee membership and ask: “who is missing?” And “why?” - address any gaps.
- Ensure that the committee membership remains the same throughout the recruitment process
- Ensure that all committee members are committed to and understand EDI principles
- Raise awareness of committee members to the potential for unconscious bias*
 - Have committee members complete the [Harvard implicit association test](#) and the e-learning seminar, [‘What you don’t know: the science of unconscious bias and what to do about it in the search and recruitment process’](#), and provides signed attestation of completion prior to the first search committee meeting

Standardise the Interview and Candidate Selection Process

- Establish agreement on credentials/qualifications for the position in advance of interviews (often these qualifications cannot be readily identified from a CV) and the evaluation criteria (see [appendix 2](#) for example)
- In selecting which applicants to interview, do not penalize candidates for ‘CV gaps’ that may coincide with parental/family leaves or other personal matters
- Highlight the department’s progress in achieving EDI goals in selection and recruitment process
- Use standardised questions and structured interviews to elucidate candidate’s suitability for the position
- Ensure sufficient time is available to discuss each applicant
- Compare responses to the interview questions horizontally, across candidates, question by question, benchmarked to the agreed-upon qualifications for the position
- Rank candidates after thorough discussion using private ballot instead of open ranking to avoid peer pressure

- Consider a second interview if there are outstanding questions or concerns about one or more applicants – if two are being considered, re-interview both
- Do not require letters of reference until later in the recruitment process
 - Raise awareness that letters of reference may reflect unconscious bias (see [appendix 1](#) for examples)

Monitor the process

- Task one search committee member, who is committed to and understands EDI principles, to monitor and document the search process with respect to EDI principles; ask this individual to intervene if they feel there has been a violation of the expectations for fairness and equity. Other members should take responsibility for doing so as well.
- Have committee members reflect on what went well and what could have been done better at the conclusion of each search

Beyond the Search Process

- Commit to supporting the successful candidate with mentorship/coaching to facilitate their transition and integration in the DOM – provide an appropriate orientation
- Review the search processes regularly, including decisions made, and progress towards equity goals
- Continue to enhance the culture of inclusion for the Department such that diversity in hiring is aligned with support and inclusion in the DoM community
- Consider using the DOM [self-identification survey](#) results to establish hiring goals for equity deserving groups and BIPOC candidates

** Holistic Review is a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant's capabilities by providing balanced consideration to their experiences, attributes, and academic metrics to ascertain how the candidate might contribute meaningfully as a future Department of Medicine's faculty member/leader in alignment with the departmental vision and priorities.*

***An unconscious bias is an implicit attitude, stereotype, motivation or assumption that can occur without one's knowledge, control or intention. Unconscious bias affects all types of people and can be found in men and women. Examples of unconscious bias include gender bias, racial bias, and ageism.*

****The ways in which institutions are organized and governed transmit their institutional norms from generation to generation, and individuals within those institutions are socialized to expect things to be a certain way. This phenomenon maintains the power and advantages of groups that have traditionally held those advantages and makes it harder for those from groups that have traditionally been less powerful to be successful and become leaders. The identification of this phenomenon of cultural reproduction, including pointing out assumptions that advantage or disadvantage certain groups, helps to disrupt the cycle, thereby enabling positive change*

Resources:

- Suggested Networks to post:
 - ✓ Canadian Society of Internal Medicine (CSIM)
 - ✓ Canadian Medical Association (CMA)
 - ✓ Ontario Medical Association (OMA)
 - ✓ Subspecialty organisations e.g. Canadian cardiovascular society, Canadian society for endocrinology and metabolism, etc.
- Suggested Networks to post for Groups currently underrepresented in the Department of Medicine
 - ✓ Indigenous Physician Association of Canada <https://www.ipac-amac.ca/>
 - ✓ Black Physicians of Canada (<https://blackphysicians.ca/>)
 - ✓ Black Physicians Associations of Ontario ([BPAO Job Board – Black Physicians' Association of Ontario](#))
 - ✓ Muslim Medical Association of Canada (MMAC) <https://muslimmeds.ca/>
 - ✓ Canadian Association of Physicians with disabilities (www.capd.ca)
 - ✓ Sexual and Gender Identity Office at University of Toronto <https://sgdo.utoronto.ca/>
 - ✓ DoM LGBTQ2S Ambassadors
 - ✓ Diversity and Inclusion Leads at other universities and institutions
- Temerty Faculty of Medicine EDIIA guidelines document: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ErvYb-Dh4hOig28uvzGp984eU0m3CPa/view>
- Reducing Bias in Academic Search Committees (<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2594729>)
- Interview guide/question suggestions on how to ask about EDI related work and experience (few examples are shared below)
 - ✓ *In your past experience, how have you fostered equity, diversity and inclusion at work?*
 - ✓ *What would be your approach to further EDI mission in this role (for the position they are being interviewed)?*
 - ✓ *How do you approach interactions with health professionals from diverse backgrounds?*

Appendix 1

In a linguistic analysis of letters of reference for faculty hired at a major medical school in the US, differences were noted between letters written for men and women. Letters written for female applicants were shorter and less focused on the candidate's record of accomplishment. They used more gendered terms such as 'intelligent young lady'.

- Letters for women included more grindstone adjectives such as: hardworking, conscientious, dependable, careful, dedicated or meticulous.
- Letters for men included more standout adjectives such as excellent, superb, outstanding or unique.

This finding suggests that women's success is more often associated with effort while men's success is associated with ability.

- Letters written for female applicants included more references to personal life than those written for men.
- Letters written for men were more likely to have references to their CV, publications or patents.

1. Trix F., & Psenka, C. Exploring the Color of Glass: Letters of Recommendation for Female and Male Medical Faculty. *Discourse & Society*, 2003; 14(2), 191- 220.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926503014002277>
2. Madera JM, Hebl MR, Martin RC. Gender and letters of recommendation for academia: agentic and communal differences. *J Appl Psychol*. 2009 Nov;94(6):1591-9. doi: 10.1037/a0016539. PMID: 19916666.
3. Lin, F., Oh, S.K., Gordon, L.K. *et al*. Gender-based differences in letters of recommendation written for ophthalmology residency applicants. *BMC Med Educ* **19**, 476 (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-019-1910-6>
4. Schmader T, Whitehead J, Wysocki VH. A Linguistic Comparison of Letters of Recommendation for Male and Female Chemistry and Biochemistry Job Applicants. *Sex Roles*. 2007;57(7-8):509-514. doi: 10.1007/s11199-007-9291-4. PMID: 18953419; PMCID: PMC2572075.

**The Department of Medicine interprets the word "female" as fully inclusive of all self-identified trans and cis women.*

Appendix - 2
Search Committee Checklist

The following offers a method for participants in Department of Medicine faculty member recruitment or leadership search committees to ensure a fair and transparent process that adheres to our **“Guidelines for Department of Medicine Search Committees Using an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lens”**.

Candidate’s Name:

Position being considered for (specify):

Committee Chair Checklist (pre-selection):

- Efforts made to identify a diverse applicant pool
- Position has been advertised broadly
- Search committee has diverse representation from across relevant stakeholders, e.g., gender and equity deserving groups, career stage, position description
- Search committee includes an individual with EDI expertise who is designated an EDI champion (must be done for searches for leadership roles)

Search Committee Member Checklist (pre-selection):

- Position description for posted role been reviewed and is understood
- Unconscious bias training has been completed
- Candidate’s Letter of Interest (LOI) has been reviewed
- Candidate’s CV has been reviewed
- Candidate’s TES has been reviewed
- Candidate’s Statement of Commitment to EDI, if provided, has been reviewed

Candidate Assessment Checklist (at selection):

Please rate the candidate on each of the following:

	excellent	good	neutral	fair	poor	unable to judge
Potential for (Evidence of) scholarly productivity						
Potential for (Evidence of) scholarly impact						
Potential for (Evidence of) collaboration						
Potential for (Evidence of) efforts to support diversity and inclusion						
Alignment with institutional (hospital/department) priorities						
Potential for (Evidence of) ability to make positive contribution to DoM culture						
Potential (Demonstrated ability) to provide a safe, supportive learning environment						
Potential (Demonstrated ability) to be a good citizen of the U of T						

Other comments?
