

DCIF Project – Evaluation Tool 1: Building A Team Behind an Inclusive Hiring Process

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Tags

Who is this for?

High Priority:

- Hiring Managers
- Hiring Committee Members

Practical Information:

- Direct Line Managers

Useful to Know:

- **DEI** and HR Professionals

What guidance does it provide?

- How to appoint a diverse, equitable, and disability confident hiring committee
- How to prepare a hiring committee for an inclusive hiring process

Take home points

- Building a diverse team means including individuals of varying races, gender identity, age, ability, and more. To be inclusive of every candidate, it's essential to design your hiring process with careful thought and consideration to ensure it is accessible to all candidates.
- When working to combat the structural inequities that persist in traditional hiring practices, it is essential that any potential committee member who identifies with underrepresented groups is not **tokenized**.
- Education, training, and ongoing dialogue are fundamental in shaping inclusive hiring committees that do not discriminate against people with disabilities. Stay informed and prepare collectively.

Building A Team Behind an Inclusive Hiring Process

When a job posting closes, organizations may find that they receive many applications from qualified candidates. **Unconscious bias**, disability discrimination, inaccessible assessments, and more, make it all difficult or people with disabilities to be evaluated fairly. Consider the following guidance to widen your candidate pool and build a truly inclusive hiring process that allows persons with disabilities to compete fairly on the basis of their skills and potential.

Appointing a **Disability Confident** Hiring Committee

A hiring committee is a group of individuals who manage the recruitment, interviewing, and hiring process. While hiring committees are most often assembled for management or senior positions within a company, they can be extremely beneficial for all roles across an organization and enhance the inclusivity of the hiring process. Multiple individuals, with diverse backgrounds and important, nuanced perspectives:

- Collaborate to make more fair and equitable hiring decisions
- Work to counteract the unconscious biases present when a single individual is tasked with evaluation
- Ensure that all candidates are not evaluated on the basis of their disability or illness, but their ability to perform the job
- Facilitate the onboarding process and help integrate the new employee into the organization

"We want to let job seekers with disabilities know that at CIBC we focus on the abilities and personal strengths of people," adds Ms. Dottori-Attanasio. "We need a diverse team to deliver on our goal of being a strong, innovative and relationship-oriented bank."

Who should be on it?

At minimum, a **disability confident** hiring committee should include at least two individuals:¹

- A hiring manager within the team or department who fully understands the open position
- A human resources professional who has experience with diversity, equity, and inclusion

As with any team, committee members will have different roles and responsibilities. While these individuals form the core of the committee and may be responsible for final decisions, to adopt an intersectional and equitable approach to hiring, we encourage you to add other people to the hiring committee. The purpose of this step is to ensure that the hiring committee embodies the team's commitment to inclusive excellence, recognize and counteract structural inequity and implicit/explicit biases. This is among the most critical steps in ensuring an inclusive and equitable evaluation process and should therefore be treated with great consideration and care.²

Pop up: Take a good look at who in your company is filtering applicants – does everyone look the same or come from similar backgrounds? Is there diversity in thought? Who are you not seeing? Why?

These individuals should:³

- Represent the diversity of the workforce you want to achieve, including persons from marginalized communities

- Be sourced from various departments and levels within the organization
- Have different backgrounds in education and work experience
- Have respect for different ways of thinking, cultures, and characteristics

Their roles may include recording meeting minutes, participating in deliberations, communicating with candidates, and more. Regardless of the scope of their duties, make sure every member of the hiring committee has assigned roles and responsibilities, and a clear understanding of them.

The employer is responsible for recruitment and hiring. However, union representative involvement on hiring committees has the potential to further inclusion initiatives due to labour’s long history of social justice advocacy.

The inclusion of the union in hiring decisions can bring a justice and advocacy lens to a hiring committee. Unions know the makeup of their membership and are well positioned to advise on areas where inclusion efforts could be most effective. Through intensive training on practices such as equity, diversity, and inclusion and practical labour resources in disability, union leadership provide an untapped resource to enrich your hiring process.

Addressing Tokenism on the Hiring Committee

When working to combat the structural inequities that persist in traditional hiring practices, it is essential that any potential committee member who identifies with underrepresented groups is not tokenized. Tokenism is the practice of making a performative effort, such as the recruitment of underrepresented groups, to give the appearance of fair and equitable treatment within a workplace.

To address tokenism in the workplace, consider the following:

- Everyone must be committed to the inclusion of all people and their diverse backgrounds
- All committee members’ contributions must hold equal weight
- Diversification on a hiring committee cannot be ‘just for show’
- Underrepresented persons must not be burdened with their roles on hiring committees
- Ensure that workers do not serve as the lone representative for their entire group
- Underrepresented persons must be adequately compensated for their work

All of these steps are critical in our advancement towards equity.

“CIBC is making inclusion the way we do business,” explained Sarah Matheson, Director Employee Policies and Programs. “We value the perspectives and abilities that each of our team members bring to the table because their unique skills and experiences give us a competitive edge.”

Preparing an Inclusive Hiring Process

Education, training, and ongoing dialogue are fundamental in shaping inclusive hiring committees that do not discriminate against people with disabilities. Adopt these strategies to showcase your commitment to inclusion.⁴

Undergo Training

- Seek out training on inclusive hiring, unconscious bias, and intersectionality for all members of the hiring committee⁵ [\[link to training landing page\]](#)

- A good start is engaging with the [Government of Canada's Gender Based Analysis Plus training](#) (GBA Plus). GBA Plus provides an opportunity to deepen knowledge and examine the impact of programs, initiatives, and policies on different groups of women, men, and people of different gender identities. The 'plus' indicates that the analysis also takes account of other identity factors including race, ethnic origin, religion, age, and intellectual, physical, mental health, or episodic disabilities.
- *Pop out: Inclusive hiring and unconscious bias training needs to go beyond 'sensitization' to disability – ensure training is practical, action-oriented, and grounded in the reality of both the business and the lived experience of people with disabilities.*
- Role-play and debrief scenarios where non-discriminatory hiring decisions can be practiced

Prepare Collectively

- Schedule opportunities for a hiring committee to come together and identify potential biases that may impact decision-making and selection in every phase of the hiring process
- Openly discuss the negative implications of making judgements on the basis of disability or any other label. Due to stigma and biases, many workers may be afraid to disclose their disability to others. They may be worried about being labelled, experiencing negative attitudes from others, losing their jobs, or experiencing unequal treatment in services.⁶
- Create a plan to mitigate such biases when assessing candidates and keep one another accountable

Stay Informed

- Take time to review and ask questions about the role you are hiring for
- Collectively determine the top traits you are looking for in a candidate. Try to keep an open mind and be flexible while determining these traits
- Reflect on the diversity of current staff and develop targeted strategies for hiring targets that are informed by federal standards and regulations, such as the Employment Equity Act⁷

Strive for Consistency

Ensure that the hiring committee remains consistent through the recruitment, interviewing, and hiring process. This means the same people involved in screening applications and interviewing should be involved in the hiring decision.

- As a hiring committee moves with candidates throughout the various stages of hiring, they can garner deeper insights about their skills and ability to do the job. This also allows them to directly reflect upon and address any biases or stereotyping that might have occurred during their first impressions of candidates.

Bringing in additional committee members throughout the process may complicate or cloud decision-making. It will also take time to get the new member up to speed, delaying the hiring process.

If a person has a time or scheduling conflict, they should not be asked to serve on the hiring committee. Set realistic expectations and encourage hiring managers to contribute to the process. Sitting on a hiring committee is an important time commitment and the success of the hire is closely related to the effort invested by each of members.

If any changes to the hiring committee must be made during the hiring process, consider the following:¹

- Ensure that relevant information about the change in the committee is clearly communicated to the candidate
- Conduct a debrief meeting and maintain clear communication between the outgoing and incoming hiring committee member regarding the candidacy of each applicant
- Follow up with the outgoing member to get their input when completing final deliberations about appointment

References

- ¹ Government of Canada (2021). Creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment: A best practices guide for recruitment, hiring and retention. *Canada Research Chairs*. https://www.chairs-chaire.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/best_practices-pratiques_examplaires-eng.aspx
- ² University of Colorado (n.d.). *Forming an Inclusive Hiring Committee*. Department of Environmental Studies. <https://www.colorado.edu/envs/step-2-forming-inclusive-hiring-committee>
- ³ Toronto Metropolitan University (n.d.). Recruiting and hiring diverse faculty guidelines. *Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion*. <https://www.torontomu.ca/equity/resources/recruiting-hiring-diverse-faculty-guidelines/>
- ⁴ University of Colorado (n.d.). Step 2: Forming an inclusive hiring committee. *Department of Environmental Studies*. <https://www.colorado.edu/envs/step-2-forming-inclusive-hiring-committee>
- ⁵ Vancity (2018). Unconscious bias training for all staff. *Accessible Employers*. <https://accessibleemployers.ca/resource/vancity-unconscious-bias-training/>
- ⁶ Ontario Human Rights Commission (n.d.). *Ableism, negative attitudes, stereotypes, and stigma*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-mental-health-disabilities-and-addictions/5-ableism-negative-attitudes-stereotypes-and-stigma>
- ⁷ Government of Canada (2022). Employment Equity Act. *Justice Laws Website*. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/>