



# STANDARDIZED INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT GUIDE

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## 1. Overview: Understanding Inclusive Recruitment

Diversity is a central component of excellence. Once a faculty or staff position becomes available for recruitment, department leaders and the potential search committee chair(s) are tasked to implement processes that are transparent, timely, effective and align with the departmental Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) framework (people, processes, and policies) and the organizational EDI strategic plan.

Inclusive recruitment refers to the process of finding, interviewing, hiring and onboarding employees across a spectrum of backgrounds, races, genders, ages and more. Inclusive recruitment actively recognizes equity, with the understanding that a diversity of perspectives, identities and cultural backgrounds enriches our spaces and creates inclusion and belonging and reflects the world we live in, and the patients, families and communities we serve. Standardized Inclusive hiring practices enhance leadership accountability and promote the inclusion of varied perspectives and experiences, particularly for candidates from equity deserving groups.

The process does not end at attracting and recruiting both diverse and strong candidates; retention of a diverse workforce can transform workplace culture and solidify identity as an employer of choice. Institutional commitments to improve equity is increasingly important for job seekers, especially in highly skilled roles in health care. According to Glassdoor's Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Survey, 76 percent of job seekers indicated that EDIA is important when evaluating companies and job offers.

The Standardized Inclusive Recruitment (SIR) guide has been adapted from the work of the Research Institute's Program Manager Suzanne Charles-Watson and the Office of Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Toronto. While we hope you will read the entire guide, we have outlined the different sections of the guide and encourage you to choose what works best for you and/or team in the recruitment process. The resources from other hospitals and academic institutions were carefully curated to supplement the contents of this guide. We recognize that this guide is a work in progress and encourage you to provide feedback to the departmental EDIA team. Contact information is provided at the end of the guide.

### ***1.1 Organizational Inclusive Recruitment Pathway Resources***

The Inclusive Recruitment Pathway provides you with recommended best practices to ensure inclusivity is at the core of recruitment and hiring – actions you can take to reduce unconscious biases, increase candidate diversity and support an equitable and inclusive recruitment experience at SickKids.

The creation of the pathway has been informed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission's guide "Count me in! Collecting human rights-based data"; Ontario Human Rights Code; the

Employment Equity Act; the Employment Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA); BlackNorth Initiative; and Ontario Health's Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework. It is rooted in the SickKids Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Throughout the document, the links are provided to these resources which supplement this guide and align with the hospital's Equity Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025.

### ***1.2 Diversity is not Inclusion***

Diversity and inclusion are under one umbrella; one can conceptualize *diversity* as a prerequisite, or stepping stone, to *inclusion*. The hospital's EDI strategy emphasizes inclusion, specifically building inclusive multi-disciplinary health care teams at the departmental level. Diversity without inclusion may be perceived as tokenism, which tends to occur when a member of an equity-seeking group is recruited, but the culture does not foster belonging where one can bring their authentic selves to work. Diversity alone can yield the minority tax for the historically marginalized team member who feels social pressure to represent the group.

"Psychological safety" refers to a situation where individuals feel secure in sharing their thoughts, emotions, and questions, or in making mistakes, without fear of negative consequences. It is a crucial element of inclusion, and fostering a psychologically safe organizational culture can help mitigate risks and fully unlock the benefits of inclusivity. In recruitment, teams can promote psychological safety by engaging in genuine conversations with candidates.

### ***1.3 Benefits of Inclusive Recruitment***

Adapted from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and the hospital's EDI plan:

- ◆ *Happier, more engaged employees:* Feelings of inclusion paired with representational diversity increases employees' feelings of trust and engagement.
- ◆ *Better problem-solving:* Diversity expands the range of perspectives present within a team, which improves a team's problem-solving ability, output quality, and conflict management.
- ◆ *Enhanced creativity:* In organizations with leadership that is both diverse and competent in diversity, employees are more willing to share marketable ideas, feedback is more readily given and received, and those ideas are more likely to move the needle, including in research, scholarship and teaching and learning.
- ◆ *Improving Health Equity:* On a departmental level, this is one of the most compelling reasons for diverse health care teams. Perhaps, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best when he stated: "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most

shocking and inhumane.” We have much to do to truly ensure that diversity and inclusion in healthcare is the norm and not the exception. Research affirms that “a racially diverse medical workforce results in improved self-reported patient experiences” ([Essien, September 2023](#)).

## 2. Standardized Inclusive Recruitment Lens

### ***2.1 Best practice are embedded throughout the organizational institutional pathway, including:***

Everyone may be at different stages of knowledge on inclusive recruitment, but the following apply to most searches:

- ◆ Ensure the language in the job posting is focused on essential occupational requirements.
- ◆ Include at least one equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)-related competency in job posting and related question during the interview.
- ◆ Select a diverse interview team, and ensure all members are aware of the inclusive recruitment pathway tools and resources.
- ◆ Inclusive job postings and application experiences that focus on the essential requirements to improve access to opportunities.
- ◆ Reducing bias in the selection process through structured hiring and engaging an EDIA advisor trained in mitigating bias and anti-oppression.
- ◆ Ensuring awareness of and access to accessibility and accommodation supports.
- ◆ Prepare the candidate for the interview in advance with information, such as how long the interview will be, who the panel members will be and the types and number of questions that will be asked.
- ◆ If there is an assessment during the interview, such as a presentation, provide the instructions and information to all candidates ahead of time, and attach any instructions to the calendar invite, as appropriate.

### ***2.2 Employment Equity***

To pursue excellence in healthcare, research, innovation, and patient outcomes, we must foster opportunities for a diverse workforce. Put simply, understanding, and implementing employment equity helps achieve inclusion and fairness, brings rich diversity to our department as a workplace, and creates the necessary conditions for innovation and excellence. Consistent

with the organization's EDI framework, [Equity Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025](#), and commitments, the hospital will:

- ◆ Advance the interests of historically oppressed groups – Indigenous peoples, racialized people, people with disabilities, and women;
- ◆ Ensure that fair and equal opportunity is afforded to all who seek employment in the department; and
- ◆ Treat equitably all faculty and staff.

### 3. Principles for a successful recruitment

#### ***3.1 Designing an Inclusive Job Posting***

First impressions go a long way; a job posting is the first window to the position for potential candidates. It's critical that the job requirements, competencies and desired skills/education/experience accurately depict the job. Notwithstanding this criterion will form the selection criteria, it is a crucial step in identifying the most suitable candidate for the job and the team they will be joining.

- ◆ Ensure the range of application material to be solicited through the advertisement is explicit.
- ◆ Advertise widely within and beyond your networks. Reach out to partners and stakeholders to encourage members of equity-seeking groups to apply.
- ◆ If the selection committee determines that the pool of applicants to the job posting is not large or diverse enough, extend the application deadline, or review the job posting more critically for potential barriers and re-post it.

#### ***3.2 Stages 1 & 2 of recruitment***

Stages of Recruitment	Best Practices
<b>Stage 1: Getting ready to recruit</b>	
Book Recruitment Strategy Meeting	Develop a strategy for job posting screening criteria, and advertising.
Review Job Posting	Ensure clear duties, inclusive language, and acceptance of career gaps.
<b>Stage 2: Search Committee</b>	
Establish the Selection Committee	Identify the chair and members, ensuring a general recruitment timeline.

Ensure Diversity	Select members with diverse perspectives (e.g., gender, specialty) and expertise to evaluate candidates effectively.
Include EDIA Representation	Include at least one EDI Advisor, either trained or bringing an EDI lens. The Department has a list of current advisors; please reach out to Anna Hossain for assistance: <a href="mailto:anna.hossain@sickkids.ca">anna.hossain@sickkids.ca</a>
Address Conflicts of Interest	Declare and document any conflicts before proceeding.

### 3.3 Selection Committee Structure

Search Committee Representation:	For Faculty Recruitment	For Division Head/Department Chief Recruitment
Division/Department Head	✓	✓ ✓
Executive Member of DOP	X (as per needed basis)	✓
Clinical and Education Representatives	✓	✓
Member of DOP External to the Division	✓	✓ ✓
Other Division Heads/Department Chiefs	X	✓
Research Institute Member	✓ (as needed depending on job profile)	✓
Allied Health Member	✓	✓
EDI Advisor	✓	✓
Learner	✓	✓

### 3.4 Stages 3 & 4 of recruitment

Stage 3: Screening and Short listing	
Shortlist and Ranking	Forward a shortlist for independent ranking, using a scoring matrix if needed.
Ensure Objectivity	Discuss confidentiality, implicit bias, and independent ranking to avoid groupthink.
Bias Training	Ensure all members complete implicit bias training if no EDIA advisor is present.
Define Criteria and Interviews	Agree on criteria, predetermine interview questions, and clarify that career breaks won't impact decisions (e.g. a pregnant candidate, or a candidate whose spouse will not be able to migrate with them). Sometimes, candidates share personal information which may bias us.
Stage 4: During the Interview	

Foster a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment	Introduce yourself, provide transparency, and accommodate candidate needs (e.g., rephrasing questions, allowing notes).
Ensure Fair and Standardized Interviews	Ask the same questions in the same order and allocate equal time for candidates to ask questions.

### ***3.5 The last stage of recruitment***

<b>A Second Interview (usually in-person)</b>	
Evaluate the Need for a Second Interview	If conducted, the same committee leads a more role-specific process.
Maximize the Site Visit Experience	Provide a detailed itinerary, involve family, arrange accommodations, and offer opportunities for confidential discussions.  <i>[Please refer to Resource 10.2 for a sample Site Visit itinerary]</i>
Ensure Aligned and Transparent Evaluation	Set unbiased criteria, use an evaluation matrix, and consider diversity of thought and EDI commitment.”  Arrange group and 1:1 meeting as the position requires.

*\*Please refer to section 10 at the end of guide for detailed resources and links\**

## **4. Virtual Interviews**

### ***4.1 Equity Considerations in Virtual Interviews***

The Covid-19 pandemic forced a rapid transition to virtual interactions to reduce virus transmission, resulting in significant changes to how we work, live, and engage socially. Virtual interviews have become the norm for the first interview. However, these changes introduce new equity considerations. Research from the US and Canada indicates that candidates from historically marginalized communities, especially those from low-income and racialized backgrounds, face increased risks of encountering bias and skepticism during online interviews. Factors such as caregiving responsibilities, disabilities, and limited control over one's physical environment can significantly impact a candidate's performance in virtual settings.

#### **4.2 Best Practices for Ensuring Equity in Virtual Interviews**

- ◆ **Share information in advance:** Ensure that all candidates receive any relevant information, instructions, or interview questions ahead of time, so they are prepared. For example, if there is an assessment involved, candidates should be informed in a timely manner that there is allocated time to complete the assessment.
- ◆ **Consider privacy/recording sessions:** Recording interviews is *not* recommended as it can make candidates feel unsafely especially when asking questions or discussing clinical examples which have EDIA implications. It is generally recommended not to record sessions where personal stories or sensitive experiences are shared. However, taking detailed notes for review and debriefing purposes is crucial for a fair and transparent selection process.
- ◆ **Focus on content, not style:** When evaluating candidates virtually, it's important to separate a candidate's style from their content as cultural differences and the impact of physical surroundings can affect how candidates present themselves. Challenge any biases within the selection committee that may overemphasize style over content.
- ◆ **Question the paradigm of 'Fit':** When hiring under uncertain circumstances, there is a tendency to favor familiar candidates, when proximity or affinity bias is activated. For example, candidates who grew up in the area or have been "tapped" and have strong networking skills. This preference can prejudice early careers who may lack a strong network, reinforcing the existing division staffing profile and exclude historically underrepresented individuals.

### **5. Evaluating Candidates**

#### **5.1 Offer to Highest Ranking Candidate Selected by the Committee**

- ◆ Once a salary has been decided, a verbal offer may be extended either by the Talent Acquisition Specialist or Search Committee Chair.
- ◆ It's important to convey that this offer is conditional on a satisfactory police background check (Vulnerable Sector Search) and two professional reference checks. For more information, please see [Criminal Record Checks and Employment Reference Checks](#). Candidates are also required to complete standard immunization requirements.
- ◆ Following the verbal offer, the Talent Acquisition Specialist will send the candidate an email with detailed instructions on each of these requirements.
- ◆ Chris Carew ([Chris.carew@sickkids.ca](mailto:Chris.carew@sickkids.ca)) will connect with successful candidates to finalize the offer details and discuss details.

- ◆ This Verbal Offer Script is a helpful tool for sharing foundational information about the candidate's new role and helping them understand some of the perks and benefits of working at SickKids!

### ***5.2 Contacting unsuccessful candidates***

It is essential to keep interviewed candidates informed about their progress throughout the recruitment process, including notifying those who are not selected. Best practice is to offer candidates the opportunity to request feedback if they are interested. Be prepared to provide constructive feedback based on the essential occupational requirements and include positive comments where appropriate.

If you need assistance in delivering feedback to unsuccessful candidates during any stage of the screening or interview process, the Talent Acquisition Specialist is available to provide guidance or resources to support you.

## **6. Assessing Internal Challenges: Key Metrics for Improving Diversity in Hiring**

Before focusing on hiring diverse candidates, organizations should assess internal challenges. Metrics can reveal areas for improvement and track long-term progress. We already have measures in place to track the following:

- ◆ **Diversity of Applicants:** We monitor candidate demographics throughout the hiring process to identify where diverse candidates may be filtered out.
- ◆ **Time to Fill:** We measure how long it takes to fill positions to identify bottlenecks and streamline the hiring process.
- ◆ **Offer Acceptance Rate:** We track the percentage of accepted job offers to assess the competitiveness of your compensation and benefits packages.
- ◆ **Retention Rate:** We analyze employee retention to identify potential issues with management or departmental dynamics.

## **7. Closing**

Inclusive recruiting is essential to building diverse, innovative teams that drive positive change and foster strong communication. By attracting talent from varied backgrounds, we enrich decision-making and expand perspectives, strengthening our reputation and creating a more

engaged, productive workforce. Ultimately, inclusive recruitment broadens our reach, ensuring we attract individuals who will enhance and enrich our community.

## 8. Frequently asked Questions (FAQs)

- ✓ **Why do we need a standardized selection committee and processes?**
  - Standardized processes ensure fairness, transparency, and equity for all candidates, considering both individual merit and cultural fit. This approach avoids biases based on personal attributes or privileges.
- ✓ **Does DoP have a bank of questions?**
  - Yes, there is a bank of standardized questions. You can adapt them based on the job's requirements and desired expertise.
- ✓ **Can we ask follow-up questions if a candidate doesn't answer fully?**
  - Yes, it's reasonable to ask follow-up questions or request clarification if answers are unclear or incomplete.
- ✓ **Why do we need Implicit Bias (IB) training?**
  - Implicit biases can affect our judgment and decision-making. Training helps recognize and mitigate biases related to familiarity, networks, or demographic characteristics, ensuring fair evaluations.
- ✓ **Why can't we just hire based on merit alone?**
  - We don't compromise on merit—rather, we recognize it comes in different forms. Traditional metrics often overlook diverse skills and potential. A broader view ensures we hire talent in all its forms, not just those with systemic advantages.
- ✓ **After the interview, do we rank candidates or vote?**
  - Best practice is to discuss candidates individually first, then rank them separately. Final rankings are shared individually with the Chair, followed by a consensus meeting.
- ✓ **When can we review reference letters?**
  - Reference letters should be reviewed after the interviews to avoid bias, as they may contain both positive and negative judgments.

- ✓ **Who will the candidates meet?**
  - Candidates may meet with key figures like the Chief of Research, Paediatrician-in-Chief, Program Head, Associate Chairs, and Business Operations Managers.
- ✓ **Who can candidates request to meet?**
  - Candidates can request meetings with stakeholders such as the CEO, faculty, EDI Chair, or other healthcare and administrative staff.
- ✓ **Candidates may ask questions about EDIA in the second interview. What if the panel can't answer?**
  - Ensure the panel is prepared to answer EDIA-related questions. If the EDIA advisor is unable to answer on the spot, please contact Anna Hossain for information to get back to the candidate promptly, via email.

## 9. Implicit/Unconscious Bias/Anti Racism Training Resources

Resource	link
<b>AAMC Unconscious Bias E-learning Seminar</b>	<a href="#">link</a>
<b>Unconscious Bias in Medicine Online CME (Stanford)</b>	<a href="#">link</a>
<b>Unconscious Bias Resources for Health Professionals (AAMC)</b>	<a href="#">link</a>
<b>Science of Unconscious Bias &amp; Recruitment Process (AAMC)</b>	<a href="#">link</a>
<b>Gender &amp; Leadership IAT</b>	<a href="#">link</a>
<b>Physician Search Committee Training (University of Washington)</b>	<a href="#">link</a>

## 10. Resources

### **10.1 Forms & Checklists**

[Standard Recruitment form](#)

[Inclusive recruitment checklist](#)

[Objective resume screening criteria](#)

### **10.2 Interviewing Tools**

[Sample Interviewing questions](#)

[Inclusive interviewing iLearn](#)

[Creating a diverse hiring team iLearn](#)

[Inclusive questions tip sheet](#)

[Sample Site Visit itinerary](#)

### **10.3 Hiring Manager Guides & Tips**

[Guidance document for TAs and hiring managers](#)

[Onboarding tip sheet](#)

### **10.4 SickKids Policies & Strategies**

[Inclusive recruitment pathways](#)

[SickKids 2025 EDIA Strategy](#)

### **10.5 Search Committees selection & New hire information**

[Selecting search committee members](#)

[New hire information](#)

## **11. References**

Essien, U.R., Agbafe, V., & Norris, K.C. (2023). Diversifying the Medical Pathway in a Post-Affirmative Action World. *JAMA*, 330(14), 1325–1326. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.17089>

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