

Best Practices in Applications & Selection (BPAS) 2.0

Unconscious Bias Information for Selection Committees

Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) at the University of Toronto is strongly committed to diversity within its community. Selection committee members should understand the important implications of unconscious bias on the resident selection process and how its recognition and mitigation can support and enhance equity and inclusion. It is therefore required that selection committee members participate in unconscious bias training and attest to this being completed and reflected upon.

It is also important to note that unconscious bias is just one small area of focus for organizational training and education within the realm of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Attesting to the completion of unconscious bias training does not guarantee equity is applied as a guiding principle throughout the selection processes, but it does provide a helpful platform for self-reflection and dialogue. More important than encouraging selection committee members to undertake unconscious bias training is to create space and time to debrief this experience before the start of a selection process, and also to explore the connections between unconscious bias, equity, diversity, inclusion, and excellence. The Temerty Faculty of Medicine's Academic Strategic Plan highlights "[Excellence through Equity](#)" as one of the three core domains of focus. Initiatives such as unconscious bias training and equity training are important to engage in, as they encourage and foster excellence in scholarship, research, clinical practice, and administration throughout the organization. Equity education should not just take place in the form of one-off initiatives, but should consist of intentional and purposeful actions and goals that continue beyond one training session or discussion. We encourage all departments to incorporate the "excellence through equity" framework in their resident selection processes.

This document is meant to provide information and resources on unconscious bias to support the resident selection process, especially for those programs who do not already have formal processes or training in place. Each selection committee should also adhere to any additional institutional and/or departmental commitments and procedures around EDI principles in their processes.

What Is Unconscious Bias?

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University defines unconscious or implicit bias as *attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner*. These biases can be positive or negative and differ from those beliefs that we are aware of but conceal or suppress to appear non-biased.

How Can We Change Our Unconscious Biases?

Here are two commonly used online resources that provide training for unconscious bias by stimulating active reflection on this topic:

1. The **Toronto Initiative for Diversity & Excellence (TIDE)** offers a series of [unconscious bias education modules](#) that provides an introduction to unconscious bias, how it manifests in typical processes and procedures, and how academic units might adopt more inclusive practices by considering these dynamics. As most selection committee members would have some familiarity

with what unconscious bias is and how it arises from past experiences and stereotypes, we recommend the third module, *“Interrupting Bias”*, which provides examples of how unconscious biases affect common professional assessment processes and suggestions on how their impact can be reduced. The first module remains helpful for those who would like to learn or have a refresher on the fundamentals – it also includes a discussion on the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT), which aims to provide education for the general public to understand attitudes, stereotypes, and other hidden biases that influence perception, judgment, and action.

2. The **Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)** offers an online seminar on [*The Science of Unconscious Bias and What To Do About it in the Search and Recruitment Process*](#). It aims to provide search committees in academic medicine with scientific evidence on how unconscious bias may influence the evaluation and selection of candidates and by doing so, help search committees mitigate the effects of unconscious bias.

Required Training and Attestation

It is recommended that each program requests their selection committee members to complete one of the above two unconscious bias training resources, reflect on what they have learned, and provide their attestation prior to participating in the resident selection. The sample attestation form below can be adapted by programs for their current process. Selection committee members who have already completed unconscious bias training for another committee or context within the last three years are not required to complete it again, but they should still sign and submit the attestation.

Additional Resources

- [Unconscious Bias Resources for Health Professionals](#), AAMC
- [Unconscious Bias Education Modules](#), Toronto Initiative for Diversity & Excellence (TIDE)
 - Module 1: What is Unconscious Bias?
 - Module 2: Effects of Unconscious Bias on Assessment
 - Module 3: Interrupting Bias
 - Module 4: Inclusive Academic Cultures: Ideas for Making Change
- Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT)
 - a. Go to [Project Implicit Social Attitudes](#)
 - b. Choose to *continue as guest* and select *Canada*
 - c. Click “Go” and select your language
 - d. Click “*I wish to proceed*” at the bottom
 - e. Take a test by choosing one or more of the following: *weight, sexuality, skin-tone, race, gender, countries* or *age*
- [Unconscious Bias and Search Committee Resources](#), Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto
- [Office of Inclusion and Diversity](#), Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto
- [Equity Resources](#), University of Toronto



Faculty Development

- Darani SA, Gajaria A, Singhal N, Ho C, Rawle F. Teaching Psychiatry Faculty to Address Unconscious Bias: Implementation of a Large-Scale Intervention. *Acad Psychiatry*. 2024 Jul 9. doi: 10.1007/s40596-024-02012-7.

Admissions Process

- [Best Practices in Applications and Selection](#), Postgraduate Medical Education, University of Toronto (policy document)
- [Rooting out implicit bias in admissions](#), AAMC (article)

Search Committees, Recruitment and Selection

- [Search Committee Principles & Practices](#), Office of the Vice-President and Provost, University of Toronto
- [Strategies for Recruiting an Excellent & Diverse Faculty Complement](#), Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty & Academic Life, University of Toronto
- [Recruitment of Faculty Members to the Department of Medicine at the University of Toronto](#)
- [Guidelines for Department of Medicine Search Committees Using an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lens](#), University of Toronto
- [Creating an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Research Environment: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention](#), Canada Research Chairs
- [Interviewing and Making Hiring Decisions](#), Ontario Human Rights Commission



Unconscious Bias Training Attestation: Resident Selection

As part of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine's ongoing commitment to ensuring equity in our learning environments, all resident selection committee members¹ are required to complete unconscious bias training.

Please complete one training opportunity on unconscious bias listed below. After completing the training, this form should be signed and returned to [program/departmental contact] at [e-mail address] prior to participating as a selection committee member.

Please note: If you have already completed unconscious bias training for another committee or context within the last three years, you are not required to do it again. However, please ensure you sign and submit this attestation.

Unconscious Bias Training (one is required):

- ☐ TIDE Unconscious Bias Education Modules - [Module 3: Interrupting Bias](#)
- ☐ AAMC online seminar - [The Science of Unconscious Bias and What To Do About it in the Search and Recruitment Process](#)
- ☐ Unconscious bias training from another module or session (in the last three years)

Please specify the training and year of completion: Click or tap here to enter text.

I confirm that I have completed the above expectations for unconscious bias training, reflected upon what I have learned, and will make every effort not to let unconscious bias impede my judgement as a member of my residency program's selection committee.

Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: ☐ Faculty ☐ Resident ☐ Fellow

X

¹ Selection committee members refer to a faculty or learner who participate in any part of the selection process, such as review of applicant files, interviews, and ranking meetings.