

UNM Guidance on Admissions Race and Ethnicity

On June 29, 2023 the US Supreme Court issued a ruling regarding the use of race/ethnicity in admissions decisions in higher education. This document provides guidance on admissions at UNM in consequence of this decision. It should be noted that this guidance is most relevant for competitive admissions in which multiple candidates may be weighed against one another for admission in to a limited number of places in an academic program. For admissions based on simple qualifying factors like exceeding a specified high school GPA, these guidelines may have little impact.

Policies: Admitting units should review all admission policies and ensure that they do not use race/ethnicity as a factor in admission decisions.

Training: Units should develop and deliver training to admissions staff regarding appropriate admissions criteria and decision-making.

Publicity: Admitting units should:

1. Review all websites and publicity materials to ensure that they do not refer to race/ethnicity in a manner that would indicate race/ethnicity is a factor in admissions.
2. There are often old and little maintained websites out there – search these out and make sure they are appropriate, or better yet shutdown if no longer relevant or maintained.
3. It is acceptable for websites and other publicity materials to emphasize, discuss, and describe the importance of diversity at UNM.
4. According to guidance issued on August 14, 2023 from the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice’s Educational Opportunities Section, “institutions of higher education may continue to articulate missions and goals tied to student body diversity and may use all legally permissible methods to achieve that diversity”, including but not limited to targeted outreach, recruitment, pathway programs, student yield and retention strategies and programs.

Application Processes: Review all application forms and materials and ensure that they do not use race/ethnicity as a factor in admissions.

1. You can and should collect standard demographic information, including race and ethnicity information, for reporting purposes. Be clear on the purposes for collecting this information.
2. As noted by Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice’s Educational Opportunities Section, “data containing demographic information about an institution’s student applicant pool, student admissions outcomes, and student enrollment and retention provide institutions with critical information related to their programs and objectives. Such data convey a range of information about students, including their race/ethnicity, age, sex, gender identity, citizenship, Tribal affiliation, disability, geographic background, language proficiency, socioeconomic status, family

background and parental education level, and military background. Institutions may continue to collect this information and use it for a variety of purposes, so long as that use is consistent with applicable privacy laws and ensures that demographic data related to the race of student applicants do not influence admissions decisions.”

Admission processes:

1. Develop standard rubrics, scorecards, or forms for officials evaluating admission materials for decision purposes. These rubrics, scorecards, or forms should be comprehensive in the factors used in admission decisions and make it clear in trainings to admissions committee members that race/ethnicity is not a criterion.
2. Formal and documented tribal affiliation can be considered in programs that specifically are designed for the members of these sovereign nations and/or where such individuals are underrepresented.
3. Essays can be a part of an admissions application required of all applicants. Applicants can write essays that describe the ways in which their identity (of which race/ethnicity is certainly a part) has impacted their life, decision making, character, motivation, etc. It is acceptable to use these impact statements as part of the decision-making criterion – not the specific racial/ethnicity information for its own sake, but the self-identified benefits, consequences or experiences of the individual applicant. This must be done fairly across all candidates for admission independent of race/ethnicity.
4. Maintain records of admission decisions.

For more information, see:

[*Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College and Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina et al. \(“SFFA”\)*](#)

[Advance Diversity and Opportunity in Higher Education: Justice and Education Departments Release Resources to Advance Diversity and Opportunity in Higher Education](#)

[Dear Colleague Letter from the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice’s Educational Opportunities Section](#)

[Questions and Answers Resource from the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice’s Educational Opportunities Section](#)

Issued:

December 4, 2023

This guidance may be updated in the future.