
COVID-19 IMPACT STATEMENT FOR APPLICATIONS

Dear Recipient Name,

We at MPOWIR⁽¹⁾ propose a new initiative to include a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the hiring process across academic and research institutions through 2025. This single incremental change can improve your institution's ability to identify and hire top applicants based on work effectiveness and career potential while also addressing inequalities faced by marginalized groups in science. MPOWIR is a community-based program that aims to reduce the barriers to career development for all junior scientists in the field of physical oceanography, but this initiative is relevant across disciplines. More information as well as suggestions to assist you with launching this change can be found at <http://mpowir.org/resources/covid/>.

In order to maintain a more equitable and well-informed hiring process, we recommend the inclusion of a COVID-19 statement for all graduate, research, and faculty job applications during the next 5 years. Although the impact of COVID-19 has been felt materially on a global scale, several groups have been disproportionately impacted, including Black, Indigenous and other people of color, women, parents, individuals from low-income backgrounds and/or people whose visa status has been impacted. This group includes a large portion of talented early career scientists. Failing to account for differences in productivity during the review of applications would bias the assessment of anyone under consideration and further compound the disparity felt by these groups.

To address the pandemic's impact on current employees, many institutions have already initiated pauses in the tenure-clock, or the inclusion of COVID statements for promotions and tenure proceedings. This underscores the pressing need for policies that address the uneven burdens on academic employees. It is critical to extend the same level of consideration to new hires, as early career disruptions are more likely to have significant long-term consequences (Akkermans et al., 2020). Such a policy ensures that the potential of early career individuals or those transferring to a new institution are judged within the broader context of current socioeconomic challenges and hardships.

We thank you for your consideration for this initiative.

Sincerely,

Emily Lemagie, Ph.D.

LuAnne Thompson, Ph.D.

Marion Alberty, Ph.D.

Claudia Hinrichs, Ph.D.

Michelle Fogarty, Ph.D.

Kate Hewett

Supported by the MPOWIR Steering Committee

(1) Mentoring Physical Oceanography Women to Increase Retention (MPOWIR): mpowir.org

(2) Akkermans, Jos, Julia Richardson, and Maria L. Kraimer. 2020. "The Covid-19 Crisis as a Career Shock: Implications for Careers and Vocational Behavior." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 119:103434.

SAMPLE COVID-19 PROMPTS

In addition, you may submit an optional statement that outlines how you have been impacted by COVID-19 such as loss of field work or lab time, decreased hours due to childcare or family responsibilities, mental health issues, or funding gaps.

Please describe the impact, if any, this event has had on your ability to meet your professional obligations. Your statement should focus on the resulting impact to your performance regardless of the reason. You do not need to include details, such as reference to personal at-home situations, medical issues, etc.

Suggestions for evaluating COVID-19 statements: Two primary ways that the COVID-19 statement can be incorporated into the evaluation process are to (a) add a separate section to the existing rubric related to the COVID-19 impact statement as included in the application materials, and (b) encourage individuals to include information from the COVID-19 impact statement in comments related to other aspects of the evaluation.

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