

Helpful Resources for Students About Discrimination & Bias in Hiring

It is our mission at SuccessWorks to provide students with information and experiences to support personal and professional development while at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and beyond. This handout provides you with resources to learn more about discrimination in the hiring process. Below you will find a list of curated resources to learn more, including some UW-Madison resources and other resources from experts in the field of career development.

What is discrimination?

The Bias Response and Advocacy Coordinator at the UW-Madison has defined discrimination as “the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong rather than on individual attributes.”¹ Examples in hiring would be an employer making a hiring decision based on a person’s race, gender, or political views rather than on their abilities to do the job.

What is bias and hate?

The UW has defined bias and hate incidents as “single or multiple acts toward an individual, group, or property that are so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that they create an unreasonably intimidating, hostile, or offensive work, learning, or program environment, and that one could reasonably conclude are based upon actual or perceived age, race, color, creed, religion, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, spirituality, cultural, socio-economic status, or any combination of these or other related factors.”²

What is hiring discrimination?

For a discussion of many issues related to hiring discrimination, see [How to Know If You're Being Discriminated Against in the Hiring Process](#) by Sarah Landrum. In that post, you will learn definitions of discrimination in hiring, and concrete tips regarding what to do if you are being or have been discriminated against in a hiring process. For international students, the Immigration Reform and Control Act makes it illegal to discriminate against an applicant because they are not a U.S. citizen.

What kinds of questions might an employer ask that are illegal or discriminatory?

Colleagues at the University of Iowa have identified several illegal questions based upon the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in this [Illegal Interview Questions](#) handout, which includes sample responses. For international students, it is possible that you would be asked two legal questions: (1) your work authorization in the United States and (2) a requirement for sponsorship. The handout provides information about follow-up questions that you may be asked. Advisors on campus and at SuccessWorks are available to help you consider responses to difficult or illegal interview questions.

¹ [Addressing Bias Incidents and Creating an Inclusive Campus Community](#)

² [Hate & Bias Resources: Bias or Hate Reporting](#)

Note: This handout is for informational purposes and is not professional legal advice. If you feel you've been a victim of interview discrimination/employment discrimination and want to pursue it further, contact an attorney who specializes in employment law and discrimination cases.

What should I do if I feel I have been discriminated against in the hiring process?

If you feel you have been a victim of interview discrimination or employment discrimination and want to pursue your options, we recommend you contact an attorney who specializes in employment law and discrimination cases, call legal aid in the town where you live or contact [EEOC](#) (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission). Sterling Employment Law listed [a few steps](#) you can take if you believe you have been discriminated against.

How do I get in contact with SuccessWorks for general support in the hiring process?

We welcome you to [make an appointment](#) to talk with an advisor if you need additional support around the hiring process. An advisor can listen to your needs, help you strategize around applications and interviewing, offer support, and help you think through how you want to move forward. Advisors work closely with our Employer Relations Team to guide students and employers through the hiring process.

What resources are available to me if I feel I am experiencing discrimination or bias on campus?

Some students will experience discrimination and bias outside of the hiring process. We want to be sure you have resources for those experiences too. UW-Madison has websites that provide additional information for students who feel they are experiencing bias or hate, including general instruction on definitions and processes on the [Bias or Hate Reporting](#) website and the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#) for students to use. In addition, the Multicultural Student Center has [hate and bias resources](#) that may be helpful for you now.

Where can I turn if I need support for overcoming discrimination or am feeling overwhelmed?

Many resources are available to support students who are feeling overwhelmed. Hiring and interviewing can be a stressful process. Remember that the UW-Health has resources that can be accessed remotely and that are free. Visit the [Remote Health and Connection](#) website to hear from students like you and learn tips and tools for dealing with distress. In addition, [SilverCloud](#) is a free, online, self-guided mental health resource available to UW-Madison students 24 hours a day. The APA also has a helpful resource, [Discrimination: What it is, and how to cope](#), that provides tips for overcoming discrimination.

Where can I learn more about my rights?

Many helpful organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union, have publications that advise citizens about [rights under U.S. law](#), about [rights if stopped by police](#), and [ICE visits a home, employer, or public space](#). Yale University has published a helpful handout regarding [What to Do if You are Detained at a Port of Entry \(Lawful Permanent Residents\)](#).

An important reminder from SuccessWorks

As a student, you are never alone. There are faculty, staff, and students who are available to provide guidance to you throughout the hiring process, and along your academic journey. We support you!

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