



## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION CODE OF PRACTICE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to promote a structured, professional, and efficient recruitment process across the University, ensuring fairness, transparency, and cost-effectiveness. This document outlines the procedures involved at each stage of recruitment and provides guidance on best practices.

The scope of this Code applies to all employees, covering both substantive and fixed-term recruitment. It is recommended that the good practice principles within this Code also be followed for casual recruitment where appropriate, to maintain consistency and fairness.

This policy is underpinned by the core principles of attracting the best candidates while upholding equal opportunities for all applicants. The University is committed to a recruitment process that is respectful, inclusive, and compliant with all legal obligations, including those related to equal opportunities and immigration laws. Staff involved in recruitment are required to follow this Code and to ensure confidentiality and compliance with the Data Protection Act (2018).

The University values equity and diversity, and discrimination based on any protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As a Disability Confident Employer, we guarantee an interview for applicants with disabilities who meet the essential criteria, and reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure accessibility and support during the recruitment process.

#### 1.1 Purpose

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

#### 1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1** This Code of Practice applies to all staff. It is applicable to all substantive and fixed term recruitment. However, many of the good practice recommendations should also be applied to casual requirement to ensure consistency and fairness

### 2. Core Principles

- 2.1.1** The University will endeavour to attract and recruit the best candidate for each job.
- 2.1.2** All applicants will be treated with respect and dignity and will be subject to a fair, equitable and transparent selection process.

- 2.1.3** All recruitment and selection processes will comply with the University's legal obligations including Equal Opportunities and immigration legislation.
- 2.1.4** The University will ensure that anyone directly involved in recruitment and selection of staff for the University will have received the appropriate training (including unconscious bias training) and be familiar with current statutory requirements and best practice.
- 2.1.5** All staff members involved in recruitment and selection activities must comply with this Code of Practice.
- 2.1.6** All personal information will be treated confidentially and only used for the purposes stated in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and as outlined within the University's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) statement.

## **2.2 Equity and Diversity**

- 2.2.1** Keele University is proud to be a multi-cultural community. Equity and diversity values are embedded into all aspects of the recruitment and selection process; discrimination at any stage will not be tolerated.
- 2.2.2** In addition, Keele University is committed to taking positive steps to employ people with disabilities and has been awarded the disability confident employer logo:



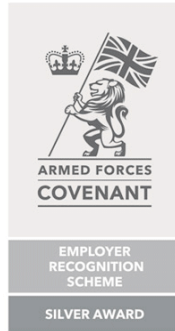
All applicants who declare that they have a disability, wish to partake in the scheme and who meet the essential criteria, are guaranteed an interview. Disabled applicants will be asked what reasonable adjustments they may require, and it is the recruiting managers responsibility to ensure these are accommodated to ensure equal access to the recruitment process and provide the necessary support to demonstrate their skills and qualifications. Recruiting managers should contact a member of the HR Resourcing and Talent Management Team should they have queries regarding reasonable adjustments.

The University is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all and does not discriminate against any applicant on the grounds of any of the following protected characteristics at any stage of the recruitment process.

- Age,
- Disability,
- Gender reassignment,
- Marriage and civil partnership,
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

- Sexual orientation

**2.2.3** The University has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant and is committed to taking positive steps to employ people from the armed forces community. The University has been awarded with the Silver Employer Defence Recognition Scheme award.



By holding this award, the University is committed to supporting applications from all members of the armed forces community including veterans, cadets, reserves and spouses, partners or family members. The Silver award is granted to employers who actively demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that service personnel and the armed forces community are not disadvantaged during the recruitment and selection process and are appropriately supported during employment. This includes supporting our employees such as through time off for public duties and flexible working policies which can be found on the policy zone. The University recognises the value and contribution that the armed forces community can bring to the University and recruitment panels should appropriately consider and recognise military skills and qualifications when recruiting and when relevant.

### 3. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

**3.1** 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:

- 3.1.1** A job description which covers key responsibilities for the role.
- 3.1.2** A person specification which specifies the qualifications, experience, skills and competencies required to do the job.
- 3.1.3** An advertisement which attracts the best pool of applicants.
- 3.1.4** 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 HR web pages.*

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

### **3.2 Vacancy**

- 3.2.1** Every vacancy must be accompanied by a job description and person specification and all roles must be reviewed by a member of the HR Resourcing and Talent Management Team and where applicable, graded by job evaluation. The job description should state the overall purpose of the job and detail the key responsibilities. The person specification describes the minimum (essential) qualifications, experience, skills and attributes required for the position. The 'desirable' criteria highlight additional qualities and achievements which, although beneficial, are not essential.
- 3.2.2** Generic job descriptions are available for the majority of job families and should be used by managers when recruiting to new roles. A library of generic job descriptions is available on the HR intranet web pages. Where the nature of the role means that a generic job description cannot be used, the recruiting manager is required to write the job description and person specification using the University's standard template, which is available on the HR web pages.
- 3.2.3** Discriminatory references, both direct and indirect, must be avoided in all recruitment-related documentation. This includes the use of gendered language and any terms that may imply bias or exclusion. To ensure fairness and inclusivity, recruiters should focus on neutral and objective language. Further guidance on avoiding discriminatory language is provided in the mandatory Recruitment and Selection training module.

### **3.3 Advertisement**

- 3.3.1** Once the electronic post approval form (EPAF) to advertise a post has been fully approved, the post may be advertised. The approved EPAF will stipulate whether the post can be advertised internally or externally. To meet our Equal Opportunities requirements and where approval allows, advertisements should be published as widely as is possible and practical. If this is not appropriate, the Resourcing and Talent Management Team will advise.
- 3.3.2** The advertisement should be designed to attract the best pool of applicants. It should be succinct and focused and should avoid discriminatory and/or biased references. To bring the vacancy to the attention of the most suitable applicants it should be advertised in the most relevant media.
- 3.3.3** A member of the Resourcing and Talent Management team will review the advertisement text and are able to advise on where to advertise if required.
- 3.3.4** From time to time the University will use an executive search agency for very senior or specialist roles. Further information can be obtained from the Resourcing and Talent Management team.

### **3.4 Applications**

- 3.4.1** 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.
- 3.4.2** The application form is the primary document in the recruitment process. While applicants may include a curriculum vitae and other supplementary materials, these will only be considered if submitted alongside a fully completed application form.
- 3.4.3** Job applicants are also asked to complete information relating to Equal Opportunities which is retained by HR for monitoring purposes. This information is not shared with recruiting managers.

### **3.5 Appointment Panels**

- 3.5.1** In addition to the requirement for all panel members to have completed 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.
- 3.5.2** Depending on the nature/grade of the post, the Chair may enlist the support of an external assessor to be part of the appointment panel. External Assessors partaking in the selection process will receive a pack outlining the University's processes and obligations in terms of equality and diversity.
- 3.5.3** HR are able to advise on panel membership and further information is available in the recruitment panel guidance document available on the HR intranet web page.

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

- 3.6.1** The Chair of the panel has overall responsibility for the entire selection process and they 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. The notes may be subject to disclosure, so the Chair must ensure they are detailed enough to clearly justify the decisions made. They should ensure that the master copy of all the notes/records are uploaded to the recruitment file shared by the HR Operations team, along with the completed Applicant Details Form (ADF) and Contract Request Form (CRF).

### **3.7 Long and Shortlisting**

- 3.7.1** 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, exceptionally, a panel member is unable to attend the meeting then their views should be sought via correspondence and fed, via the Chair, into the discussions at the meeting.
- 3.7.2** 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 be compared to the desirable criteria.

- 3.7.3** The Chair of the panel should ensure that a written record of the long and shortlisting process is kept and that the ADF (a copy of which will be sent to the Chair by the HR Operations team) is completed accurately.
- 3.7.4** 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.
- 3.7.5** The University will be trialling anonymous shortlisting for professional services posts. This initiative is designed to enhance the fairness and transparency of the selection process by removing names and email addresses from applications before the shortlisting stage and encouraging candidates not to include identifiable information within their supporting statements. By focusing solely on candidates' ability to meet the person specification, the University aims to reduce unconscious bias and promote a more equitable recruitment process. Recruiting managers of applicable posts will receive guidance on the anonymous shortlisting process from the HR Operations Team.

### **3.8 Assessment Activities**

- 3.8.1** The three most common assessment activities used by the University are interviews, presentations and ability/aptitude testing. Advice and assistance on the latter can be sought from the Resourcing and Talent Management Team, who will advise on whether the proposed assessments are fair, relevant and free from bias.
- 3.8.2** Feedback from teaching/ stakeholder 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.
- 3.8.3** Candidates may also be required to teach, deliver a presentation, or complete a test as part of the assessment process. These tasks should be relevant to the role and clearly outlined in the person specification as essential skills. Candidates must be provided with a clear brief on the presentation topic, which should relate to the job, and given adequate time to prepare. The Chair of the panel is responsible for ensuring that any required audio/visual equipment is available on the day, if applicable

### **3.9 Interviews**

- 3.9.1** 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. Questions should be based on the skills and experience outlined in the person specification and be relevant to the role.

**3.9.2** The Chair is responsible for ensuring that comprehensive written records of the interviews are maintained, along with the completion of the Applicant Details Form (ADF) and Contract Request Form (CRF).

**3.9.3** The University is trialling the pre-sharing of questions with candidates ahead of interview for professional services posts. This initiative is designed to improve the overall interview experience and ensure a fair, transparent, and inclusive selection process. Recruiting managers of applicable posts will be provided with guidance regarding the process from the Resourcing and Talent Management Team. A feedback mechanism will be in place to gather insights on the success of the trial.

### **3.10 Making an Offer**

**3.10.1** The Chair or their nominee will usually contact the successful candidate to make a conditional job offer. Care must be taken when making a verbal offer as, once accepted, it is legally binding. It is essential to state that the offer is subject to certain conditions such as suitable references and evidence of eligibility to work in the UK.

**3.10.2** A verbal offer should clearly state that it is subject to written contractual details from HR.

**3.10.3** The job offer will include a starting salary, typically set at the first point on the pay scale for the job grade. Any request to vary from this must be discussed and approved by the HR Resourcing and Talent Management team **before** an offer is made. Guidance on Starting Salaries is available from the HR Recruitment intranet page.

### **3.11 References**

**3.11.1** As part of the recruitment process, 2 references (3 for academic staff) will be requested for successful candidates to gain insights into their previous employment, skills, and overall suitability for the position and to validate the final decision.

**3.11.2** References should be sought from the applicants' current line manager (or most recent line manager if currently unemployed), and their next most recent employer (where applicable). For graduates or candidates with limited work experience, references may be provided by individuals who can speak to their achievements and skills in other areas such as academia, volunteering or extracurricular activities.

**3.11.3** With the candidates' consent, the University may request additional references if it is felt these are necessary to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their suitability for the role.

**3.11.4** 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.

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

### **3.12 Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 3.12.1** Records are kept of each entire recruitment and selection process; some databased and some documented. The University has a legal obligation to monitor and evaluate equity issues during the process and, in addition will monitor and evaluate the process in line with the core principles stated earlier in this document.

### **3.13 Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **3.14.1 Chair of the Appointment Panel**

The Chair oversees the entire selection process, ensuring it is fair, transparent, and compliant with the University's policies and legal requirements. They ensure records of discussions, decisions, and interview notes are maintained, and that forms such as the Applicant Details Form (ADF) and Contract Request Form (CRF) are completed. They are responsible for the smooth operation of the recruitment process, managing interviews, and ensuring the panel's decisions are properly documented and justified.

#### **3.14.2 Human Resources**

The Resourcing and Talent Management Team is involved in reviewing job descriptions, person specifications, and advertisement text to ensure compliance with University policies and avoid discriminatory language. They also provide guidance on where to advertise, assist with the use of executive search agencies for senior roles, and offer advice on fair and relevant assessment activities. They ensure that all recruitment materials and processes align with the University's standards, offering expertise in recruitment strategy and compliance.

The Operations Team provides administrative support throughout the recruitment process, including advice on the composition of the appointment panel, arranging advertisements, inviting candidates to interviews and issuing formal job offers. They are also responsible for maintaining recruitment records and ensuring GDPR compliance. HR plays a vital role in ensuring recruitment activities are aligned with the University's policies.

#### **3.14.3 Panel Members**

Panel members must complete recruitment and selection training, participate in long and shortlisting of applicants, and assess candidates based on the person specification. They are required to follow equity and diversity guidelines and keep written records of their decisions. They contribute to candidate evaluation, ensuring a fair and thorough selection process while upholding the University's commitment to equal opportunities.

## **4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Starting salary guidance  
Recruitment panels guidance  
Limiting unconscious bias guidance



EDI guidance note for Chairs of recruitment and selection panels  
 Avoiding discriminatory language in recruitment materials  
 Guidance on the use and provision of references and testimonials

## 5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

As a general principle, the Code of Practice will be reviewed by the HR Department, in consultation with recognised Trade Unions, after three years or where operational and/or legislative requirements change. Any revisions will be approved in accordance with UEC and Council procedures, where applicable.

## 6. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

<b>Document Name</b>	Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice
<b>Owner</b>	Chief People Officer, Human Resources
<b>Version Number</b>	1.1
<b>Equality Analysis Form Submission Date</b>	August 2025
<b>Approval Date</b>	March 2025
<b>Approved By</b>	Chief People Officer
<b>Date of Commencement</b>	4 January 2018
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	March 2025
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	March 2028
<b>Related University Policy Documents</b>	Starting salary guidance Recruitment panels guidance Limiting unconscious bias guidance EDI guidance note for Chairs of recruitment and selection panels Avoiding discriminatory language in recruitment materials Guidance on the use and provision of references and testimonials
<i>For Office Use – Keywords</i>	Recruitment, selection, interviews