

FAQs - Accessibility and Accommodations during UBC's Canada Research Chair Recruitment and Hiring Process

UBC is committed to conducting equitable faculty recruitment and hiring processes to attract and engage the greatest diversity of excellent scholars. This commitment is an integral component of our strategic plan. Embedding equity principles in our recruitment and hiring systems and structures aims to create the conditions for equitable opportunity as well as fair treatment in faculty search and selection processes. See: hr.ubc.ca/managers-admins/recruiting-and-hiring/faculty-recruitment [Access is limited by your CWL.]

As part of our commitment to equity, UBC has a responsibility to tailor the workplace to meet the accessibility needs of employees under the BC Human Rights Code. This responsibility is referred to as a duty to accommodate. "Accommodation" is the process of modifying employment requirements, rules or policies that may have an adverse effect on groups on the basis of a BC Human Rights Code protected ground, and, thereby, could be considered discriminatory. This document has been prepared to answer your questions about accommodation and accessibility in the recruitment and hiring process.

If you have any questions regarding accommodations or accessibility during the recruitment and hiring process, please contact the [Centre for Workplace Accessibility](mailto:workplace.accessibility@ubc.ca) at workplace.accessibility@ubc.ca, for information and support.

How to plan with accessibility in mind?

Where possible, consider accessibility proactively, and design the search and selection process by choosing more accessible options even before an accommodation request may be received. A more comprehensive approach to ensuring accessibility in searches and selection is supported in the EIO's [Equitable Hiring Guide](#), available at info@equity.ubc.ca. For example, the following general practices should be considered to enhance accessibility for all candidates:

- ask all candidates if there is anything that can be done to make the recruitment process more accessible
- hold the interview in a building with accessibility features (e.g., ramp, elevator, vehicle access, accessible and all-gender washrooms, private space to nurse/pump, smudge, take a break, etc.).
- provide accessibility information about that physical space in the invitation, as a matter of course.
- share interview questions 30-60 minutes in advance of interviews and let interviewees know in advance of this practice.
- have water available for the candidate if the interview is in person.
- activate the captioning feature on the virtual interview platform.

What do I do if someone requests an accommodation during the hiring process?

A candidate may ask for an accommodation at any point during the hiring process. "Accommodation" refers to UBC's responsibility to tailor the environment or practices to meet the accessibility needs of an individual, under the *BC Human Rights Code*. We are responsible

for considering the requests from applicants/candidates for accommodation of work-related needs. Please contact the Centre for Workplace Accessibility at workplace.accessibility@ubc.ca, for information and support.

What kind of accommodations might someone require?

Accommodation could include (but is not limited to) the following, depending on candidate needs:

- Physical Space: e.g., hold the interview in a space that is accessible for a candidate who uses a wheelchair or cannot walk long distances/navigate stairs; in a location with access to private space to re-energize, or to nurse or pump; etc.).
- Interview Format: e.g., offer video conferencing, phone interview, or in-person formats for a candidate who may experience virtual/physical access barriers.
- Communications: e.g., provide sign language interpreting or captioning, as requested; provide written materials in accessible formats, such as large print, braille, or electronic text.
- Scheduling: e.g., schedule the interview at a time of day and/or scheduling a longer interview period that provides time for breaks.
- Adjustment of social expectations: e.g., some candidates may: take longer pauses after questions are asked in order to process the information, or require a support worker to attend the interview with them.

Who needs to know if someone has requested an accommodation?

Respecting privacy and confidentiality in the accommodations process is essential. Only someone who is required to do something differently because of the accommodation needs to know about it – and only enough about it to enable them to support that accommodation. Information about an accommodation does not necessarily include information about why it is required for that individual.

If you have any doubts, please discuss the request with the Centre for Workplace Accessibility *before* disclosing *any* information on behalf of a candidate or employee.

What are UBC's responsibilities to provide accommodations to a candidate during the interview process?

UBC has an obligation to accommodate candidates, and failure to provide accommodations can lead to a finding of discrimination under the university *Discrimination Policy* and/or the *Human Rights Code*.

According to [UBC's Employment Equity \(Policy HR10\)](#):

"The University of British Columbia has established a program of employment equity to provide a fair and equitable workplace and to offer all individuals full opportunity to develop their potential. Accordingly, the University will identify and eliminate any discriminatory barriers that interfere with employment opportunities in all jobs and at all levels throughout the University.

Both current and prospective faculty and staff will receive equitable treatment in hiring, training, and promotion procedures."

Some of these accommodations are expensive, who will pay for them?

UBC's funding for accommodations for Canada Research Chairs is accessed through the Centre for Workplace Accessibility.

What if I'm not sure an accommodation request is 'reasonable'?

Reasonable accommodations during the recruitment process must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In general, accommodations should not alter the level of qualification being assessed, and those qualifications must be a requirement of the position (e.g., does the position require "on the spot" or "immediate" responses? Would sharing some or all interview questions in advance alter the assessment of a skill required for the role?).

There are experts at UBC who determine the reasonableness of accommodation requests, and how to fund those that warrant accommodation. If you have any questions or concerns *at all* about how to appropriately provide accommodations during the recruitment and hiring process, please contact the Centre for Workplace Accessibility at workplace.accessibility@ubc.ca.

Sources:

[UBC's Employment Equity Policy \(Policy HR10\)](#)

[UBC's Discrimination Policy \(Policy SC7\)](#)

[Disability and Accommodation under British Columbia Employment Law](#)

[Canadian Research Chairs: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention](#)

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