

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUITY PLAN AND RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

(Original document approved September 2000; revisions approved November 2003; revisions approved 2017.)

The Department of Social Science is committed to a policy of employment equity, and in particular to foster the recruitment of women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities, and people with disabilities (“Designated Groups”) within the framework of hiring needs, academic standards, and the university’s contractual obligations. The Department’s Affirmative Action and Equity Plan seeks to correct any previous patterns of discrimination in academic hiring, to reap the benefits of diversity, and to have its faculty more nearly reflect the multi-racial and multi-ethnic nature of its student body and the metropolitan region in which the university is located.

By adopting this Affirmative Action Plan (AA Plan), the Department of Social Science confirms its obligations under Article 3 of the 2015-2018 *Collective Agreement (CA)* to promote equity for all appointments at York University, and, more specifically, to ensure that women, members of visible minorities (racialized groups), Aboriginal (Indigenous) people, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ2 persons, or any other protected group, do not face any form of discrimination during the hiring process.

Additionally, by adopting this AA Plan, the Department of Social Science recognizes that it is obligated to implement the affirmative action provisions under article 12 of the CA as they apply to women, members of visible minorities (racialized groups), Aboriginal (Indigenous) people, and persons with disabilities.

Affirmative action must be considered throughout the hiring process. Article 12.22 (a) mandates that “units actively seek out and give fair consideration in their selection processes” to all AA candidates.

In its commitment to Affirmative Action, the Department recognizes that, while thresholds for representation of Designated Groups, as defined by the Collective Agreement, may be met at the Department level, it remains the case that such representation may be unevenly distributed across different programs. Thus, while the Department Affirmative Action and Equity policies apply at the Department level based on the Affirmative Action list (described below), program-oriented search committees remain committed to practices that ensure a more balanced and wide-spread representation of members of the Designated Groups within the Department as well.

1. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION LIST

The Chair of the Department is responsible for communicating to the Department by 1

September of each year a list of tenure-stream faculty and the percentage of women and visible minorities among them. Cross-appointed faculty are counted in conformity with the fraction of their appointment in the Department. Faculty seconded from other units are not included in the Department's count.

2. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUITY COMMITTEE

Each year, the Department of Social Science elects Affirmative Action and Equity Representatives (hereafter referred to as the AAE Representative) to an Affirmative Action and Equity Committee which is responsible for counselling the Department on implementing its Affirmative Action and Equity Plan (hereafter referred to as the AAE Plan) in its recruitment processes, and which brings to the attention of the relevant committees any matter of concern relating to affirmative action and equity within the hiring process. A representative of this committee will sit on the Executive Committee to advise the Department on matters related to affirmative action and equity and to monitor hiring priorities and search procedures. An AAE Representative is appointed (by the Executive Committee) to each search committee at the beginning of the recruitment process to ensure that the principles and procedures of the Plan are adhered to.

3. IDENTIFYING HIRING PRIORITIES

The Department formulates its hiring priorities through a process of wide and open consultation within the Department and are recommended by the Executive Committee to the Department Council, which votes on the final recommendations on new appointments to the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. The priorities take into account such factors as student demand, imminent retirements, existing commitments within the Department to particular fields, and emerging fields of interdisciplinary inquiry in social science. The Department recognizes that the choice of fields of research and teaching as hiring priorities may influence the number of applicants from designated groups (i.e., women, aboriginal people, members of racial minorities, and people with disabilities), and therefore attempts to consider fields, or branches of fields, in which these groups are well represented. In the formation of hiring priorities, care is taken to avoid any bias that could disadvantage any of the groups designated in the affirmative action provisions of the Collective Agreement. The Department is committed to creating new positions that will further the cultural diversity of the unit's curriculum, a step that is likely to lead to a more diverse faculty complement.

To this end, programs must consult with the AAE Committee before submitting hiring priorities to the Executive, in order to ensure consistency with Department AAE principles and to indicate how affirmative action for designated groups has been taken into account in determining areas of specialization and required qualifications.

3. HIRING PROCEDURES

3.1 The Search

Once hiring priorities have been established and approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, advertisements for any positions to be filled during the current academic year are drafted by the Chair of the Department and the Executive Committee in consultation with relevant program members and the Affirmative Action Committee. The wording of the advertisement must contain the university's standard language on affirmative action and equity.

The Department then engages in proactive search procedures to elicit the largest possible number of qualified candidates from designated groups. The Chair and Executive Committee, in consultation with the chair of each Search Committee, circulates the advertisement(s) to all of the following:

- a) the Department's home page;
- b) CAUT Bulletin and University Affairs;
- c) specialized journals, websites, computerized lists, and university departments relevant to the position being filled;
- d) journals, organizations, computerized networks, and individuals that are likely to reach affirmative action groups (see Appendix).

The AAE Committee will update the list of such contacts for advertising positions every three (3) years.

Direct contact is also made with academics and others active in the field for which applicants are sought, to ask them both to encourage qualified candidates to apply and to provide names of such persons whom the Department might seek out directly.

A list of all contacts made in one search must be presented to the AAE Representative at the beginning of each search and inserted into the search file.

3.2 Appointment Committees

The Chair and the Executive Committee are responsible for recruiting individual faculty members within the Department to a Search Committee, the constitution of which is laid out in the department hiring policy. The AAE representative is a voting ex-officio member of the staffing Search Committee. The Chair of the Department (or his/her designate) is a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Search Committee. Each member of the Search Committee is given a copy of this Plan.

The Search Committee is responsible for:

- a) advertising the position(s);
- b) short-listing the qualified candidates;

- c) arranging on-campus interviews that allow for the participation of faculty, teaching assistants, and students;
- d) soliciting input from Department members;
- e) recommending a candidate for appointment.

All efforts will be made to ensure that the Search Committee is constituted with due regard to representation of all genders, sexualities, racial identities and abilities.

The Department will arrange for AA training for all AAE Representatives. In addition, every three (3) years, the Department will endeavour to hold AA training for all members of the Department. Normally, those who have not received AA training will be unable to sit on a Search Committee.

Where an applicant for an advertised position has self-identified as a member of one of the Designated Groups, the acknowledgement letter from the Chair should repeat this identification.

The Search Committee meets following the closing date for applications. The AAE Representative must be in attendance at all meetings to inform the Search Committee about provisions in the collective agreements of unionized instructors at York University (i.e., YUFA and CUPE) governing full-time appointments and to assess the extent and success of the advertising for the appointment.

The Search Committee begins its deliberations by considering a written list of the places where the position was advertised (which must be inserted into the search file) and the appropriateness of the number of applicants from designated groups in the light of the recruitment process and the potential pools of applicants from designated groups in the area. If, in consultation with the Chair of the Department and the AAE Representative, the Search Committee believes that additional advertising efforts might increase the number of qualified applicants, then it may recommend to the Executive Committee that the search be extended. If the Executive Committee is satisfied that appropriate efforts have been made to elicit the application of candidates from designated groups, the Search Committee proceeds with the preparation of a short list.

3.3. Pre-Shortlisting

Before any files are examined, the Search Committee is required to meet with the Affirmative Action Representative to familiarize members with the university's affirmative action policies and procedures as laid out in the YUFA and CUPE Collective Agreements. At this meeting:

- the AA representative will address the meaning of the "substantially equal" clause of the YUFA Collective Agreement in order to ensure that the Search Committee understands that candidates are substantially equal unless one candidate can be demonstrated to be superior.

- the Department's Affirmative Action Representative leads the hiring committee in a discussion of the goals of affirmative action, emphasizing the demographics of the York student body and Toronto and the value in having a faculty whose composition mirrors the diversity of York University. The Affirmative Action Representative points out ways in which career paths of members of targeted groups may differ from the traditional norms. For example, childbearing and other family responsibilities might slow down a candidate's scholarly output. While no precise algorithm can be devised to calculate the effect of family responsibilities and non-standard career patterns, in such instances the quality of the scholarship plays a greater role than otherwise. Persons with disabilities may also have impediments that reduce their academic output or dictate alternate forms of publication and conference presentation. The Affirmative Action Representative also emphasizes that non-traditional specializations should not be undervalued by members of the search committee.

The Search Committee will also agree on a non-exhaustive set of common questions to be asked to all candidates.

3.4 The Short List

Members of the Search Committee examine and evaluate each file in view of the requirements outlined in the job description and in this Plan.

These are the three criteria used in determining the short list: teaching ability, service, and professional contribution and standing. Expertise in the field is crucial; a Ph.D. or equivalent is normally a requirement; teaching and scholarly records are carefully scrutinized; and considerable weight is placed on letters of reference, taking into account who writes them (the standing of the referees in the field) what they say, their degree of specificity, and so on.

After reviewing all the files, the committee first considers the question of citizenship. The criteria in this category require that the position may be offered to a non-Canadian only if there is no Canadian or permanent resident (landed immigrant) who is acceptable. In effect, to offer the position to a non-Canadian is to remove immediately all Canadians and permanent residents (landed immigrants) from the search. It is essential that this fact be kept in mind when preparing a short list. In deciding between a Canadian and a non-Canadian candidate, the question of citizenship, not affirmative action, is applicable. The relevant criterion is whether the Canadian candidate is qualified.

When there is more than one qualified Canadian candidate, the Affirmative Action procedures are employed in the selection process. Likewise, if there are no qualified

Canadian candidates, the Affirmative Action provisions apply in the selection process of non-Canadian candidates. The employment of non-Canadian academics is governed by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; Citizenship & Immigration Canada; and Employment & Social Development Canada. When the appointment is to be at the C.L.A. level, U.S. and Mexican citizens are considered equivalent to Canadians (following NAFTA regulations), as are citizens of Chile (per the provisions of the Canada Chile Free Trade Agreement).

Once the question of citizenship is satisfied, no application from any member of a targeted group may be set aside summarily either by the Chair of the Department or by the Search Committee, even if it seems on first review that the candidate is not qualified. The committee discusses carefully every application by a member of one of the designated groups.

Where fewer than 40% of the tenure-stream faculty positions are filled by women and fewer than 20% of the tenure-stream faculty positions are filled by members of a visible minority/racialized group and candidates' qualifications are substantially equal, a candidate who is a visible minority woman (a woman who is a member of a racialized group) shall be recommended for the shortlist. If no visible minority woman is recommended for shortlisting then a candidate from the more underrepresented group (a woman or member of a visible minority or racialized group) shall be recommended. If no candidate who is a member of either group is recommended, then a member of another designated Affirmative Action group (a person with disabilities or an Aboriginal or Indigenous person) shall be recommended. If no member of either group is recommended, then a candidate who is not a member of a designated Affirmative Action group shall be recommended.

When one of the thresholds for tenure stream faculty has not yet been met (40% or more women, 20% or more visible minorities/members of racialized groups) and candidates' qualifications are substantially equal, then the candidate who is a member of the group whose threshold has not yet been met shall be recommended for shortlisting. If no candidate who is a member of the group that is below the threshold is recommended for appointment, then a member of another designated Affirmative Action group (a person with disabilities or an Aboriginal or Indigenous person) shall be recommended. If no member of these groups is recommended for shortlisting, then a candidate who is not a member of a designated Affirmative Action group will be recommended for the shortlist.

Where 40% or more of the tenure-stream faculty positions are filled by women and 20% or more of the tenure-stream faculty positions are filled by members of a visible minority/racialized group and candidates' qualifications are substantially equal, a member of another designated Affirmative Action group (a person with disabilities or an Aboriginal or Indigenous person) shall be recommended. If no member of these groups is recommended for shortlisting, then a candidate who is not a member of a designated Affirmative Action group will be recommended.

The Chair of the Search Committee submits its shortlist to the Executive Committee. The AAE Rep also submits a report to the Executive Committee, which considers whether the principles and procedures of the AAE Plan have been adhered to. The Executive will then either approve the list and pass it on to the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies for vetting, or sends it back to the Search Committee for reconsideration.

3.5 The Interviewing Process

When the shortlist of candidates who will be invited to the department is approved by the Dean, the Chair of the Search Committee will arrange such visits. All subsequent official correspondence with candidates will come from the Search Committee Chair, and will always be copied to the Assistant to the Chair.

All candidates are treated equally during the interview process. Candidates are informed that the Department is eager to schedule their visits to York in such a way as to accommodate any religious, cultural, disability or other needs that they may have.

In interviews and meetings with the candidates, questions about marital status, reproductive intentions, etc. are deemed inappropriate. Concerns about “career gaps” should be addressed through direct questions, rather than making assumptions or asking questions about personal matters. It follows, therefore, that decisions about candidates will be primarily based on job relevant considerations. Candidates will be informed that York University is a place where diversity is welcomed, especially given that the student body is likewise very diverse.

Candidates will be invited and encouraged to self-identify throughout the interview process.

Each candidate’s campus visit will include:

a) briefing by the Chair of the Department on the university, the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, the Department of Social Science, any relevant programs, and other general information;

b) a meeting with the AAE representative to explain the collective agreement, including the affirmative action provisions.

c) a meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, or her designate (for tenure track positions)

d) a formal presentation of research interests and teaching ideas in well-advertised meetings of Department members, normally chaired by the Chair of the Search Committee and open to faculty, teaching assistants, and students, who are given an opportunity to

pose questions to the candidate; except in unusual and unavoidable circumstances, all voting members of the Search Committee must attend these presentations; presentations will be videotaped and may be watched by members of the Department at their request.

e) a formal interview with the members of the Search Committee; a common set of structured questions will form the basis of the interview; this process should not be understood to require the asking of identical questions nor should it hinder the asking of follow-up questions that respond to specific aspects of each candidate's *curriculum vitae*, or the candidate's own statements.

Other activities, such as a meeting with graduate students, the graduate program director (where relevant), or a campus tour will also be scheduled as appropriate and as time allows. Particular attention will be paid to the specific interests of individual candidates in arranging these other activities.

During this process, Department members are encouraged to submit written assessments of the candidates based on the interviews and, if possible, a reading of the applicants' files, which contain the job description as well as letters of application, *curriculum vitae*, publications, and other materials submitted by applicants themselves. These written assessments must be signed.

The interview process is documented as part of the final report of the Affirmative Action Representative.

3.6 Criteria for Selection

Within the process of affirmative action and equity hiring and consistent with the level and nature of the advertised appointment, all successful candidates should have displayed the following qualifications through their applications and interviews:

a) Canadian citizenship or permanent-resident status (only after determining that there are no eligible Canadian applicants does the Search Committee consider candidates without Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status);

b) Ph.D. or equivalent (professional degree, or experience/expertise strongly recognized in the area), or Ph.D. pending;

c) an interdisciplinary perspective and an awareness of new areas of intellectual development;

d) demonstrated strength in scholarship, and an active, ongoing program of research, communicated through professional channels and, where possible, through other modes that reach a broader public;

- e) demonstrated excellence or clear potential in undergraduate teaching and capacity for graduate instruction and supervision;
- f) a commitment to department and university service.

3.7 The selection

Once all the short-listed candidates have been interviewed and all material in their files (including letters of reference and submitted publications) have been read by members of the Search Committee, it meets to select the most suitable candidate for the position. The Search Committee's AAE representative must be present at this meeting.

The Search Committee discusses the merits of the interviewed candidates and reaches a decision by formal vote. Only those candidates who have self-identified as members of one (or more) affirmative action categories may be considered within the procedures of affirmative action.

In making a recommendation for an appointment to the Department (and ranking the remaining candidates) the following procedures shall be followed:

No candidate shall be recommended who does not meet the criteria of the appointment in question. The Search Committee should include in its evaluation of individual candidates the fit with the job description, based on the pre-determined criteria. The candidate's performance in the presentation and answering of questions at the interview will play a key role in assessment. In evaluating research records, the Department recognizes that quantity alone is a completely inadequate criterion. Competitive candidates are considered to be those with clear and active research agendas and a talent for communication (a reflection of their teaching potential), along with strong indications of collegial service potential.

A vote is taken in the committee using a preferential system (1 point for first choice, 2 for second, and so on, so that the lowest scorer is ranked as the preferred candidate). Most often, one candidate proves markedly superior in quality of academic training, scholarly profile and promise, teaching ability and range, depth and penetration of mind, and prospective collegiality. However, that is not always the case. Candidates are considered substantially equal unless one candidate can be demonstrated to be superior.

If one or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents (landed immigrants) are judged to be acceptable for the position, then the affirmative action procedures outlined above are applied to these candidates, and the candidate who achieves the highest standing is recommended to the Department. If no Canadian citizen or permanent resident (landed immigrant) is considered acceptable, then the committee may consider non-Canadian applicants and must apply the Affirmative Action provisions outlined below in the selection

process. Recommending a non-Canadian for the position immediately removes all Canadian citizens and Canadian permanent residents (landed-immigrants) from consideration.

If the Search Committee is not satisfied that there is a qualified candidate in the pool of applicants, or if there is serious disagreement among Search Committee members, it may also choose not to recommend any of the candidates.

The chair of the Search Committee prepares a written report on its recommendation for an appointment, which must be approved by a majority of the Search Committee. The report must demonstrate how the Committee determined the rankings of the candidates, including consideration of any AA criteria, and with particular attention to each candidate's fit with the determined job criteria, as evidenced through the interview process as well as the written documents in the candidates' files (including evaluations from department members).

The Affirmative Action Representative also prepares a written report that is submitted directly to the Executive Committee. That report must document the ways the AA Plan was followed and/or raise concerns where they are warranted. Should the AA Rep determine that the AA Plan has not been adhered to, s/he must inform the Chair of the Search Committee and the Executive at her earliest opportunity.

The Search Committee's recommendation and the Affirmative Action Representative's report are forwarded to the Executive Committee, which assesses the procedures followed during the search. If not satisfied with the procedures, that committee may return the recommendation to the Search Committee for further deliberation. If satisfied with the procedures of the search, the Executive Committee approves the recommendation for presentation to the Department Council. These reports shall be made available electronically to all full-time members of the department on a password-protected basis in advance of such a meeting. If hiring recommendations are made when Council is not meeting, or if Council wishes to delegate final oversight to the Executive Committee, then the latter body shall have the authority to approve the recommendation(s) on behalf of the Department.

Notwithstanding the above, where one or more full-time faculty members or group of full-time faculty members in the Department indicates in writing within 48 hours of the posting of the recommendation that the recommendation should be reviewed by Council, the Executive shall bring the recommendation to Council for final approval as soon as is practicable.

The AAE Representative must attend the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Department Council meeting where the recommendation is to be ratified. The Department Council may accept or reject the recommendation, or refer it back to the Search Committee for further deliberation.

After the Department Council has ratified the recommendation, the Chair of the Department forwards the approved recommendation and the AA Representative's report to the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies.

4. SUMMARY OF ROLE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

- meets with programs prior to establishing hiring priorities to ensure priorities are consistent with department AAE goals.
- elects a member to sit as a Committee representative on the Executive.
- With the Executive Committee, ensures that an ex-officio AA representative is selected for each search committee.
- meets with the Search Committee to explain the Department's AAE Plan and to consider whether the advertisements for the position have generated sufficient applications from women and designated minority groups.
- receives a list of all contacts made in one search.
- prepares a written report on all procedures relating to the Affirmative Action and Equity Plan at the shortlisting and final recommendation stages for the Executive Committee, which is included in the recruitment file to be forwarded to the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies.
- presents a written assessment of the operation of the Plan at the end of each academic year.
- Reviews and, where necessary, updates the list of appropriate contacts for advertising positions to designated groups (to be done every 3 years).
- Attends, additionally, to questions of retention and promotion of members of designated groups within the Department.

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