

Assessment of contributions to EDI for faculty searches

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Purpose: To establish best practices for evaluating diversity statements and contributions/commitments to EDI for faculty candidates in Microbiology and Immunology.

Background: All faculty candidates for Microbiology and Immunology are required to submit a diversity statement as part of their application package. In addition, faculty are asked about past, current, and future contributions to EDI during their interview process. The goal of this document is to provide guidelines for best practices in evaluating this information and incorporating contributions to EDI in the overall candidacy of the applicant.

Evaluating contributions to EDI requires nuance. There is a range in EDI literacy amongst faculty and faculty candidates. Candidates may have lived experiences that explain their contributions to EDI or lack thereof. Candidates from historically marginalized groups may not feel safe sharing their personal background during the interview process, and some may feel that their representation on its own is a contribution to EDI.

The focus of the evaluation should be to assess whether the candidate's background, lived experiences, and past/present/future contributions to EDI demonstrate alignment with the EDI values and priorities of our department (microbiology.ubc.ca/edi), rather than to assess whether their contributions are above or below a threshold.

The assessment is not meant to be exclusionary of candidates who are from marginalized groups and/or for those who did not train in North America and therefore may not be familiar with the language and structure of EDI. This should be taken into consideration when evaluating candidates.

To guide the assessment of EDI contributions during faculty searches, the EDI committee members have outlined recommendations for evaluating past, current, and future contributions to EDI that aligns with our EDI values. These were based on resources from UBC and other institutions (1-4).

Assessment Category/ Purpose	Strong alignment	Sufficient alignment	Limited alignment
<p>Knowledge, literacy, and competency about EDI issues</p> <p><i>To assess the candidate's awareness of systemic barriers and the value of EDI</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Demonstrates understanding of deeper concepts of EDI (intersectionality, justice, decolonization, etc). > Ability to discuss these topics with faculty and trainees. > Can refer to data and resources to articulate examples of EDI in academia. > Adding value to academia and science by bringing knowledge associated with lived experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Understands systemic barriers that impact progress in academia (i.e. colonialism, racism, bias, accessibility). > Understands fundamental concepts of EDI (equity vs. equality, diversity vs. inclusion). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited familiarity with components of EDI. > Limited understanding of the value of EDI considerations in academia. > Limited understanding of EDI language and concepts.
<p>Past and present contributions to EDI</p> <p><i>To assess the candidate's track record for contributing to EDI</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Demonstrates leadership or initiative in activities that promote EDI in the lab, dept, university, societies. > Offers examples from lived experiences within the written statement or during the interview. > Representation of a historically marginalized community or group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Demonstrates past and current participation in EDI activities (lab, class, university, societies, etc). > Can describe examples of EDI activities at their former or current institution/department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No present or past experience in any aspect of EDI. > Limited ideas for future plans for contributions to EDI. > Limited first-hand experience through lived experiences.
<p>Future plans for EDI</p> <p><i>To assess future EDI goals for teaching and training.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Describes concrete ideas for inclusive pedagogy in classrooms. > Clear ideas for how to include EDI in hiring and training students in the lab. > Describes ideas for EDI advocacy in the department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Provides examples of good EDI practices that one could incorporate in hiring, mentoring, teaching, and student evaluations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Lack of ability to describe examples of EDI activities that can be incorporated as a faculty at UBC. > Little to no consideration for EDI in setting up a lab, teaching a course, hiring, and mentoring.

Final note: Although it is important to emphasize the candidate's commitment and contributions to EDI, the committee feels that it is equally important for the department to truly value equity, diversity, and inclusion to attract candidates from historically marginalized groups. Similar to every other aspect of the faculty interview, assessment of contributions to EDI is a two-way street, and we must be cognizant that the candidates are also evaluating our department's past, current, and future contributions to EDI.

References:

1. "Rubric to Assess Candidate Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" - UC Berkeley Office for Faculty Equity & Welfare, August 2018.
2. "Advancing Equity in Faculty Hiring with Diversity Statements" - Sara P. Bombaci and Liba Pejchar, 2022, *BioScience* 72: 365-371.
3. "What's in a Diversity Statement?" Seminar Series, Drs. Sonia Kang, Joyce He, and Grusha Agarwal. University of Toronto, Scarborough
4. "Criteria and job interview questions to address JEDI (Justice, Equity, Decolonization, Indigenization and Inclusion) for faculty and staff searches." Draft document created by Mai Yasue and Meribeth Deen in collaboration with UBC Equity and Inclusion Office.

Supplementary information

In order to guide conversations with candidates, the following is a list of a few example questions that can be used as a reference to probe the 3 different assessment categories.

*some of these questions were provided by the UBC Equity and Inclusion Office (4).

NOTE: It is important that the committee decides which type of questions to ask and ensure these questions are being asked of all candidates, not just a select few, during the course of the interview process (chalk talk, dinner, lunches, 1:1s).

Knowledge, literacy, and competency about EDI issues:

To assess the candidate's awareness of systemic barriers and the value of EDI

Entry-level questions:

1. How do you think EDI affects teaching, training, and hiring?
2. Can you name some examples of structures and environments that lack equity, diversity, and inclusion? And examples that provide equity, diversity, and inclusion?

Advanced questions:

1. What are the biggest challenges faced by historically under-represented groups in academia?
2. How does your own identity impact work with equity deserving students, staff, and faculty?

Past and present contributions to EDI

To assess the candidate's track record for contributing to EDI

Entry-level questions:

1. Do you have experience working with equity deserving groups?
2. Have you participated in efforts that tackle equity, diversity, and inclusion issues?

Advanced questions:

1. What have you done to promote a sense of equity and inclusion within your networks?
2. What experiences have you had addressing concerns of equity-deserving groups within your network?
3. What past or present experience prepared you to be an effective leader in promoting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in academia?

Future plans for EDI

To assess future EDI goals for teaching and training.

Entry-level questions:

1. What are some examples of actions that you could take to contribute to EDI at UBC?
2. How would you incorporate EDI into hiring, mentoring, and teaching at UBC?

Advanced questions:

1. Knowing what you know about UBC and/or higher education in Canada, what are some of the types of initiatives that you think might be important to enhance Indigenization/decolonization within the unit?
2. Based on your past experience, what is the biggest priority to address in the context of EDI and what are some ideas for how to implement effective strategies to tackle this?