Admissions is at the heart of all our graduate programs, and we must recognize that many factors can bias individual decisions and recognize there is no one criterion that can be used to objectively determine if an applicant should or should not be admitted. Each program should use whatever metrics it finds useful to evaluate applicants, but it is important to recognize the limitations/biases that may exist in the metrics as well as biases we all have that impact our evaluations. One thing that we should strive for is consistency in our evaluations that allow us to effectively compare one applicant with another. To that end what follows are some suggestions as how to effectively evaluate applicants.

1. **Have your Admissions Committee meet prior to evaluating the applications.** Your admissions committee should meet in the fall semester prior to reading any applications to discuss the evaluation process for the next admissions cycle. What qualities are you looking for in applicants? What characteristics are likely to lead to success? Can success be defined in different ways? What are appropriate metrics for the qualities you’re looking for?
   a. Develop a rubric so that everyone on the admissions committee can evaluate the candidates across the same metrics.
   b. What metrics are best suited to evaluate candidates for your program? Discuss within your admissions committee, what metrics are useful (e.g., transcripts, letters of recommendation, personal statement, GRE, CV...) and not helpful to your evaluation.
   c. Should weights be used – are some metrics more important than others? If so, how much more? Should they be weighted more highly than others?
   d. Does the initial review of applications ensure that certain students or groups of students are not being excluded from further consideration in later rounds of review?
   e. Review representation within your program and see where your program is not representative. What is the value of representation within your program across multiple domains (disciplinary interest, gender, race/ethnicity)?
   f. Determine an order in which to review materials. Data has shown that the order in which you evaluate data impacts your interpretation. For example, if you look at a student’s transcript and see they have a very high GPA that may impact the way you evaluate other aspects of their applications. Similarly, you may read the letters of recommendation and based on your knowledge of the recommender it may impact how you feel about a candidate. It is likely not possible to remove all biases but by looking at the metrics in the same order every time these can be minimized.

2. **Conduct Interviews.** One of the lasting impacts of the pandemic is our ability to interact via videoconferencing. Once a long list of candidates has been identified invite all for interviews. Ideally all the interviews will be conducted in the same manner (all online or all in person) and the same questions will be used (unique follow ups of course are allowed) to avoid another area of variability. Have each candidate be interviewed by multiple faculty and students who can use an agreed upon standardized feedback form to provide input to the admissions committee. Interviewers should make their own ratings before comparing notes with others.

3. **Recruitment.** Once students are accepted it is important to follow up individually and convince them of the quality of your program and how it is best suited to meet their unique career goals.
a. Follow up the admissions office generic acceptance letter, with a program specific one, highlighting the strengths of your program, include hyperlinks to your website or other useful websites at The Graduate Center.

b. Have faculty whose research areas overlap with the accepted student reach out to set up a discussion with accepted students.

c. Have students with similar background and or research interest reach out to the accepted students.

d. Host an Open house (in person and/or virtually) to present program specifics, answer questions and convey the excitement and excellence of your program to accepted students.
   i. If possible, invite them to a colloquium or a class or other program event so they can experience what it would be like to be enrolled in your program.
   ii. Make them aware of all the services they can access as a GC student (e.g., Office of Career and Professional Development, Core Facilities at the ASRC….).

4. Reflection. At the conclusion of admissions season the admissions committee should meet to evaluate:
   a. The success in getting a representative pool of applicants.
   b. Did the selected rubric work?
   c. Were the weights for different metrics, correct?
   d. Are additional metrics needed?
   e. Were interviews conducted effectively?
   f. Was recruitment effective?
   g. Should additional steps be put in place for the next admissions cycle?

5. Recruitment – Based on the most recent admissions cycle does the program’s recruitment strategy need to be adapted in any way. Please see the separate document on recruitment strategies.