1. Introduction

Generally we are able to fill the majority of the roles that we recruit to without too much difficulty whilst working within the parameters of the processes that we use on a daily basis. There are, however, occasions when it is not possible to recruit easily to a vacancy. Examples of this might be a very technical or specialised role that requires a specialised/tailored recruitment approach and process and/or that the University has identified the need for an individual who will make a significant contribution to the Institutional Plan where immediate high performance will be key.

In some cases, there are very specialised/technical roles where a clear skills shortage is known in the market, and it may well prove prudent to establish a Search Committee at the outset of the recruitment process, rather than adopting the standard recruitment methods first.

2. What is a Search Committee

A Search Committee is a group of people who agree to work together in order to add value to the recruitment and selection of hard to fill vacancies.

The purpose of a Search Committee is to utilise all of our internal knowledge to try to fill a role beyond standard advertising and recruitment methods. This can be achieved by tapping into existing employees’ networks, building online strategies and uniquely targeting the marketing to prospective applicants for the job. Getting the right members on to the Search Committee is key to success. Some members of the Search Committee might continue to be members of the recruitment panel for selection of the final applicant, but generally the members of the Search Committee are appointed to solely assist with the search process.

A Search Committee will normally be established when it is agreed that a vacancy cannot be filled (due to having possibly tried and not succeeded) using the University’s current process, and/or that a more specific and specialised process might need to be implemented.

3. Who will be on the Search Committee?

The composition of the Search Committee is of prime importance, in that consideration needs to be given as to who will add value and is needed for this process to be successful.

The individual responsible for the recruitment of the role will be the Chair of the Search Committee (unless delegated to another individual). The Chair will consider what the composition of the Committee should be. For example, it might be helpful to have a subject specialist on the panel as well as members of the School/Department who have relevant contacts or are members of specific networking groups. It could also be useful to have someone from Corporate Communications and/or the University Design and Print Centre.
team on board, to give advice about our branding and positioning externally in media and advertising. It is important to consider the University’s equality obligations and aims to achieve gender balance in the composition of the Committee as well as the value that might be added from a student point of view or student representation on the Committee as and when appropriate to do so.

Before appointing committee members, Chairs may want to make enquiries in the relevant schools to establish who has the knowledge and networks to best assist in the applicant search.

There may be times where it is appropriate to get the opinion of an external member (not employed at the University) on the committee. It is important though that there is no conflict of interest and any externals considered should not normally be a University competitor.

Ideally, a search committee should facilitate and add value to current processes in order to widen the pool of applicants for the role. It is therefore important to consider who should be on the committee, keeping in mind that too large a committee might impact the pace of the recruitment process and delay decision making.

4. The Role of the Chair

- Select committee members, taking into account their availability to take part in such a process as it does require commitment, time and effort from all members
- Arrange and agree an initial meeting to discuss ideas and generate new ways of attracting potential applicants. Call and chair meetings ensuring that relevant parties attend appropriate meetings
- Make clear to the Committee the task, deadline, budget and the kind of applicant that the University wishes to attract and hire
- The Search Committee work can be complimentary to marketing of the School/Department externally, so it is important that conversations take place between relevant Search Committee members and marketing teams to ensure that messages are in line with the marketing strategy that has been agreed. The work done here should support the School/Department positively.
- Consider the School/Department reputation and how this needs to be managed in the networking/marketing of the job.
- Manage the process, working with your HR Resourcing contact to ensure that this search committee work is complementary to the actual recruitment and selection processes
- Act as liaison with Human Resources staff working on the recruitment campaign
- Attend all scheduled meetings
- Agree who will review and comment on all materials, e.g. wording on applicant briefing pack and advertisements
- Help to identify and contact potential applicants for the role

5. Committee Member Duties

- Attend all scheduled meetings as appropriate and if needed
- Use specific skill as appropriate, e.g. to network and attract applicants or advise on advertising in media
• Review and comment on all materials, e.g. wording on applicant briefing pack and advertisements
• Help to identify and contact potential applicants for the vacancy
• Participate in the selection and interview process if required

Committee members may not need to attend all meetings as their specific skill set may not be needed at each meeting. This will be for the Chair to assess.

6. What will the Search Committee do?

The Search Committee will work together in order to discuss and agree a suitable strategy to attract applicants to the vacancy.

Examples of what can be done (but not limited to) are noted below:

• Review the job description that will be advertised and adapt the wording to make it more attractive to the external market when reading;

• Encourage employee referrals by asking our internal staff to use their own professional networks in order to advertise and market the role. Very often word of mouth can be powerful in attracting passive job seekers (i.e. those who are not actively looking for jobs) to apply. When a job sounds interesting and is marketed positively by people currently employed more applicants are likely to apply.

• Social media campaigns using online media such as Twitter or LinkedIn. The use of social media to find applicants has now become the norm in many professions and can be useful to show prospective applicants what it is like to work here and highlight the positives of the role and the working environment. Some current staff members have strong social media representation and these can also be used to try and attract applicants. The University has guidelines in place for the use of social media which can be found on the link here Social Media at Kent. In addition to these guidelines, attached to this document is a summary specifically about using social media for recruitment;

• It could be beneficial to create a micro-site specifically for your recruitment campaign which could include details about the School strategy, ongoing research, as well as positive staff and student testimonials;

• Offer prospective applicants the opportunity to have a discussion about the role before they decide to apply. In this instance the Chair or other suitable person could have a discussion about the job, working environment etc., to try and encourage applicants to apply. This could be a telephone call, Skype conversation, or even a visit to our campus for them to find out more;

• Employ the services of the specialist advertising agency to work with you on a creative advertising campaign and advertise in job specific specialised journals and or newspapers online or print (or both);
• Employ the services of a specialist “Search” agency (informally known as head-hunters) which is a specialised recruitment service used to source applicants generally for executive or other highly specialised positions.

Some of the examples mentioned above may require additional expenditure and will also involve input from various stakeholders such as HR Resourcing, Corporate Communications and the Design and Print Unit. You will be able to get guidance on which preferred supplier to use and that the advertising campaign is in line with current guidelines for external communications and branding. It is therefore important that timing is well planned and stakeholders are brought in at the outset of a campaign to ensure that they are aware of timings and expectations.

The Search Committee will do this work in addition to and alongside the University recruitment process. It is therefore important that the Chair of the Search Committee and HR Resourcing Adviser communicate about when to start the recruitment and selection process in order to allow sufficient time for the search actions to take effect.
RESOURCING

HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO HELP WITH YOUR
APPLICANT SEARCH:

1. Introduction

Employers are increasingly using social media to recruit staff. It has over recent years, become much more than just a channel for listing job vacancies and is now having considerable influence in changing how some employers approach recruitment. Social media is now used by both employers and job seekers.

This summary will give you some guidance about how best to approach social media if you want to use this as a part of your search campaign. It will cover some of the more popular social media recruitment tools which are LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

2. How social media can help/hinder in your search

- **Advertising jobs:** We always recommend that you use social media in addition to another advertising channel, e.g. University website so as to ensure that you are able to attract applicants from different backgrounds. Not everybody uses social media and some prefer traditional ways of looking for jobs.

- **Screening applicants:** It is common nowadays for employers to review the social media profiles of job applicants. This is risky and could result in bias at interview. We are even seeing claims of discrimination being made against employers if it is found that they were not interviewed as a result of their social media profile.

- **Social exclusion:** Most people these days use the internet, but not everybody uses social media. Therefore, limiting your search to social media only could potentially exclude good applicants who could successfully fill your vacancy.

- **Pro's and Con's:**
  - Social media can be quick and easy and mostly free to use, but you may have to deal with negative responses or feedback.
  - It can be time consuming as it needs to be managed
  - It can be a good way of supporting your applicant search, but needs to be managed in line with internal guidelines and Employer Branding messages.

3. Hints and tips on how to get started

- Firstly try to talk to people in your School/Department who actively use social media professionally. They may give you some practical advice and tips on what they have found useful.
- Unlock the potential of employee referrals and remember that the current employees and your colleagues are the most powerful advocates of the University, so connect with them too.
• Tell everyone who you come across about your social media pages – great updates with no followers won’t work!
• Ask applicants who apply for jobs to “like” or “follow” your pages and social media profiles
• Ask current staff to share pages with their networks
• “Follow”, “like” and “connect” with people and they will follow you back.

The information below is to help you get started:

3.1 LinkedIn:

LinkedIn is a great tool in recruiting and has been described as a massive database of professional peoples’ CV’s (Omni Resource Management Solutions, 2015). It provides a platform to approach people in a professional manner and is the most used social network in searching for jobs, as it is solely focused on building professional connections. LinkedIn users are both active and passive job seekers as well as companies and employers. LinkedIn groups are very popular and they provide excellent forums for you to talk to people and connect with people who can assist with building up your applicant network.

• How to get started on LinkedIn:

  Create your own user profile -
  o Click here to find a guide to help you set up your LinkedIn profile.
  o Important: Does your profile reflect who you are as a professional? Your profile might be an applicants’ first interaction with the University of Kent. The more you can show about who you are and what you do, the easier it is for applicants to engage with you and determine whether or not they want to work for University of Kent.

  Connect with the people you know -
  o Important: Unlike Facebook, LinkedIn is purely professional. You want to have your professional colleagues and contacts in your network. Start adding your professional contacts and sending requests access to professional groups of your interest.

  Be active -
  o Important: ‘Endorse’ your contacts, write recommendations and engage your network; comment and start conversations. Publish post about matters that interest you as a professional. Share links of your interests.

3.2 Twitter:

Twitter is a micro-blogging service that allows users to post and read each other’s updates known as “tweets”. Your updates are restricted and cannot be longer than 140 characters, but can include pictures and links. “Tweets” should also include hashtags (#) so that users looking for tweets on a particular topic are able to locate them. Twitter is the 2nd most popular social media used by active job seekers.
Once you have a user profile you could Tweet about jobs when vacancies arise and encourage your followers to re-Tweet your message. Twitter is about sharing of information and getting your information to as many people as you can.

- **How to get started on Twitter:**
  
  Create your own user profile and follow people you know/are interested of.
  - [Click here to find Twitter’s guide on how to create a profile.](#)
  
  Be active
  - Follow people
  - Tweet regularly
  - Comment on people’s tweets
  - Re-tweet (re-post) interesting tweets
  - Think what you want to say and use relevant hashtags.

### 3.3 Facebook:

Facebook is a good way to connect with people. Many individuals might want to keep their Facebook profiles private, and not use it for professional purposes. However, it is one of the most used online platforms today. In fact, when it comes to looking for jobs, 67% of active seekers use Facebook in their job search. ([Jobsite, Social Recruiting, 2016](#))

- **How to get started on Facebook:**
  
  Create your own user profile and connect with people you know.
  - Important: Facebook’s functions are much like LinkedIn’s, but it is broader mixture of personal and professional activities. Facebook consists of Personal Profiles, Public Profiles (i.e. celebrities) Pages, Groups and Events.
  - [Click here to find Facebook’s guide on how to create a Facebook account.](#)
  
  Be active; Post about job vacancies
  - Important: Job vacancies are positive news that people read and also share with their followers. Use this to reach a wider audience.
  
  Promote the University
  - Important: Tell your followers why the University is a good place to work. What’s the culture like, why do you enjoy working here?
  - [Click here to read more about using Facebook in recruitment.](#)

### 4. Follow and be followed

Social networks are all about being connected. Generally speaking the more you follow or connect with people, the more people will follow you or connect with you in return.

- Connect with your network and peers
- Find the biggest influencers in your field of profession – [and follow them.](#)
- Suggestions for who or what to follow often appear in a website sidebar/side menu. You can also search trending topics and users with hashtags (keywords), using #-sign in front of a word/combination of words.
5. University of Kent's Brand Guidelines

All our social media channels need to follow the same rigorous systems and procedures as our other communications.

Click here to find University of Kent's Brand Guidelines.

Social Media can be an excellent way to advertise and recruit. Use it as part of your search and try it out! There are many success stories out there. You can measure your success and learn from online activities, interactions and data available. Try new things as Social media could be a great way support to other methods of recruitment.