



Safer Recruitment Policy

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- It is essential that our approach to recruitment and selection responds to an increasingly competitive market for the best talent, both domestically and internationally. This policy provides a framework for the delivery of flexible recruitment and selection activity, which ensures the best candidates are secured whilst meeting our equality and diversity values.
- Staff who lead recruitment processes (otherwise referred to as 'recruiting managers') will hold delegated responsibility for ensuring that all recruitment processes are delivered in line with the recruitment policy.

Key Recruitment Principles

ATTRACTION

The recruitment and selection process seeks to attract, recruit and retain the most talented people for the organisation.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations must be made at the appropriate stages of the recruitment process.

EQUALITY

There should be equality of opportunity in all recruitment processes. Selection processes must be based on objective criteria that are impartial, applied consistently and prevent implicit bias.

BEST PRACTICE

All staff involved in recruitment should complete appropriate training; specifically in Equality and Diversity principles and be confident in delivering best practice at all stages of the process.

TRANSPARENCY

All candidates should be treated fairly using a transparent process. This includes documenting objective selection criteria, the reasons for selection decisions and providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates that attended interview.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

All candidates should have a positive experience, whether they are successful or not. The recruitment process should ensure that the Company attracts talented candidates and is presented in a positive manner that enhances its reputation.

EFFICIENCY

The recruitment process should take place in a timely, flexible, and cost-efficient manner.

COST EFFECTIVE

Recruitment processes should be conducted in a cost-effective manner.

OPEN COMPETITION

The process is one of open competition that should attract a diverse range of talented applicants. Candidates should be provided with access to information about the job, the required knowledge, skills & experience required and details about the selection process.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information relating to any recruitment process must be treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection law.

3. Context and Scope

- The Company is committed to its mission of contributing to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest levels of excellence. The Company recognises that it is our people who build our reputation and that we will only maintain a leading position by continuing to attract and retain the highest calibre of talented people.
- The Company is dedicated in its pursuit of a proactive and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture and values diversity. We recognise and promote the importance of maintaining an inclusive and stimulating environment and it is therefore essential that equality forms the foundation of our approach to recruitment and selection.
- All recruitment decisions should be based on merit, ensuring that the best candidate is selected and any decision will be free from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of: age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment ('protected characteristics').
- This policy supports the requirements of the Company Equal Opportunities Policy, the Equality Act 2010, the Company Disability and Employment Policy.

4. Eligibility

- This policy is applicable to all staff recruitment, irrespective of staff group or nature of employment and encompasses all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process.
- The Temporary Employment Service (TES), other employment agency staffing, apprenticeship and volunteer recruitment are not covered in the full scope of this policy, however, the processes followed should still meet the core principles detailed in section 2.
- In order for the policy to be effective, any employee who is involved in any aspect of the recruitment and / or selection of staff should be aware of the details of this policy (and available guidance) and adhere to it. Heads of Institution, in conjunction with Human Resources, should ensure that this is the case.
- It is expected that staff involved in recruitment and selection activities will have completed the online Equality and Diversity training. Training in recruitment and selection skills, Immigration and Recruitment and recruitment systems are available and strongly encouraged.
- Staff involved in recruitment must be made aware of any supplementary local processes that are specific to their operational requirements.

An overview of the process can be found in appendix 9.1. This outlines the key stages of the recruitment process and links back to the specific sections in this document.

5.1 Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All staff involved in the recruitment process have a responsibility for data protection and need to understand the confidentiality and data protection guidance and its importance.
- Sensitive and personal information from the recruitment and selection process must only be made available only to those who are required to have access and should not be shared with third parties, without a specific requirement to do so and consent from the applicant.
- If web recruitment is not being used for recruitment, information from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is not made available to members of the selection committee / appointments panel. (If web recruitment was used to receive applications, the equal opportunities information will automatically be hidden).
- The collection, processing, storage and retention of all information should be in line with current data protection laws and the Company's record management guidance.

5.2 Preparation and Planning

- The first step of any recruitment and selection process includes a review of the necessity of the position (and the duties covered) against the strategic needs of the Institution. The financial impact of recruiting into the position should also be considered.

5.2.1 Role description and Person Profile

- A role profile should be produced or updated for any vacant position, ensuring that it accurately reflects the position that is to be filled. The nature and scope, key responsibilities and level of seniority associated with the position should be included. The role description is also used to identify any pre-employment checks which are required.
- The person specification should detail the minimum qualifications or training (or equivalent experience), skills, experience and competencies required for the effective performance of the role. The contents of the person specification should be directly related to the position and applied equally to all candidates.
- The person specification will be the basis upon which methods of assessment are agreed and the selection decision is made and cannot be changed at a later date within the recruitment process.
- The person specification should be reviewed to ensure that the criteria used do not unlawfully discriminate against certain applicants.

5.2.2 Grading

- The requirement for grading is determined by the position that is being advertised. The timescales for grading can vary and should be taken into consideration for applicable roles during the vacancy planning process.

5.2.3 Permission to Fill

- Permission to create or fill a post must be obtained from the relevant authority, dependent on the source of funding.

5.2.4 Selection Committee / Appointments Panel

- At the earliest opportunity, the selection committee or appointment panel should be identified. Each member of the panel should have a clear brief (as delegated by the chair) of the parts of the process that they have involvement in or responsibility for.
- The panel should comprise more than one person. Wherever possible, it should be ensured that the appointing body is appropriately gender balanced and diverse. If it is not possible to achieve this, evidence should be retained to show why this was not achievable.

5.2.5 Selection Principles

- Selection criteria are the objective benchmark against which all applicants are assessed. Selection criteria should be agreed in advance of a position being advertised based on the skills, knowledge and experience required as described in the role profile / person specification.
- Selection principles should be agreed before the position is advertised.
- A record of selection criteria should be retained for 12 months to ensure that selection decisions can be justified if challenged, the process by which decisions were reached can be demonstrated, structured feedback can be provided to candidates, and a response provided to any claims of discrimination.

5.2.6 Selection Methods

- As a minimum, an interview must form part of the selection process where the position has been advertised through open competition.
- The method(s) of selection for the position should be agreed prior to advertising.
- The chosen method(s) will vary depending on the role and should focus on testing the skills required for the role.
- Where possible, it is recommended that a combination of methods are used, as this provides a more rounded assessment of each candidate and increases the likelihood of an effective selection decision being made.

5.3 Advertising

- Advertising is the foundation of fair and effective recruitment and selection and provides the fullest opportunity for all qualified candidates to know about and apply for a vacancy. This principle supports compliance with equality law and public sector equality duties.
- Exceptions in equality law, such as positive action, may be appropriate to address under-representation.

5.3.1 Advertisement

- Advertisements should be clear, truthful, engaging and representative of the Company as an employer of choice. Overselling the duties of a vacancy may have a detrimental effect on the outcome of the recruitment process.
- Care should be taken when drafting the advertisement to ensure that it is not unlawfully discriminatory and that applicants are not deterred from applying for the position on the grounds of protected characteristics.
- The full salary (up to but not including the contribution points) should be included on the advertisement. Any additional contributions to salary (e.g. Market Pay) should be included.
- Vacancies should be advertised externally, except in certain clearly defined circumstances where permission not to advertise or to advertise internally only must be obtained from the relevant HR Team.
- The minimum advertising period for vacancies is two weeks (10 working days), unless prior approval is received from Human Resources.
- All Company vacancies should be published on the Job Opportunities pages.
- Costs for advertising will be funded by the department placing the advert. Cost effective online advertising is strongly encouraged.
- Applicants should only be requested to complete one form of application, either a standard Application Form or a CV and Supporting Statement. If a CV is submitted with an Application Form, this should not be considered in the selection process.

5.3.2 Further Information Document

- Use of the Further Information document is encouraged to provide applicants with consistent information about the Company, the department / institution, the role and how to apply. It will help applicants to make an informed decision about whether or not to apply for the post and as a result, reduce applications from candidates who do not meet the minimum essential criteria.
- Any additional screening checks required should be included in the Further Information document.

5.3.3 Executive Search

- Occasionally, it may be appropriate to use Executive Search as a method for identifying suitable candidates for a vacant position. Instances in which this method may be used include professorial, senior, specialist and hard to fill roles.
- Retained or contingency recruitment may also be used for appropriate vacancies.
- The cost of executive search, retained recruitment or contingency search processes will be covered by the department.

5.4 Selection of Candidates

- The Company's principal objective through its recruitment and selection activities is to identify the best candidate for the position. This should be achieved in an open, fair and transparent process.
- The selection process should be objective, impartial and consistently applied.
- Each candidate should be invited to undergo the same assessments and the panel must remain consistent across each element of candidate assessment. The only exception will be for applicants who have requested reasonable adjustments to the process to accommodate a disability.
 - Candidates should be assessed against the criteria for the position and reasons should be documented to record the selection decisions.
 - Shortlisting decisions should be made solely on the basis of the evidence presented in the application which is relevant to the selection criteria. Generalised assumptions and stereotypes about applicants should be avoided.
 - Applicants must not be rejected during any part of the selection process on the grounds of protected characteristics.
 - Applicants must not be rejected at the longlisting or shortlisting stage because they currently do not have right to work in the UK.
 - The final scores and decisions for all applicants should be documented.

5.4.1 Longlisting / Shortlisting

- Longlisting or shortlisting should take place within a reasonable amount of time following the closing of a vacancy. Whether a longlisting process is required will be determined by the number of suitable applications received at the end of the advertising period.
- The assessment of applications should be based on the information included within the submission only. The applicant's suitability should only be compared to the requirements that were advertised in the role profile.
- It is important that decisions for each candidate are recorded with a brief explanation of the decision and retained.

5.4.2 Interviews

- There is flexibility in which assessments are chosen to assess candidates, however, there are some general principles which will be universal for every recruitment process:
 - In open competition, an interview must form part of the assessment process and should comprise of more than one interviewer.
 - Each candidate should be asked the same (or a comparable) set of questions and undergo the same assessments. Supplementary or probing questions (which are more specific to the applicant) can be asked following the responses given to the original question.
 - Notes of responses given during the interview should be made and retained (as per current retention guidelines) for all applicants.

- All recruitment decisions must be based on merit so that decisions are free from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic - even if the applicant discloses such information during one of the assessments.
- Internal and external candidates should receive equal treatment throughout the process. Prior professional or personal knowledge of an applicant or other information, which is not relevant to the position should not be considered as part of the selection process, unless the applicant offers such information as part of the assessment process.

5.4.3 Interview Expenses

- Candidates may be reimbursed by the Company, at the discretion of the department, for reasonable expenses associated with attending interviews, subject to the limits on allowances for mileage and subsistence approved by the Finance Committee. Where this is applicable, candidates should be notified prior to the interview.

5.4.4 Reasonable Adjustments

- The Company has a legal duty to consider requests for reasonable adjustments from applicants with a disability. Each request received for reasonable adjustments must be considered on their own individual merit.
- The recruiting manager should ensure that administrators are able to review and where the request is deemed reasonable, put relevant provisions in place.

5.4.5 Competency Framework

- Departments / institutions should assess the candidate's suitability for the role on the basis of both technical and behavioural competencies for academic-related and assistant staff.

5.4.6 Appointing Decisions

- Areas of disagreement in the assessment of a candidate's suitability should be discussed by all members of the panel and a final decision should be agreed. Decisions should only be made based on the evidence collected as part of the recruitment process to avoid poor selection decisions and unlawful discrimination.
- The selection of the preferred candidate can only be made after all the selection activities are complete and the outcomes recorded.
- Eligibility to work in the UK can only be considered as a reason for rejection during the final stage of recruitment, for instance, when a conditional offer would be made. In order to reject a candidate purely on right to work grounds, it must be established whether the individual holds or could obtain the right to work in the UK and that no certificate of sponsorship would be issued (e.g. because the skill level/salary for the vacancy is below the minimum threshold for sponsorship).

- Records of any decisions made and the reasons why, along with details of investigations made into obtaining permission to work in the UK should be confidentially retained for the agreed retention period.
- The decision of the selection panel should only be communicated more widely when the successful applicant has accepted an offer of employment and the unsuccessful candidate(s) has / have been informed of the outcome.

5.5 Offer

- Before an offer of employment is made, any restrictions on employment of the successful candidate should be considered, specifically in reference to:
 - Restrictions on the employment of young people.
 - Restrictions on the ability to re-employ those in receipt of a pension administered by or on behalf of the Company for its staff.
 - Restrictions under the Asylum and Immigration Act 2006, which include, supplementary employment provisions and working hours for individuals with a Tier 4 visa.
 - Financial implications for the applicant if they return within a certain period following a voluntary severance agreement.
- Offers of employment, whether made orally or in writing, are legally binding and a record should be maintained of how and when the offer was made. Offers must be subject to the terms and conditions detailed in the formal offer letter that will follow and will be conditional, upon what the Company considers to be the satisfactory return of the relevant screening checks.

5.5.1 Salary Package

- Once the successful applicant has been identified, the starting salary needs to be agreed. The approach will vary depending on the appointment that is being made.
- Where the successful applicant is an employee of the Company, the starting salary should be in line with the current arrangements.
- In making a decision on starting salaries, consideration must be given to other staff within the team / department / division in a similar position to ensure the principles of equal pay are applied and maintained.
- In addition to the salary, other incentives may be available to ensure the best candidate can be secured. If offering recruitment incentives, the principles of equal pay must be applied.
- The Company is able to provide financial assistance for specified relocation costs for moves within the UK and from overseas.

5.5.2 Feedback

- A member of the selection panel should offer specific and constructive feedback to unsuccessful applicants after an interview.

5.5.3 Screening Checks

- For the majority of staff, the checks required as part of the appointment process are;
 - Checking required qualifications and/or professional qualifications within the specified time frame (e.g. under appointments).
 - Checking Right to Work documentation
 - Obtaining satisfactory references
- Those working in sensitive areas, involved in certain types of activity (e.g. regulated activities) or with access to sensitive information, will require more in-depth screening. It should be confirmed in writing that the any offer made is conditional upon satisfactory completion of the required screening.
- The recruiting manager is responsible for reviewing the eligibility requirements for higher level screening checks and identify any additional screening required to manage mitigate risk for the Company.

5.5.4 Right to Work in the UK

- Checks on right to work must be carried out for every person the Company intends to employ in the UK (regardless of their race, ethnicity or nationality) before they begin any work. This meets the employer's requirement under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006.
- Candidates invited to interview should be encouraged to bring original documents to their interview proving their right to work in the UK.
- Where a candidate is unable to provide evidence of their right to work at this stage, any subsequent offer of employment will be conditional upon them providing evidence of right to work. Employment will not commence before evidence has been produced.

5.5.5 References

- Written references should be sought as part of the recruitment process. The number of references required and when they are requested will be dependent on the role. Referencing also applies to applicants who are currently employed by the Company.
- It should be noted that, under the Equality Act 2010, the Company is unable to enquire about a candidate's sickness absence record until an offer of employment has been made to them and permission has been provided by the applicant (unless the questions are necessary as outlined in Section 60 (6) of the Equality Act 2010).
- References can only be sought with express permission of the candidate.
- At least one reference for assistant and academic-related appointments should be from the present or most recent employer, ideally from the candidate's line manager.

5.5.6 Qualifications / Professional Qualifications

- Candidates are required to produce original documentation of any qualifications, professional qualifications or memberships which are required for the role. Misrepresentations of qualifications could exclude a candidate from further consideration and may lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

5.5.7 Review of Screening Checks

- Checks which are not deemed to be satisfactory will be reviewed by Human Resources, before being referred to the Assistant Director / Director of HR for objective assessment and a decision. Possible outcomes include amended duties, redeployment, withdrawal of an offer of employment or, where the individual has started work before the relevant pre-employment check has been completed, dismissal.

5.6 Early Employment Support

5.6.1 Induction

- It is expected that all members of staff will receive an induction which is tailored to the individual and their appointment. Line Managers should identify the level of support required within the induction period for each new member of staff to ensure the best possible start can be made and to increase the chances of a successful appointment.
- The planning and delivery of certain aspects can be delegated to appropriate colleagues. The extent to which the delegation of such tasks is appropriate will be dependent on the size of the institution and local policy or preferences.

5.6.2 Probation

- Employees who have a formal probation period (as detailed in their offer and contract of employment) should use this period to demonstrate their suitability for the role. They should receive regular reviews, guidance and training to enable them to be successful in their new role. Those who do not have a formal probation period may benefit from a period of employee support to aid their transition into the new role and team.

5.7 Data Retention

- Recruitment documentation should be held for a maximum of 12 months for unsuccessful candidates, before being destroyed confidentially.
- Right to Work documentation for unsuccessful interviewees should be disposed of immediately.

5.8 Recruitment Complaints

- The Company aims to ensure that any recruitment campaign is transparent and that all candidates receive a positive experience. Should a complaint be made about any part of the recruitment process, the Recruiting Manager should discuss the complaint with Human Resources in the first instance.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- Different members of staff will be responsible for the necessary actions during a recruitment campaign. Ultimate responsibility for recruitment will be with the Head of Institution, however, given the devolved nature of the recruitment process, responsibility may be delegated as appropriate (to a recruiting manager for instance). If a task is delegated to another person within the process, overall responsibility will still be retained by the Head of Institution and/or recruiting manager.
- The extent to which different staff are involved and their duties in the recruitment process will depend on the Department / Institution concerned, the seniority of their role and that of the vacant position.

6.1 Department / Institution Responsibilities

- Ensure the relevant supporting documentation for the position is accurate and that permission to fill has been granted in order to advertise the position.
- Oversee the planning, completion and retention of all related recruitment administration, including shortlisting, appointment and payroll documentation.
- Set the required access and permission levels on relevant HR / Recruitment systems for appropriate tasks, such as downloading applications.
- Manage and oversee all candidate correspondence, seeking advice for potentially sensitive cases.
- Ensure that all candidates are assessed in a fair, transparent and consistent manner and make appropriate selection decisions ensuring adherence to the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure that equal opportunities information is not made available to selection committee / appointments panel.
- Ensure that the relevant checks are carried out for the appointment, especially right to work checks.
- Ensure an induction programme is designed and delivered. This will include managing all local arrangements for the new employee, including IT, phone and building access, immediate training / induction requirements and local orientation.

6.2 HR Team / Resourcing Team Responsibilities

- HR teams, in conjunction with the Resourcing Team, will provide advice to the recruiting team as required. Advice may also be given directly to the applicant as appropriate, for example concerning sensitive / confidential matters.
- Review requests for approval on variations to standard recruitment procedures, such as internal advert requests, starting salary cases and pre-employment checks.
- Ensure that systems are available to support the delivery of core recruitment processes. In line with HR system development priorities, consider new features to meet business needs.
- Keep up to date with relevant legislation, providing updates to recruiting managers and their staff on changes to legislation, policies, guidance and procedures as required.
- The Resourcing Team, in conjunction with key stakeholders, will identify and deliver new tools and support mechanisms which enable effective recruitment.

7.1 Recruitment Process Flowchart

