

Inclusive Hiring

Start with the Right Job Description

Attracting exceptional candidates through an inclusive and equitable recruitment process takes intention, planning, sustained effort, and resources. Diversifying your candidate pool with talent from many different backgrounds starts with refining your job descriptions. To help make writing job descriptions a bit easier, here are tips you can use to support your process for more inclusive hiring.

Establish your Goals

Determine what outcome you would like to see. Do you simply want antiracist job descriptions? Do you want representation on your staff to reflect the student population? Do you want more Black people in leadership roles? How will you know if you are successful? At every point consider your goal and whether the action you are taking supports it.

Avoid descriptions that include narrowly defined qualifications

Is a degree really required to perform the job? What impact does requiring a degree have on your target populations? While you have less control over the classifications at the University you do have the flexibility to be more descriptive. For instance, what is the equivalent combination of education and experience? You could provide specific examples of the experience you would consider in lieu of a degree.

Men apply for a job when they meet 60% of the qualifications while women tend to apply only when they meet 100%. The more qualifications you list the more you deter potential applicants from considering the role. A long list of required skills, experiences, degrees, and levels of seniority is probably not truly necessary for success and will only limit your potential candidate pool. Remove or minimize the restrictions to mitigate socioeconomic, racial, and gender bias.

Highlight accomplishments that speak to diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values of the institution

Share what you have done so far to become a more welcoming and inclusive place to work. Mention DEI-related initiatives, individual and departmental DEI awards, inclusion councils, and other accomplishments.

Describe how the position contributes to the campus goal of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Communicate how you expect this person to support these goals. Share how you foster a sense of belonging at the institution.

Create a customized DEI statement. What does DEI mean to your organization? What are your values? Help candidates understand the cultural expectations if they join your team.

Use gender neutral language

The language we choose and the words we use play a big role in how the job description is interpreted. The use of pronouns and gender-coded words can significantly impact the candidate response rate. Use gender decoder software tools to analyze and improve job descriptions. Removing non-inclusive pronouns and gender-coded words is more inclusive and less likely to turn off candidates who feel they do not fit the image you are putting out.

Minimize ableism bias

There are numerous words used in everyday language that may turn off a person with a disability. Instead of using speak, see, carry, or walk try replacing them with words like communicate, identify, move, or traverse.

Avoid using unnecessary acronyms and jargon

Insider language is one of the quickest ways to make someone else feel like an outsider. The use of jargon and inside references is one of the biggest barriers keeping talented people from applying to positions. They can make some candidates feel unqualified for a position that they are in fact qualified for. Keep in mind candidates do not know how the University of Iowa works. Spell out acronyms or, better yet, choose more universal wording that describes what you are looking for.

Highlight inclusive benefits

Benefits like health insurance (including fertility treatment), paid family caregiving leave, parental leave, flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, family services, Employee Assistance Program, and the employee discount program go a long way toward supporting diversity and inclusion. These benefits also increase retention and morale. Highlighting them in your job posting gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to inclusion immediately. Remember, the advertisement is usually the first touch point you have with a candidate. Mentioning some of these benefits signals your larger departmental and organizational values.

Include DEI competency in every role

Demonstrated experience with or commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion should be required in every job description. More importantly, you should weight DEI competency as heavily as you do other tangible skills and expertise. Be prepared to ask specific interview questions about DEI and expect a strong response.

Have the position description reviewed by EOD to ensure discrimination-free language

