

## Defining and Using “Fit” Appropriately in Searches

### **“Good fit” can mean many things (some of these are fair, some are discriminatory):**

- Skills that match the core requirements of the job
- Interpersonal abilities like working well with others, collaborating, and respectful ways of interacting that support the working style, mission and priorities of the unit
- Areas of expertise that blend well with the rest of the team, such as engaging in complementary work or research, an interest in collaboration, or teaching areas that fill gaps
- Similarity in culture, gender, or other interpersonal characteristics
- Personality or cultural characteristics that are outside the norms of the unit

*Which of these are useful definitions? Which are discriminatory?*

### **“Bad fit” also can mean many things (some of these are fair, some are discriminatory):**

- Skills that don’t match the core requirements of the job
- Lack of interpersonal abilities
- Disrespectful or problematic ways of interacting, such as bullying, ignoring certain colleagues, sexually harassing behaviour, racism, etc.
- Areas of expertise, lines of work or priorities that will divert resources from the mission and priorities of the unit
- Dissimilarity from common cultures, genders or other interpersonal characteristics in the unit
- Belief that the person won’t fit in with or will disrupt the working culture and values of the unit

*Which of these are useful definitions? Which are discriminatory?*

### **Some aspects of fit are essential for success. Some are discriminatory.**

We tend to be comfortable with the way things are. This built-in bias against diversity and change means that we should always consider if we are biased when we feel that someone doesn’t “fit” ... or when we automatically assume that they do.

“Fit” does matter. Certain people can better support the work of a unit, and others have ways of being that may be harmful to the unit or individual members. To differentiate between the two, use these steps:

#### **Steps to using “fit” well**

1. Consider what aspects of “good fit” are essential for success, and what parts are discriminatory.
2. Identify what kinds of “bad fit” may be useful definitions (and not discriminatory).
3. Play around with each description to see if they have any hidden biases or limits.
4. Construct an inclusive definition of “good fit” that is as broad and welcoming as possible. Include diverse cultures, personalities and communication styles, and skills in working together.
5. Embed this definition in your criteria and job ad.
6. Build an inclusive culture so that many candidates are a "good fit."