



Guidelines for Excellence Through Equity

Appointments of Faculty and Academic Administrators

What follows are recommendations to incorporate in recruitment practices. They reflect the core values of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine. In order to address the needs of our city and our country we need to reflect our population. Diversity literacy serves our education and research missions. Regardless of the academic discipline, knowledge and expertise only benefit from being understood in social and historical contexts; we must be conscious of structures of advantage and systems of inequity. While tailored to the appointment of faculty and academic administrators, the guidelines complement a fair-minded selection process in which diversity is an integrated perspective. By adopting this framework we aim to disrupt bias in the search process so that relevant expertise, qualifications and competencies are paramount to a search committee.

1. Understand the policies and procedures involved in searches and the establishment of search committees.

Consult with human resources at Temerty Medicine and/or the Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty & Academic Life.

[Academic Administrative Procedures Manual \(AAPM\)](#)
[Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments \(PPAA\)](#)
[Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators \(PAAA\)](#)

2. Who Is On the Search Committee?

Adopt a skills-based matrix to identify members—beyond title and academic rank. Include people with diverse competencies, expertise, perspectives, backgrounds and lived experiences.

The University of Toronto's policies and procedures give relatively wide latitude to search committee membership. Ensure greater participation by junior faculty, as opposed to senior faculty, in order to mitigate conventional power dynamics. In this regard, consider students, administrative staff, alumni and members of other eligible constituent groups for membership.

Consider power dynamics and ask *"Who is missing?"* from the space.

Engage EDIIA (equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigeneity, accessibility) leads and use other inclusive methods to identify equity-deserving individuals, as well as to encourage self-nomination by eligible individuals from underrepresented groups or have others nominate them.

Include an equity advisor or consultant on the search committee. Distinguish this individual's role from that of the committee chair.

The role of the equity advisor or consultant is to—

- i. provide ongoing expertise and feedback on the incorporation of equity principles
- ii. recommend training, education and techniques to combat implicit bias and inequity
- iii. intervene and question committee members when potential bias, assumptions and/or stereotypes arise during the search process

3. Role + Responsibilities of the Search Committee

The role of the search committee is active. Search committee members commit to dedicating time and effort to conduct a thorough and equitable search process.

The role of the search committee chair is to lead in the collective responsibility for a fair, legal and equitable search. This takes time; beware of hastening the process.

See 2 above on the role of the equity advisor or consultant.

Education and instruction on—

- i. why equity matters
- ii. implicit bias
- iii. commonality of purpose
- iv. intentionality to make choices that align with the broader goals and vision of the academic unit

Do not rely solely on training videos on implicit bias; integrate dialogue and discussion on Excellence Through Equity at every meeting.

Job ads reflect the values and needs of an academic unit and Temerty Medicine. Before any discussion of potential candidates—

- i. Engage in a fulsome discussion of the expertise, experience and qualities sought in the faculty member or academic administrator, including things that will further the vision, mission and values of the academic unit.
- ii. Use inclusive language so as not to limit unnecessarily the scope of the candidate pool (e.g., although qualifications may be listed as “*preferred*” or “*desired*” they risk being interpreted as required).
- iii. Vet language used in the ad using a human rights law lens; this may help to encourage diversity.

Once finalized, continually reference the criteria agreed upon throughout the search process—when considering the individuals whom the committee chair will reach out to personally, reviewing applications, preparing interview questions and, ultimately, deliberating.

Commit to identifying a diverse pool of candidates (e.g., through networks, targeted societies/organizations, other means). Engage in active outreach. Develop a list of excellent candidates from diverse communities.

Reach out to resources for assistance (e.g., [Temerty Medicine Office of Inclusion & Diversity](#) and Academic Affairs, [Office of the Vice Provost, Faculty & Academic Life](#), [Division of Human Resources & Equity](#)).

Engage the EDIIA leads who, using their broader network, can also make suggestions about excellent candidates to consider.

4. Application Process

Request applicants to include a short statement on their contributions to EDIIA in their submission. This addition to the required documents (e.g., CV, letter of interest, research statement, teaching statement, reference letters) demonstrates that equity is a core value at Temerty Medicine.

Examples of contributions to EDIIA include faculty and/or leadership development initiatives; development of inclusive pedagogies; research, scholarship and/or teaching with a focus on underrepresented and historically marginalized communities; public engagement activities that reach out to marginalized communities; mentoring of students, staff and/or faculty from underrepresented groups.

In addition to an EDIIA statement, questions probing the candidates' track record in EDIIA work and deep understanding of the relevant EDIIA issues should be part of the interview process. See 6 below.

Caution must be taken not to value words over a candidate's lived experience. See 6-7 below.

5. Generation of the Short List

Evaluate submissions against the criteria originally agreed upon by the search committee.

Revisit 3 and 4 above.

6. Interview Process

Establish a welcoming atmosphere for candidates. A brief Zoom meeting or phone call a few days before the interview process begins offers an opportunity to answer any questions and alleviate any concerns candidates might have. This will help candidates to give their best performance. Similarly, there could be a follow-up meeting at the end of the interview process to answer any questions that came up, strengthen rapport and address any difficulties that may have occurred along the way.

For faculty searches, a secondary committee of students and postdoctoral fellows could meet with the candidates. This serves two purposes: First, it can show the candidate the sort of diverse student community they could be serving as faculty; second, student feedback can provide a counterbalance to any bias that may exist amongst the faculty. Students have an acute sense for strengths in potential mentorship.

Interviews are highly stressful. Historical structures of power, moreover, can disadvantage underrepresented candidates in an interview setting. Consider a second interview to delve deeper into questions or areas of particular interest. A second meeting with the search committee offers another opportunity for candidates to present themselves and to build upon their performance at the first interview.

Use standardized questions—asked in exactly the same way of each candidate—that reflect the criteria originally agreed upon by the search committee.

Examine the equity competencies, understanding and track record of the candidate through the questions asked.

Resist prompting, as this encourages bias.

Ensure that interview questions do not violate human rights policies (e.g., explicit or implicit questions about age, marital or family status, disability or any other grounds found in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*).

7. Committee Deliberations + Recommendation

The interview is typically the last element in the application process, so it can be overvalued because it is the most recent in memory. Remember that the interview is but one component of the application. Take a holistic approach that includes the letter of interest, statements, lived experience and reference letters.

Assess candidates against the criteria originally agreed upon by the search committee.

If “*fit*” is raised, clarify what is intended by the general use of the term in order to defend against implicit bias. A more helpful reframing can be “*commonality of purpose.*”

Discuss candidates through **the** lens of Excellence Through Equity.

Prioritize the advancement of the broader EDIIA goals of the academic unit in the context of the diverse communities in the Greater Toronto Area and Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Give equal time to every member of the search committee to participate in the discussion. Invite input from members in positions of less power to speak first. Discourage any member from dominating the discussion.

Dedicate time for the equity advisor or consultant to redirect discussions that are potentially biased. Revisit 2 above on the role of the equity advisor or consultant.

The committee chair will ensure a fair-minded discussion that relies on evidence to assesses candidates against the criteria originally agreed upon by the search committee.

Following discussion, instead of openly ranking candidates, a private ballot system can be utilized. The outcome would be disclosed to the committee following the 48-hour reflection period taken by the committee chair.

8. After the Interview—and Beyond

It is important to note the imperative to provide the appropriate resources and support that will maximize the potential for success of the appointed candidate. This support should be proactive, intentional and equitable. It should include culturally-appropriate mentorship with support that will enable full integration into the academic unit and its networks.

Personally follow up with the short-listed candidates to ensure they know they are highly valued.

Commonality of Purpose: Build and enhance a culture that allows all within the academic unit to flourish. Hiring faculty and leaders who are committed to this—and by definition to equity—sets the tone for the entire academic unit.

Invite feedback from the equity advisory or consultant and other committee members on the process. What could be improved in future searches to attain Excellence Through Equity?

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following individuals for their expertise and invaluable contribution to the planning and development of these guidelines. Our gratitude also extends to everyone who was involved indirectly.

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