

Unconscious Bias Check Sheet

for Candidate Evaluations

Office for Gender Equality, The University of Tokyo

All of us are affected by unconscious biases – the sub-conscious preconceptions that affect thought and behavior. Unconscious biases can be triggered by exposure to unfamiliar people or situations, and can affect both actions and decision making without the person being aware of their influence.

Unconscious bias can be affected by various factors, including but not limited to gender, age, nationality, and ethnicity. Findings have determined that when institutions and employers evaluate candidates as well as employees (for both hiring and promotion), minorities tend to be at a disadvantage. In order to attract the best and brightest individuals, it is vital to minimize the effect of unconscious bias and to make due consideration to diversity in the evaluation process. This check sheet is for people in positions relating to human resource selection, and is intended to encourage reflection on our unconscious biases before conducting an evaluation.

The findings below are from current studies. Please keep them in mind during evaluations.

- Unconscious bias may be partially counteracted by being aware of the fact that all people, including ourselves, are affected by unconscious bias.
- In evaluations for hiring and promotion, decision making can be adversely affected by subconscious assumptions about what kind of person someone is based on gender, place of origin, or other affiliations.
- Biases are more pronounced when a person is pressed for time to make a decision, is affected by fatigue or stress, or when a person's mental faculties are burdened by a large volume of information.
- Establishing evaluation criteria before an evaluation and sharing them amongst the hiring staff can mitigate the effects of bias and lead to sounder assessments of aptitude.
- A person's resume of awards and work accomplishments, as well as letters of recommendation can be affected by conscious or unconscious biases.
- The situations of universities and faculties/graduate schools/institutes change with time. An evaluator's personal view of a university or faculty/graduate school/institute may affect the evaluation of an applicant for the organization.
- In order to obtain employees with diverse backgrounds, it is vital to establish diversity amongst the evaluators themselves.

Tips for using this Check Sheet

This check sheet is intended for use by those who are engaged in actual evaluation of candidates (hereafter, "evaluators"). Since each faculty/graduate school/institute follows their own protocols for selecting personnel, this check sheet should be used in a manner that fits the characteristics of your affiliation.

We recommend using this check sheet alongside the leaflet "Understanding Unconscious Bias" by EPMEWSE (hereafter, "leaflet"), but feel free to pair this check sheet with appropriate teaching aids, such as materials created within your own affiliation. It is important that the evaluators review and discuss the contents of the leaflet and this check sheet before starting personnel selection.

The points below are intended to facilitate effective use of the check sheet.

- At the beginning of the academic year and at a place where all faculty members are present, such as a faculty meeting, discuss the leaflet and check sheet with the entire staff, and inform them that they should be used in evaluators' committees and at other opportunities.
- Distribute the leaflet before the first meeting of the evaluators and request that they read it before the meeting. For the first 10 minutes or so of the first meeting, have all members comment on the leaflet and summarize the points that should be kept in mind during the process of the personnel selection at hand. Afterward, distribute this check sheet and have all members review it.
- Follow the above procedure at meetings making decisions following document screening processes.
- Follow the above procedure immediately before interviewing candidates.
- When making proposals for hiring at faculty meetings or other meetings, how this check sheet was used by the evaluators and during the steps in the selection process should be reported.

Download page for the “Unconscious Bias Check Sheet for Candidate Evaluations”

The Office for Gender Equality of the University of Tokyo made the “Unconscious Bias Check Sheet for Candidate Evaluations” to check one’s own biases, especially targeting those in charge of personnel selection. We hope that this check sheet will be used for personnel selections both inside and outside the campus.

- The data is created in H275 mm × W121 mm, but can be enlarged when printing out.
- When you download the check sheet for a certain purpose, we would appreciate it if you could notify us by emailing the Office for Gender Equality.
- When referencing, please specify the following source and website URL .

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For further inquiries about this check sheet, please contact the following:

Office for Gender Equality, the University of Tokyo

<https://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/kyodo-sankaku/en/inquiry/index.php?sd=1>