

# CODE OF PRACTICE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code of Practice is to assist and encourage planned, professional, fair, efficient and cost-effective recruitment across the University.
- 1.2 The Code sets out what happens at each stage of the recruitment and selection procedure and explains best practice during the process.

## **2 SCOPE**

- 2.1 This Code of Practice applies to all staff.

## **3 CORE PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 The University will endeavour to attract and recruit the best candidate for each job.
- 3.2 All applicants will be treated with respect and dignity and will be subject to a fair, equitable and transparent selection process
- 3.3 All recruitment and selection processes will comply with the University's legal obligations including Equal Opportunities and immigration legislation.
- 3.4 The University will ensure that anyone directly involved in recruitment and selection of staff for the University will have received the appropriate training and be familiar with current statutory requirements and best practice.
- 3.5 All personal information will be treated confidentially and only used for the purposes stated, in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

## **4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

4.1 Keele University is proud to be a multi-cultural community. As set out in the Core Principles, equality and diversity values are embedded into all aspects of the recruitment and selection process: discrimination at any stage will not be tolerated.

4.2 In addition, Keele University is committed to taking positive steps to employ people with disabilities and has been awarded the disability symbol:-



All applicants who declare that they have a disability, wish to partake in the scheme and who meet the essential criteria, are guaranteed an interview.

## **5 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS**

This process comprises a series of discrete, critical activities which, from beginning to end, take several weeks to complete. To maximise the opportunities afforded by the process, careful planning of each stage is essential. Recruiters should have:-

- A job description which covers all aspects of the job
- A person specification which specifies the qualifications, experience, skills and competencies necessary to do the job.
- An advertisement which attracts the best pool of applicants.
- A selection process which is fair and equitable and enables the selection of the best person for the job.

*All forms and pro forma mentioned in this Code are available from the Human Resources web pages.*

The key stages of the recruitment and selection process are as follows:-

### **5.1 Vacancy**

Every vacancy must be supported by a job description and person specification and all salaried jobs must be graded by job evaluation (contact your Human Resources Link Advisor regarding job evaluation). The job description should state the overall purpose of the job and list the key responsibilities. The person specification describes the minimum (essential) qualifications, experience, skills and attributes that someone would require to be able to do the job. The 'desirable' criteria describe the additional qualities and achievements which, although useful to someone in the job are not essential. The University job descriptions and person specification template should be used and is available from the Human Resources web pages.

Discriminatory references must be avoided in all documentation and Human Resources will check text before publishing.

### **5.2 Advertisement**

Once full permission to advertise the post has been obtained (PAF form) the post may be advertised. To meet our Equal Opportunities requirements, advertisements should be published as widely as is possible and practical. Exceptionally, if this is not appropriate, Human Resources will advise.

The advertisement should be designed to attract the best pool of applicants. It should be succinct and focused and should avoid discriminatory references. To bring the vacancy to the attention of the most suitable applicants it should be advertised in the most appropriate media.

Human Resources will check the advertisement text and are able to advise on where to advertise if required.

From time to time the University will use an executive search agency for very senior or specialist roles.

### **5.3 Applications**

To keep the selection process fair, all applicants are asked to provide the same information in the same format by completing an application form. This is also very helpful at the long and short listing stages, providing structure to the process.

Whilst CVs and other additional information may be provided; applications will not be accepted without a completed application form to ensure equality in application.

Job applicants are also asked to complete an Equal Opportunities form which is retained by Human Resources for monitoring purposes.

### **5.4 Appointment Panels**

In addition to the requirement for all panel members to have attended the recruitment and selection training, the University has specific structures for panels for various grades and types of job. This is not only to ensure fairness but also to make sure that the panel has the expertise necessary to make the recruitment decision.

Human Resources will advise on panel membership.

### **5.5 Role of the Chair of the Appointment Panel**

The Chair of the panel has the overall responsibility for the entire selection process and he/she must ensure that the selection activities are fair and transparent. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that records of discussions and decisions are kept through all stages of selection. He/she should ensure that Keele People is updated accordingly at each stage of the recruitment process.

### **5.6 Long and Shortlisting**

If a large number of applications are expected for a post it may be necessary to both long and shortlist applications. Both processes must be carried out by the appointment panel who should meet to consider and discuss the applications. If, unusually, a panel member is unable to attend the meeting then his/her views should be sought via correspondence and fed, via the Chair, into the discussions at the meeting.

The applications should be filtered firstly by comparison to the essential criteria listed on the Person Specification. If too many applicants meet the essential criteria then those applications should then be compared to the desirable criteria.

The Chair of the panel should ensure that a written record of the long and shortlisting process is kept.

Occasionally, appointment panels may seek advice, external to the panel, in the form of an expert or advisory group. In such cases, all advisory group members must have been on the recruitment and selection training. The group may only consider the applications against the Person Specification criteria; a written record of the discussions must be kept and passed to the Chair of the appointment panel.

Throughout the long and shortlisting processes, decisions must only be based on the ability of the applicants to do the job as detailed in the Person Specification.

### **5.7 Assessment Activities**

The three most common assessment activities used by the University are interviews, presentations and tests.

Feedback from teaching presentations should be structured and focussed. Candidates must be given a clear brief against which to prepare and present. The Chair of the panel should select relevant individuals who will attend the presentation and answer specific questions, based on the candidates' brief and the Person Specification. Feedback should then be given to the Chair of the appointment panel and recorded in writing.

Candidates may also be asked to make a presentation to the appointment panel at or before the interview. The ability to present must be relevant to the job and listed as a skill on the Person Specification. The candidates should be given a clear brief on the subject of the presentation (which should be relevant to the job) and sufficient time to prepare. Ensure that the necessary audio/visual equipment is available on the day.

## **5.8 Interviews**

Interviews are the most common method of selection. Interviews need careful planning and preparation to maximise the use of the panel members' expertise and the candidates' time with the panel. The Chair of the panel should allocate areas of questioning and determine the running order of the interview. The Chair should be responsible for opening, controlling and closing each interview.

## **5.9 Making an Offer**

The Chair or his/her nominee will usually contact the successful candidate to offer him/her the job. Care must be taken when making a verbal offer as, once accepted, it is legally binding. It is especially important to remember to state that the offer is subject to certain conditions such as suitable references and evidence of eligibility to work in the UK.

A verbal offer should clearly state that it is subject to written contractual details from Human Resources.

The job offer will also include a starting salary; which should be the first point on the pay scale for the job grade. Any wish to vary this must be discussed and agreed with the Human Resources Link Manager. Management Guidance on Starting Salaries is available from the Human Resources Recruitment web page.

## **5.10 References**

The process for requesting and using references for academic and support jobs differ. For support roles references should only be requested for the successful candidate and used to validate the final decision. For academic jobs, references are often requested for all the shortlisted applicants, but again, they should only be used to validate decision-making.

It should always be borne in mind that any personal opinion made by a referee may be prejudiced, biased or discriminatory. It therefore follows that any decision based or part-based on such an opinion is open to challenge.

References are provided in confidence and should only be circulated to the appointment panel.

## **5.11 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The University has a legal obligation to monitor and evaluate equality issues during the process and, in addition will monitor and evaluate the process in line with the core principles stated earlier in this document.