URGEO
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

UCLA | College | Physical Sciences
Earth, Planetary & Space Sciences

Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for UCLA EPSS

This is what was found by UCLA EPSS Pod at University of California Los Angeles on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

Note: We acknowledge this information is not always accessible to students and even staff. If you do not have access to this information, please reflect on your own experience and outline what admissions and/or hiring should be like to foster a diverse and inclusive community.

- **What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement[1] is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available[2]?**
    - **Postdoc application:** " We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive community at UCLA. We seek to build academic environments where diverse groups of people with a variety of viewpoints and ideas can thrive and work together. We therefore encourage applicants from those from under-represented groups and backgrounds to apply."
    - **Assistant Researcher:** "The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or protected veteran status. For the complete University of California nondiscrimination and affirmative action policy see: https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/DiscriminatioHarassmentAffirmAction. The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age or protected veteran status. For the complete University of California nondiscrimination and affirmative action policy, see: UC Nondiscrimination & Affirmative Action Policy, https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/DiscHarassAffirmAction"

[1] R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples, (2017).
[2] https://careers.whoi.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/
[3] K. Cobb, #GRExit Resources, https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13215461.v1, (2020).
[4] J. Posselt, Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvjghw8s, (2016).
[5] https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html
[6] K. Griffin, J. Bennett, T. York, Leveraging Promising Practices, Washington DC: Aspire Alliance, (2020).

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- **Search Waivers for Academic Appointees at the University of California**: "The University of California's commitment to diversity, equal opportunity and nondiscrimination recognizes that a diverse academic employee workforce enhances our academic mission of teaching, research, and service. The University also recognizes that a diverse workforce is essential for maintaining our standing as a public university dedicated to serving the needs of an increasingly diverse state. As an employer and federal contractor, the University of California is required to provide equal employment opportunity and to identify and address underutilization of protected classes, including women, underrepresented minorities, individuals with disabilities, and protected veterans in our academic job groups. Conducting full and open searches for academic employment positions supports the University of California in fulfilling these requirements under federal and state laws."
- **Graduate Student Application:** "UCLA is committed to increasing diversity in graduate education. We embrace the principles of diversity and inclusion to understand, appreciate, and respect differences in cultures and customs, religious beliefs, gender identity, sexual preferences, and political points of view. The Office of Diversity, Admissions, and Inclusion (DIA) in the Graduation Division at 1247 Murphy Hall is open Monday through Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm to answer any and all of your questions regarding diversity in admissions and inclusion efforts. If you need online assistance with your application, please email DIA. The on-campus, UC-wide, and California-based programs that DIA and other UCLA units sponsor for current and aspiring graduate students can be found on the diversity resources page."
- Staff
- Faculty

- **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**
  - Postdoc positions found on academic job advertising websites (inside higher ed, Professor positions, HERC jobs, metro los angeles jobs, jobs trabajo.org)
  - https://recruit.apo.ucla.edu/JPF06474
  - --- asking Julie

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores[3]/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**

directly from: https://epss.ucla.edu/graduate/admissions/ and the UCLA grad student application portal

The UCLA Graduate Division retains the official application information and the mandatory application fee ($105 for US citizens and permanent residents; $125 for all other applicants).

The Earth, Planetary, and Space Sciences Department requires the following additional information:

From the UCLA Graduate Division Online Application

- Basic Information
- Biographical data
    - Asks for gender identity and expression: How do you describe yourself? What sex were you assigned at birth? Sexual Orientation? Preferred pronouns?
- UCLA ID
- Citizenship and Residency
- Plans for Graduate Study
- Academic History and transcripts
- Additional academic info
- Awards and Publications
- Test Scores (GRE General Test; TOEFL scores if applicable)
- Statement of Purpose (please upload under "supporting documents") (There is a place to upload it under "statement of Purpose"
- Personal Statement : Please respond to one or more of the following prompts. Your statement can be up to 500 words in length (approximately 1-page, single spaced, using 1-inch margins and 12-point font). To be considered for a Cota-Robles or Graduate Opportunity fellowship, be sure to describe your contributions to diversity. The University of California Diversity Statement can be found online.

    - Are there educational, personal, cultural, economic, or social experiences, not described in your Statement of Purpose, that have shaped your academic journey? If so, how? Have any of

these experiences provided unique perspective(s) that you would contribute to your program, field or profession?

- Describe challenge(s) or barriers that you have faced in your pursuit of higher education. What motivated you to persist, and how did you overcome them? What is the evidence of your persistence, progress or success?
- How have your life experiences and educational background informed your understanding of the barriers facing groups that are underrepresented in higher education?
- How have you been actively engaged (e.g., through participation, employment, service, teaching or other activities) in programs or activities focused on increasing participation by groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education?
- How do you intend to engage in scholarly discourse, research, teaching, creative efforts, and/or community engagement during your graduate program that have the potential to advance diversity and equal opportunity in higher education?
- How do you see yourself contributing to diversity in your profession after you earn your advanced degree at UCLA?
- Survey Information - How did you learn about the UCLA program to which you are applying? What contact have you had with UCLA? List the other academic institutions to which you are applying. Identify agency or exchange program support if applicable.
- Professional Experience
- Fee Waiver
    - ---Problematic sometimes causes separation of applications and delays. We suggest that we push to find a solution to this problem.
    - Suggestion: add a line that if you are applying for a fee waiver, you should directly contact the advisor you are interested in to streamline the process.
- Resume Upload (optional but beneficial)
- Recommendations (3 letters of reference submitted electronically)

The University requires that you complete the fields under:

- Disclosure Statement (personal statement)
- Biographical Data

In addition, we require receipt of one set of official transcripts from all institutions attended since secondary school. These materials must be mailed directly to Earth, Planetary, and Space Sciences.

- **How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric[4,5] public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?**

  - The rubric is not public.
  - The Departmental Graduate Advisor assigns applicants to one of four Area Counselors: Geology, Geochemistry, Geophysics and Space Physics, Planetary. Each Area Counselor then assigns three faculty to review the file using the rubric below. Each Area then has a meeting at which the Area Counselor presides and all Area faculty are invited to attend. Each applicant is discussed in turn and decisions are made regarding admissibility and potential sources of support. The Graduate Advisor then assembles information gathered from the Area meetings and decides on a final list of offers.
    - Our Rubric:
    - 1-5 Strength of background preparation (Institution, Major, GPA, courses)
    - 1-5 Statement of Purpose, appropriateness to UCLA faculty
    - 1-5 Letters of recommendation
    - 1-5 Summary Evaluation
    - Deficiencies to be made up at UCLA (what courses will they need to take)
    - Are you willing (and able) to offer GSR support?
    - Comments
  - Is there a way to rank or give some merit value to the diversity impact of an applicant? - Add this into the rubric! /combine with Grit factor?
  - 2021-2022 admissions - the ethnicity was not only listed but highlighted this year as a way to emphasize the potential diversity impact of an applicant.

- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**

  - The Departmental Graduate Advisor assigns applicants to one of four Area Counselors: Geology, Geochemistry, Geophysics and Space Physics, Planetary. Each Area Counselor then assigns three faculty to review the file using the rubric below. Each Area then has a meeting at which the Area Counselor presides and all Area faculty are invited to attend.

- How often are new Counselors selected? - every 3-4 years maybe?
- Lauri interacts with applicants
- Potential advisor interacts with accepted applicant
- Suggestion: in some cases communication about money, and where your money will be coming from, is not always 100% clear. For example, students who have two potential advisors coming in. it is not always clear right away, which advisor is providing funding, or if both somehow are. Another example: knowing how often you will need to TA. -
  - suggestion: more emphasis on money/taxes in the 495 class in the first quarter of grad school.
  - Suggestion: documentation on taxes in your funding letter
  - Suggestion: more transparency on summer funding year to year

- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**

  - No
  - Process for changing admissions: There is little hard documentation, so if a process needs to be changed, faculty discuss it and implement it year to year.
  - Suggestions: keep a hard copy of the process that is physically updated year-to-year. Keep a presentation of the process so it can be explained to and discussed with any new committee members each year. We have a written copy of the process above, so this document can be used as a source to be updated in the years to come.
  - What would an outside evaluation look like?
    - We are hiring a new Department DEI coordinator - suggestion: they could look into this.

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- **Has your university or company implemented or considered strategies like cohort hiring, mentoring, dual career support and partner hires, re-visioning your work culture, or other considerations outlined in "Leveraging Promising Practices"[6]?**

Admission Strategies			
	definition/purpose	Implemented at UCLA EPSS?	How is it/can it be implemented?
Cohort Hiring	● Admitting a group of students who are not assigned to a specific advisor - they must establish an advisor prior to their first exam.	● No, but we encourage a cohort environment	● EPSS assigns students to an advisor upon acceptance to the program. ● We do encourage a cohort environment by encouraging bonding at events like prospective student visit day. ● See below for a pros and cons list of implementing this strategy at EPSS
Mentoring	● Establishing relationships and building experiences prior to the new hire/student's arrival/ application to the program. ● This mentorship period can lead to more recruitment, and successful transition into the department as the new student/hire	● Informally - Undergraduate students reach out to faculty themselves. ● Formally - advisor student mentorship	● Faculty should encourage undergraduate research during classes. ● The grad students and undergrad students in the department have started a family mentorship program that began spring 2021 - families of ~ 6 undergrads and grads, encouraged to socialize and share advice. ● Undergraduates are invited to participate in the annual student research symposium, encouraging them to get involved and find a mentorship ● A formal mentorship program could broaden our reach to students outside of UCLA's undergraduates - increasing our recruitment success.

Dual career/ Partner Hires	● Supporting the professional needs of potential hires' partners. This can lead to better recruitment and more successful transitions for new hires.	● yes	● https://www.apo.ucla.edu/faculty-career-development/managing-dual-careers : ● UCLA has a number of resources available to assist with dual-career partner employment. ● HERC Higher Education Resource Consortium
Re-visioning your work culture	● "Focuses on how various forms of identity-based marginalization are embedded in institutional values, systems and structures" (Griffin et al. 2020)	● How often do we re-evaluate?	● Examples of questions we can potentially re-evaluate within a department: ● According to Griffin et al. 2020, when it comes to tenure requirements, expectations of excellence are often written in a way that affirms skills attained by white men (grant activity, scholarly productivity) and devalues skills that are often shifted to women and men of color in an institution (thawing and mentorship for example.) ● Another example could be leave for infant care

Search waivers	● In rare circumstances, and on a case-by-case basis, the requirement of conducting an open search prior to review for appointment may be waived.	● Yes - UC wide	● Guiding Principles Search Waivers for Academic Appointees at the University of California: ● https://medschool.ucla.edu/workfiles/Site-AcademicAffairs/GuidingPrinciplesSearchWaiversforAcademicAppointeesattheUniversityofCalifornia.pdf
Recruitment strategies	● Advertise our department so that everyone knows we exist, what we do, and thinks it is good.	● Yes, but we could increase our recruitment	● Outreach - we participate in some great outreach events where we represent our department - EYU, IOTMN. Organizations like SWG and Queers in STEM organize outreach events as well, where our department has some great representation. ● we used to go to schools every week/ every other week to represent our department specifically - it would be great to ramp up outreach again ● Develop relationships with surround undergraduate institutions: mailing lists. Direct, recommend undergraduates at other institutions to apply to UCLA, or connect them with someone in our department. ● Word of mouth from undergraduate professors (this is the only way some of us learn about UCLA EPSS) so developing connections to other departments and institutions is really important.

Cohort Hiring

Pros	Cons
● Minimize bias of hiring students based on network and who they already know ●	● Without a guaranteed advisor upon entry, students may be more likely to leave the program at the 1st exam stage because they had trouble finding an advisor 　○ Could be helped with formal mentor program in this (non-advisor mentors) ●

Example of Deliverable from Berkeley: https://urgeoscience.org/index.php?gf-download=2021%2F03%2Fhiring2021-berkeley.pdf&form-id=4&field-id=6&hash=81b42aaba5aa66229351187daf0122932b56ed345c173778060aa8a8c8769124