

Tool for Identifying Implicit Bias: Awareness of Common Shortcuts

Short cuts can lead to biased assessments (either positive or negative) in evaluation if we are not motivated to avoid them and skilled in doing so. These shortcuts can lead to erroneous conclusions that candidates are unqualified or a bad fit. They can also adversely affect the fairness and equity of a review process.

- **Snap Judgments** – Making judgments about the candidate with insufficient evidence. Dismissing a candidate for minor reasons or labeling a candidate “the best” and ignoring positive attributes of the other candidates. Having a covert agenda furthered by stressing something trivial or focusing on a few negatives rather than the overall qualifications. Often occurs when the hiring or review process feels rushed.
- **Elitist Behavior** (also called “Raising-the-Bar”) – Increasing expectations for women and underrepresented minority candidates because their competency doesn’t strike committee members as trustworthy. Downgrading the qualifications of women and minorities, based on accent, dress, and demeanor. In short, uneven expectations based on a candidate’s social identity.
- **Negative Stereotypes** – Characterized by presumptions of incompetence. Research shows that the work of women and underrepresented minorities is scrutinized much more than majority faculty, at all stages of an academic career.
- **Positive Stereotypes** – Dominant group members are automatically presumed to be competent. Such a member receives the benefit of the doubt, negative attributes are glossed over and success is assumed. Also called the “original affirmative action” because dominant group members are automatically presumed qualified and thereby given an unearned advantage.
- **Cloning** – Replicating oneself by hiring someone with similar attributes or background. Also refers to undervaluing a candidate’s research because it is not familiar, as well as expecting candidates to resemble someone whom the search committee is replacing. Cloning limits the scope and breadth of *approaches* and *perspectives* in research, teaching and service.
- **Good Fit/Bad Fit** – While this judgment may be about whether the person can meet the programmatic needs for the position, it often is about how comfortable and culturally at ease one feels with her/him.
- **Wishful Thinking** – Insisting racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice no longer exist.
- **Euphemized Bias:**
 - Visionary: Members of dominant groups are evaluated based on their potential whereas underrepresented groups are judged on their accomplishments and their track record only. For example: “He has vision” or “She lacks vision.”
 - Star: Used when the speaker is an infatuated fan of the candidate under consideration. (For example: “It’s clear he’s a rock star”). Others should ask the speaker to explain his/her use of the term and support it with evidence.
 - Committed, single-minded focus or hard-worker: These terms could be used to exclude those who have demanding family commitments, cloaking a bias against care-givers.