
Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for SIO/UCSD

Submitted to URGE on 2-April, 2021

This is what was found by SIO URGE Pod at SIO/UCSD on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

- **What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement¹ is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available²?**

All Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) job openings have the following statement: 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, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

For the complete University of California nondiscrimination and affirmative action policy see:

<http://www-hr.ucsd.edu/saa/nondiscr.html>

- **Internships:** The Scripps Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) REU program has this sort of statement on its landing page and we recommend that others adopt this model. Such statements do not appear to be standardized in advertisements.
- UCSD details its commitment to diversity in graduate education on this page:

<https://grad.ucsd.edu/diversity/index.html>

From this page: “A diverse graduate student body brings a broad spectrum of ideas and perspectives into the learning environment and we welcome the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, sex, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, geographic region, political beliefs, and more. We wish to broaden and deepen both the educational experience and the scholarly environment, as students and faculty learn to interact effectively with each other, preparing them to participate in an increasingly complex and pluralistic society. We also want all of our students to contribute to the campus community in a manner that enhances campus diversity and inclusiveness, consistent with the [University of California Principles of Community](#).”

- **Post-Docs:** In the application for the SIO IGPP institutional postdoc, there is a statement at the bottom which reads “*UC San Diego is an Equal Employment Opportunity/affirmative action employer with a strong commitment to diversity (<http://diversity.ucsd.edu>) and welcomes all*

¹ R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples, (2017).

² <https://careers.whoj.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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qualified applicants. Applicants will receive fair and impartial consideration without regard to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic data, or other legally protected status.” Besides rare cases (such as the prestigious IGPP institutional postdoc referenced above, there appears to be a great deal of variability for Post-Docs recruitment and application processes across SIO and even within single departments.

- Faculty: In addition to the EEO statement, the following is also included in all Faculty advertisements: *“SIO is a world-renowned center of solid Earth, planetary, oceanographic, biological, and atmospheric research committed to academic excellence and diversity within its student body, staff, and approximately 200 principal investigators (<http://diversity.ucsd.edu>).*”
- **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**

UCSD will post all jobs published on Recruit to the following outlets. Recruit focuses on academic jobs.

HERCjobs.com

America'sJobExchange.com

HigherEdJobs.com

DiverseJobs.net

LinkedIn: [UC San Diego Academic Jobs](#)

Twitter: [@UCSDAcademicJob](#)

Facebook: [@UCSDAcademicJob](#)

[DiversityJobs.com](#), which includes:

- [AfricanAmericanHires.com](#)
- [AllHispanicjobs.com](#)
- [AllLGBTJobs.com](#)
- [AsianHires.com](#)
- [DisabilityJobs.net](#)
- [LatinoJobs.org](#)
- [VeteranJobs.net](#)
- [WeHireWomen.com](#)
- [JustJobs.com](#)



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Possible issue: Given UCSD provides this recruitment, it is possible that hiring committees, managers, and others do not think that recruitment is their responsibility or that they need to think about how to recruit a more diverse pool of applicants.

Typical recruitment practices:

- Interns: Tabling at Annual Meetings, personal networks, student coordinators and faculty at individual institutions (community colleges, Cal. State system, elsewhere), social media (Twitter), outreach through SACNAS.
- Graduate Students: Advertised on SIO website, outreach through SACNAS, magazines, newsletters, SIO community members advertising, SURF and other REU programs
- Post-Docs: Email lists (personal and professional), word of mouth, networking. Very dependent on the PI. Institutional post-docs may have an advertisement in EOS.
- Project Scientists: These positions are typically recruited internally at SIO, targeting people who are at the end of their post-doc. Project Scientist positions enable individuals to continue working with a researcher and/or faculty in a specific research field; when it is a post-doc that is transitioned to a new position an affirmative action waiver is required. An open search is generally required when bringing an individual in from outside the university.
- Faculty: Search committees are formed for all faculty searches (both the teaching and research tracks). Such committees write job advertisements based on input from Section leadership and other stakeholders; they are expected to do outreach and contact specific individuals for the opening. Search committees are required to carefully document methods including writing down types of individuals that you want to reach out to use as a checklist. Jobs are advertised in scientific societies (e.g. AGU), through social media (especially Twitter), Journals (e.g., Science, Nature), and there is a target outreach list for underrepresented minorities.

Suggestions: Building the pre-existing relationships so that when the committee reaches out it isn't awkward. Reaching out should be personalized, prioritizing science first, not racial/ethnic identity. Personalize recruitment outreach, and set specific demographic goals for accountability. Develop a departmental structure for the outreach, to reduce the burden placed on individuals in search committees. Maintain a database of underrepresented scholars through our department office that is constantly updated so that individuals can be invited to apply to relevant postings. Need to assess the effectiveness of our advertising venues.

- Staff: To understand the anticipated availability of women and minorities available for employment, HireOnline provides workforce availability data for each recruitment effective February 1, 2021. Data are estimates of the qualified number of women and minorities available for employment for the jobs in a given job group; in other words, the pool of people in a specified geographic area who are qualified for a particular job. The availability comparison can serve as



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an overall evaluation that considers the recruitment pool makeup in a given job group compared to their availability.

<https://blink.ucsd.edu/HR/employment/hiring/edi.html#Workforce-Availability-Data-in->

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores³/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**
- **Interns:** Requirements vary across programs but typically include a combination of CV, Letters of Recommendation, short answer statements, possibly transcripts. Since many internships are unpaid (which is problematic) many intern opportunities require financial privilege to work without pay. The two-month SURF program provides a \$6,000 stipend, free on-campus housing and other benefits. Many projects require high levels of coding which can filter out would-be successful applicants, but Scripps provides a coding tutorial over summer to help interns learn coding.
- **Graduate Students:** GRE required (exempt 2020/2021), Transcript (3.0+ in upper division coursework), written Statement of Purpose, 3 letters of recommendation, \$120 (\$140) application fee for U.S. (international) students, fee can be waived for domestic students
Suggestion: See appendix
- **Post-Docs:** PhD required and earned within the previous 5 years, positions are often achieved informally and seek specific skill sets.
- **Project Scientists:** PhD in a relevant area, several years of post-doc work, special attributes that fit the project/program that they are/will be working on.
- **Faculty:** PhD, CV, Research Statement (Interests and Plans), Publications - requirements for submitting a certain number of publications upfront will vary with the specific search. Teaching Statement, Diversity Statement (“Contributions to Diversity”), three letters of recommendation (some request letters at the beginning, some ask letters for later on).
Suggestions and notes: The expectation is that applicants who are at this stage have access to mentors who will let them know what should be in each of these); one suggestion for more equitable application would be to provide more detail or “scaffolding” or have a SIO example to make the intent of the statements more clear.
- **Staff:** A resume and UCSD Job Application are always required; a department can also create a “Questionnaire” (generally 3-4 questions) and require that all applicants submit along with their resume & UCSD job application. Departments can choose if they want applicants to submit a cover letter. Letters of recommendation are welcomed, but generally not required. If the position is “leadership” there will more than likely be additional documents/information required or requested. Say there is a requirement of the position, (e.g. type 65 wpm) instead of administering individual tests to applicants, applicants would be asked to take a standardized



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test via: SkillSoft. <https://blink.ucsd.edu/sponsor/talent-support-services/index.html>. If there is a requirement of the position that cannot be captured by a SkillSoft standardized test, then the hiring department works w/ the UCSD recruiter on all aspects of the “test” provided to applicants, in order to ensure consistency and fairness.

- **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?**
- **Interns:** Qualifications considered include: ambition/motivation, coursework/ability to code. Scripps REU (SURF) program does take into account previous research experience, barriers and contribution to diversity to increase research chances to URM students. The prevalence of rubrics varies across internship programs. To our knowledge, the rubrics are not public (especially prior to the application closing).
Suggestions: Best practices would include the removal of applicant names, the creation of a rubric for more objective evaluation of students (although rubrics can also be biased) and the publishing of rubrics so applicants can know what they are being evaluated on.
- **Graduate Students:** Holistic review, including rubrics, is now becoming a standardized part of review, though the details can be modulated to suit the needs of an individual curricular group. The process is not transparent to Graduate students that have applied or received admission. Biases in the process still include university prestige or the prestige of letter writers; availability bias, etc. See Appendix for more specifics on rubric.
- **Post-Docs:** PI-dependent; Post-Docs are often selected from existing networks of PIs.
Suggestion: Since Post-docs are mostly funded through project grants and awarded through informal networks with existing biases, more diversity-centered institutional wide Post-Doc funding might be necessary.
- **Project Scientists:** A small committee makes a recommendation to the relevant Section on the hiring. The Scripps Committee on Academic Personnel evaluates it and must approve it before going to campus for UCSD wide approval. No rubrics are used in the evaluation.
Standard biases can enter here: Bias training for the project scientist review committees. Developing a standard rubric for the different project scientists steps would make the evaluation more transparent and limit the discretionary space.
- **Faculty:** Search committee evaluates applicants, makes long and short lists, requests references, uses rubric to reduce to short list, seeks input from Section/Department at large, conducts on-campus interviews, more input sought, then a final choice is made. Search committee members are required to attend bias training.
- **Staff:** Staff are evaluated on the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) that appear in the job description. These are often used to make a rubric for the evaluation process. The job



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descriptions that the KSA come from are approved by the hiring manager and UCSD HR before the job can be posted.

- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**
 - **Interns:** Again, this varies across programs. Selection is often made by the individual responsible for mentoring the intern. In other instances, the evaluation is completed by a group of folks who review applications, and then pair interns with mentors. It seems there is limited interaction with the applicants. In some cases, there is an interview step, but this was not well documented. Individuals selected for SURF awards are contacted by email with potential SURF mentors CC'd; potential mentors are encouraged to reach out to the selected individual to offer an opportunity to speak by phone or on a video call.
 - **Graduate Students:** Funding dependent. Some curricular groups at SIO have pooled funding, others keep to specific advisors bringing on specific students. Seems varied by curricular group in general, although some form of a committee reviews applications and the application is passed to an advisor if their name is listed in the personal statement.
 - **Post-Docs:** Ultimately, PI is often the one deciding. Possible interactions involve giving a seminar to a research group, potential involvement of collaborators.
 - **Project Scientists:** Hiring committee is selected by the division chair and must be independent of applicant but also experts in the field. The hiring chair solicits letters of recommendations from external people and then a report is formed. The report goes to division. Most often the hiring committee recommendations are approved, but because it is voted on by division providing multiple checks and accountability to the hiring committees recommendations.
 - **Faculty:** At SIO, Section head creates a search committee based on the scientific area of search, relative seniority of advertised position, consideration of gender and diversity balance, and various intangibles. The search committee interacts with the candidate for most of process until the on-campus interview stage when the candidate meets with various faculty one-on-one and in groups for meals. Some candidates may also meet with Margaret Leinen (this was not the case for a recent Research Faculty hire so there may be differences between teaching/research positions in this way). They may also meet with the Department Chair, and with graduate students (usually as a group with the students). Faculty and students attend job talks. Search committee puts forth final candidate after several levels of consultation with faculty at large, then faculty as a whole vote on whether to extend a hiring offer. The entire process, from start to finish, is monitored by a Faculty Equity Advisor to ensure that the search committee is conducting the search in a way that promotes inclusivity, diversity and equity in hiring.

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Suggestions: Ensure that the search committee is diverse in terms of race and gender. Allow potential faculty of color to meet existing faculty and students of color.

- **Staff:** UCSD provides guidance on how to develop the interview and search committees. <https://blink.ucsd.edu/HR/employment/hiring/interview.html#Selecting-Interview-Panels-and->

The hiring manager makes the final decision after the interview committee has provided its recommendations/ratings.

- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**
- **Interns:** Varies by program. The official SIO REU program (SURF) is evaluated by outside consultants (The Mark, Irvine CA). It is well documented and seems like a very good model to follow. This effort is headed by Jane Teranes. Other programs, not funded by NSF, seem to lack structure to support or encourage an independent review of the program.
- **Graduate Students:** Graduate admissions at SIO follows the lead of the Graduate Division at UCSD. The graduate program has been reviewed by UCSD Graduate Council, with an external committee of independent academics (from other universities and/or departments). A number of programs have been put into place to foster diversity in graduate programs via holistic review and related practices.
See <https://grad.ucsd.edu/diversity/index.html>
UCSD is continually evaluating and improving the graduate admissions program with regard to diversity and inclusion and has partnered with C-CIDE, the California Consortium for Inclusive Doctoral Education to educate faculty and promote recommended practices for increasing diversity in graduate admissions.
See <https://grad.ucsd.edu/diversity/programs/c-cide/index.html>
Changes in admissions policies made at the UCSD grad division level are propagated to the SIO admissions process via the SIO grad division.
Suggestion for further changes (beyond Appendix 1): independent evaluation of admissions, retention and success.
- **Post-Docs:** No independent evaluation of hiring; variable processes and changing process is PI dependent. Some funding agencies (e.g. NSF) require Post-Doc mentoring plans but there is little evidence that these plans are reviewed carefully or that feedback is ever given about them; perhaps a hiring plan could be an added requirement?
Suggestion: Require hiring and mentoring plan for all postdoc hires in the department. Improve advertising and interviewing processes by broadening



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outreach. Perhaps a procedure could be standardized across the department that provides a monthly listing of open postdoc positions.

- **Project Scientists:** No independent evaluation of hiring. Variable processes for evaluating hiring, dependent on PI.
Suggestion for change is making the project scientist be part of the faculty equity adviser review to look at the demographic data of those qualified in the community for that job. This would also create a rubric for the review.
- **Faculty:** Change in hiring process requires faculty input to SIO department, extended discussion with SIO faculty at large, department-wide decision to change process. Exit interviews for search committee members are used to improve the process.
Suggestions: More focus on the transition phase. Reflection interviews 1-2 years later on transition. Listen when concerns are brought up. Environment/community make a big difference - Faculty hiring process should make clear SIO's values. Increase housing allowance, negotiation templates, lab renovation templates
- **Staff:** EEOC has audited UCSD's hiring practices and UCSD has changed its practices as appropriate.
- **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"?**
- **Faculty:** SIO has tried cluster hires. Need to focus on the quality, not quantity of top hires. New faculty are assigned a mentor from senior faculty to provide advice in all aspects of navigating the tenure, or, for Research Faculty, promotion process. The role of the faculty mentor is however completely unstructured and very open to interpretation, resulting in large variance in that role and its impact. Partner hires are regularly a part of hiring negotiations throughout SIO and UCSD.
Suggestions: Modify the current faculty handbook to emphasize the collective wisdom of our junior/recently tenured faculty can be harnessed to provide a document focused on the early years. Formalize faculty mentorship expectations and responsibilities (e.g. expected number of meetings per year, typical topics to be covered) signed by the new faculty member and assigned mentor.
- **Postdocs:** No known programs for spousal support; sometimes ad hoc requests from PI to colleagues. NSF requires mentoring plans.
Suggestion: All postdoc hires should provide a mentoring plan.
- **Project Scientists:** No known programs for spousal support; sometimes ad hoc requests from PI to colleagues. *Suggestion: Apply staff plans for mentoring and partner hires to project scientists.*
- **Graduate Students:** See Appendix 1. *Suggestions: Continue to standardize admissions and add training on "availability bias" and related fallacies.*

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- **Staff:** UCSD has a Mentor Program
<https://blink.ucsd.edu/HR/training/career/CC/mentorship/index.html>

Appendix 1: Recent SIO modifications to the graduate admissions process

In the 2020-2021 admissions cycle, SIO has attempted a more holistic and inclusive approach to graduate admissions. This was partly facilitated by the COVID-19 crisis, which provided an opportunity to remove the GRE as a requirement for admission. The SIO graduate department also developed a basic rubric for the evaluation of applicants (see below) which curricular groups were encouraged to use and tailor for their own purposes. These adjustments to admissions procedures were encouraged by the Dean of the UCSD Graduate Division:

[June 5, 2020 TO: GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS CC: DEPARTMENT AND GROUP CHAIRS GRADUATE ADVISORS GRADUATE COORDINA](#)

Additional potential for checks on discretionary space (i.e. elimination of bias) in the SIO graduate admissions process:

- GRE scores have not been permanently removed as a requirement; the department's position on this is still evolving. Further modifications could include permanently eliminating the GRE requirement and redacting self-reported scores.
- In addition to removing GRE scores, biases could also possibly be circumvented by removing additional information about applicants (e.g. name, gender, birth date, place of residence, citizenship status, undergraduate school(s) attended, additional personal identifiers), at least for initial review.

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SIO base rubric for 2020-2021 admissions season:

| Criteria | High | Medium | Low |
|---|---|---|--|
| Academic Preparation | Mostly A grades in STEM courses and appropriate course selection to be well-prepared for required first-year coursework. (In physical oceanography, specifically look for ordinary differential equations and at least one of partial differential equations and complex variables, as well as substantive upper-division quantitative coursework.) | Strong coursework, but potentially with a few weaker grades or gaps in preparation that would require substantial extra effort for success in required coursework. | Inadequate preparation for first-year coursework. (In physical oceanography, no math beyond first-year calculus.) |
| Scholarly potential | Substantial previous research experience; authorship on a paper, or presentation at meeting | Some previous research experience or internship; demonstrated academic interest (clubs, volunteer programs), attendance at meetings, even if not a presenter | No obvious engagement or attempts at engagement with research |
| Potential relative to opportunities; "Distance Traveled" | | | |
| Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Contributions | Leadership roles in community building activities; acts of social justice (e.g. advancing access for members of underrepresented groups); evidence of overcoming adversity; evidence of high | Participation in community building/social justice activities; evidence of overcoming adversity. Moderate evidence of overcoming hardship, initiative, leadership, etc. | No evidence of interest or participation; limited to awareness alone. Little evidence of overcoming hardship, initiative, leadership, etc. |
| Alignment with Program | Research interests align with multiple faculty AND stated career goals align with program training | Research interests align with one faculty member AND stated career goals align with program training | Limited alignment with faculty research interests OR limited evidence of alignment between career goals and program training |
| Realistic Self-Appraisal | Clearly delineates strengths and weaknesses AND clear evidence of effort on self development | Basic statements about strengths and weaknesses AND does seek positive and negative feedback | Over or understates abilities; indications that self-assessment or learning from experiences are limited |
| Preference for long-term goals | Clearly communicates long-range goals beyond the PhD AND has a record of engaging in long-term endeavors | Clearly communicates long-range goals beyond the PhD OR Has a record of engaging in long-term endeavors | Goals are short range (e.g., specific coursework); limited history of engagement in long-term projects |

- Undergraduate research experiences needs to be evaluated carefully, in the context of the opportunities available to, and circumstances of, individual applicants.
- Rubric use is new and inconsistently applied by curricular groups, this could be more strongly regulated and enforced.



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- Additional guidance (more detailed prompts) could be provided to applicants in terms of the contents of their personal statement.
- A more formalized and/or regulated approach should be applied to how faculty handle pre-admission email inquiries from applicants, and all pre-admissions communications.
- Graduate student support structures could be created that enable support of all first-year, or pre-candidacy PhD students.
- The role of support directed specifically towards URM students, either internal (e.g. San Diego Fellowship) or external (e.g. NSF GRFP) in influencing admissions decisions should be carefully considered.
- The requirement/expectation that Masters students be self-supporting has the potential to create a great deal of inequity in this graduate education category, and this should be carefully considered. Other inequities currently exist between MS and PhD students that should be eliminated, including laptops, office space, and after hours building access provided to PhD students but not necessarily to MS students.
- Faculty interest in recruiting students who will become faculty members may discourage students with other interests or expectations from applying.