

OUR PEOPLE PRACTICES/

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION: Policy



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Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Aims
3. Scope
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Principles
6. Training/Support
7. Review
8. Associated Practices

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University's ability to attract and recruit the best people we can is fundamental to our success and long term future. A strategic, professional approach to recruitment is essential to ensuring the best candidate is appointed.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide an overarching framework for the recruitment and selection of staff to ensure the process is conducted in a manner that is efficient and effective, and promotes equality of opportunity.
- 1.3 The principles outlined below will enable the University to meet its staffing requirements through a range of routes which, whilst allowing for flexibility of approach, will comply with relevant legislation.
- 1.4 To ensure appropriate implementation of this policy, the policy should be read in conjunction with the recruitment procedures listed in Associated Practices. The procedures provide more detail on key steps at each stage of the recruitment and selection process.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The aims of the recruitment and selection policy are to ensure:
 - 2.1.1 A fair, inclusive and consistent approach is taken throughout the recruitment and selection process;
 - 2.1.2 The best¹ candidate with the appropriate skills is recruited in order to meet the University's operational and strategic requirements;
 - 2.1.3 Appointments are made on the basis of merit through assessment of the candidates' suitability against role specific selection criteria;
 - 2.1.4 All recruitment and selection is consistent with employment legislation and the University's Equality and Diversity policies, practices and commitments (e.g. Athena SWAN, Disability Confident);
 - 2.1.5 All candidates are treated fairly, equitably and efficiently, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of outcome;
 - 2.1.6 We balance our desire to help existing employees achieve their career progression aspirations and retain security of employment where they have the necessary skills and experience to carry out new job roles, with our commitment to applying open and fair recruitment processes.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The principles outlined in this policy apply to the recruitment and selection of all employed staff which includes staff employed on ongoing, fixed term contracts and timesheet staff. There are separate recruitment procedures which govern the recruitment of staff on timesheet contracts and those on ongoing / fixed term contracts.
- 3.2 The policy does not cover the engagement of sole traders, self-employed workers, or individuals who work via third parties (e.g. agency personnel).

¹ There are limited occasions where the University's duty to its current staff will mean that a candidate may only need to demonstrate that they are suitable and competent to fulfil the role in question. The Redeployment & Organisational Change Policies provide further detail.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 Human Resources/Resourcing will co-ordinate the recruitment and selection process, and provide expert advice, information, training and support to hiring managers, Search Committees, and Chairs of panels in relation to this policy and associated procedures.
- 4.2 Human Resources/Resourcing will maintain records of those staff who have attended recruitment and selection training, unconscious bias training and will ensure that at least one panel member is so trained.
- 4.3 Hiring managers, panel members, the Chair/Chair of a Search Committee and Human Resources are responsible for different elements of the recruitment process. Areas of specific responsibility are defined in the recruitment procedures and guidance.
- 4.4 All managers and staff involved in recruitment and selection are responsible for ensuring the process is conducted in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

5. Principles

- 5.1 Recruitment to anything other than new posts should not commence until full consideration is given to the most effective and efficient way to meet the need, which may not always be direct replacement.
- 5.2 The University has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment other than in cases of redeployment (see 5.4).
- 5.3 We are committed to ensuring that we make the best possible use of the considerable talent that exists within our workforce and for creating a future pipeline of talent that is ready to compete for roles within the University.
- 5.4 Employees who are seeking redeployment will be given priority consideration over other applicants, provided they have the relevant skills and experience.
- 5.5 All recruitment activity should be undertaken through the University's recruitment system.
- 5.6 All recruitment campaigns must comply with data protection requirements and:
 - 5.6.1 All documentation and other data related to the process must be kept securely.
 - 5.6.2 There needs to be a clear, documented audit trail of decisions made throughout the process.
 - 5.6.3 All personal data must be treated confidentially and with due care, and consideration be given of the need to print or transport documents.
- 5.7 Equality & Diversity principles will be applied at all stages within the recruitment and selection process:
 - 5.7.1 Applicants will not be discriminated against by being required to have experience or qualifications that cannot be proven to be relevant to the role. Only those qualifications genuinely required for the effective performance of the role will be required and where possible and practicable to assess, equivalent skills knowledge and experience will be accepted in lieu of a qualification.
 - 5.7.2 As a Disability Confident employer we guarantee to interview all applicants who indicate they have a disability and who have demonstrated, through the

application process, that they meet the essential criteria for the role. All such candidates will be considered on merit.

- 5.7.3 We encourage the recruitment of staff with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments where we are informed by a candidate will be made where possible to prevent them being placed at a disadvantage by any practice within the recruitment and selection process.
- 5.7.4 To ensure our staff are diverse and reflect the diverse profiles of our students and the surrounding communities, where there is evidence of under-representation in certain jobs or at certain levels, we may actively target applications from those groups through the use of Positive Action Statements on adverts.
- 5.7.5 We do not require disclosure of spent convictions, in accordance with Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation, unless the nature of the role is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record. In these cases, the offer of employment is subject to satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks.
- 5.7.6 We will always strive to achieve diversity in the composition of Selection Panels and Search Committees (where appropriate) as outlined in 5.13 below.
- 5.8 To preserve objectivity, integrity and avoid conflicts of interest:
 - 5.8.1 If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare this to the Chair as soon as they are aware of the individual's application so that a decision can be made regarding their continued involvement in the recruitment and decision-making process.
 - 5.8.2 If a candidate has named a member of staff involved in the selection process as a referee, the candidate will be asked to provide details of an alternative referee.
 - 5.8.3 In all cases, where the applicant has a close personal or familial relationship with a manager to whom either the Chair or the ultimate line manager to whom the successful candidate will report; this must be reported promptly and via the Disclosure of Interests policy.
- 5.9 Prior to the start of any recruitment, authorisation must be gained to recruit via the recruitment system with the relevant completed Job Description and Person Specification attached.
- 5.10 A Job Description and Person Specification must be produced or updated before any vacant role can be authorised and advertised.
 - 5.10.1 If the role is new it will need to be Job Evaluated before starting the authorisation process.
 - 5.10.2 If a role has been changed, depending on how significant the changes are, it may need to be Job Evaluated before starting the authorisation process.
 - 5.10.3 The criteria within the Person Specification must be relevant and appropriate to the level of the post.
 - 5.10.4 Suitable equivalent alternatives to any specified essential qualification criterion in the Person Specification should always be identified, where possible and considered e.g. where a generic non-specialist qualification is considered essential, the Person Specification will include both equivalent qualification and equivalent work experience. The Hay job evaluation framework should be used as a guide for explaining what is meant by equivalent experience.

- 5.11 Vacant roles will normally be advertised on the University's jobs website and jobs.ac.uk.
- 5.11.1 The duration of the vacancy advert may vary as it is dependent on the availability of candidates and current market conditions but would normally be for 2 weeks.
- 5.11.2 To be able to sponsor an overseas candidate to work at the University, the Resident Labour Market Test will need to be met – one of the requirements is to advertise for a minimum of 28 days on the University's website and jobs.ac.uk.
- 5.11.3 In certain circumstances, specialist or urgent operational needs may mean that it is appropriate to fill a vacant role without advertising and/or or going through a competitive selection process. Such appointments are not intended to disadvantage good internal and external candidates, but to allow the University to move quickly for strategic reasons, or to minimise replication of a process. Examples of when it may be appropriate to fill a vacancy without advertising:
- Where the role is funded by an external research grant and the grant is obtained by providing the name and CV of a candidate, or a particular member of staff is on the grant as a named researcher.
 - Where the University needs to consider a single exceptional candidate whose work is important to the University's strategy for a position in the University but the timescales involved in the normal recruitment process would mean the candidate would be no longer available if the normal processes were followed.
 - When there is an urgent need to ensure that a person is in post for business continuity reasons with as little impact on normal operations as possible and the appointment is on a fixed term basis of no more than 12 months.
 - Where a similar vacancy has been advertised so recently (normally within 4 months) that the field of candidates has not changed, and is therefore known to the hiring manager.
 - Staff given redeployment status are entitled to be given priority consideration where they meet all the essential criteria. If the hiring manager agrees there is a match, there is no need to advertise the vacancy externally.
- 5.12 In exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the Deputy Director HR the salary range advertised may be up to the top of the relevant pay scale discretionary point.
- 5.13 A fair and consistent approach will be taken to select the best candidate for the role using objective selection criteria based upon the Person Specification. A selection panel will assess suitability of candidates at both shortlisting and interview stages using the criteria listed in the Person Specification.
- 5.13.1 A panel should comprise at least 2 members.
- 5.13.2 Wherever possible, all selection panels must comprise of mixed gender and larger panels should have a gender balanced composition (unless otherwise agreed with HR). It is acknowledged that balanced panels may not always be achievable due to urgency of the need, workforce composition and/or specialism but hiring managers would be expected to make reasonable efforts to achieve this.

- 5.13.3 At least 1 member of the panel needs to have completed University Recruitment and Selection Training within the previous 5 years.
- 5.13.4 At least 1 member of the panel needs to have completed the University Unconscious Bias training. This could be the same member as in 5.13.3.
- 5.14 The selection panel's primary aim is to select and appoint the best person for the job.
- 5.14.1 To ensure fairness, the selection process needs to be rigorous and structured. It is however important to maintain a degree of flexibility to ensure the most appropriate means is used of selecting a candidate for the post in question.
- 5.14.2 The use of job-related selection tests or asking candidates to give presentations is useful for assessing elements of the Person Specification that are difficult to test during an interview. They need to be objective and relevant to the appropriate criteria in the Person Specification. Advice and guidance on the relevance and suitability of such tests can be sought by hiring managers from their designated resourcing contact.
- 5.14.3 Appointment decisions should be explicitly based upon evidence, though the evidence required may differ according to the type of role. CVs, covering letters, application forms, interviews and skill specific tests are usual.
- 5.14.4 Salaries on appointment will be made within the evaluated grade. New appointment will normally be at the bottom of the appropriate pay scale, however the University acknowledges that there may be justifiable reasons to appoint above the bottom of the salary scale. A number of factors need to be taken into account when agreeing the appropriate starting salary:
- Level of relevant experience, knowledge and skills the successful candidate would bring
 - Anticipated level of performance/contribution taking into account performance during the selection process and track record
 - Internal consistency – the salary levels of colleagues performing roles of similar responsibility, particularly with relation to Equal Pay legislation
 - Current salary (where it is relevant in the case of similar experience)
- The above factors are all interdependent e.g. in all cases internal relativities, and the impact on other staff performing like roles must always be considered before offering a starting salary above the bottom of the scale. Internal relativities, based on respective levels of performance and knowledge must always be a primary consideration. Before any offer is made, hiring managers wishing to make a higher salary offer must speak to their resourcing contact.
- 5.14.5 Where an offer needs to be in excess of £100k, the signed approval of two Executive Group members and the Director of HR & OD is required.
- 5.14.6 Offers of employment are made by the Chair of the selection panel and must comply with the University's compliance policies (e.g. evidence of eligibility to work in the UK, satisfactory internal/external references). For some roles, the offer is also subject to additional checks such as DBS or essential qualification checks.
- 5.14.7 Any offer of employment will be conditional until all pre-employment checks have been completed.
- 5.14.8 Offers may be withdrawn if additional information comes to light (including non-compliance by the hiring manager with the University's recruitment and

selection policies) although the advice of HR must always be sought before such action is taken.

6. Training / Support

- 6.1 Appropriate training, development and support will be provided to those involved in the recruitment and selection process.
- 6.2 HR Learning & Organisational Development run regular recruitment and selection training – details of which can be found on the Training section of Staff Connect.
- 6.3 Although at least one member of the selection panel needs to have completed the University recruitment and selection training within the previous 5 years, it is desirable that all hiring managers and interview panel members complete the training before embarking on the recruitment process. It is, however also accepted that staff may bring with them significant recruitment experience from previous employment. In order to learn how recruitment is carried out at the University, those members of staff are still encouraged to attend the training provided or at the very least, speak to their designated resourcing contact.
- 6.4 Detailed practical guidance on key considerations and the conduct of the various elements of the recruitment and selection process can be found on the Human Resources Recruitment web site pages.
- 6.5 Hiring managers can also seek guidance and advice from their designated resourcing contacts.

7. Review

- 7.1 This policy may be reviewed in the light of operational experience, sector developments and changing organisational needs.

8. Associated practices

- 8.1 This Policy complies with relevant UK employment legislation.
- 8.2 This policy is supported by other relevant University of Kent People Practices:
 - Direct Fixed Term Contract Recruitment Guidelines
 - Single Person Appointment Procedures
 - Grades 1 – 10 Recruitment Procedures
 - Lecturer or Senior Lecturer Recruitment Procedures
 - Readers Recruitment Procedures
 - Professorial Recruitment Procedures
 - Head of School Recruitment Procedures
 - Engaging Casual Workers – Policy & Procedure
 - Internal Secondments – Policy & Procedure
 - Employment Reference Policy and Procedure
 - Disclosure of Criminal Records Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy
 - Redeployment Policy
 - Search Committee Guidance
 - Declaration of Interests Policy
- 8.3 For detailed practical guidance on key considerations and the conduct of the various elements of the recruitment and selection process, refer to the Human Resources Recruitment web site pages.