

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF

It is intended that this document will assist in the appointment of the best person to perform the role as identified, eliminate discrimination and provide equal opportunity in recruitment.

In order for each section to be read as a 'stand alone' document (six in total), inevitably there is an element of repetition in the content of the document as a whole.

### SECTION 1 – INITIAL PROCESS – OBTAINING APPROVAL TO RECRUIT

- No recruitment of staff, either for temporary or permanent employment, should be undertaken without approval.
- Approval must be confirmed by Personnel Services (PS) before any offer of work is given.
- Faculty/Service/Units wishing to recruit or replace staff (e.g. following resignation) must complete the **Recruitment - Fill A Vacancy** request form, available on the Personnel Services intranet site – Downloads folder.
- Following adoption of the Child Protection Policy at a Board of Governors meeting held on the 13 December 2006 certain positions require a CRB - Criminal Records Bureau (Enhanced Disclosure) to be undertaken for the role-holder. Advice can be obtained from Personnel Services as to the type of position where this is applicable.

Where a CRB enhanced disclosure is required, the fee payable (currently £55.00 at September 2012) will be charged to the Faculty/Service/Unit budget.

- The completed request form should be submitted via the Personnel Services Manager for consideration by the University's Staffing Committee.
- All sections of the form must be completed and submitted with the required supporting documentation; otherwise the request will not be put forward for consideration. i.e. Justification for the need to recruit/replace, Job/Person specification, Faculty/Service/Units organisational structure and general overview.

Faculty/Service/Units should use the standard template for completing the Job/Person specification, available as an attachment to the Fill a Vacancy request form.

- The Personnel Services Manager will collate all fully completed requests and put them forward for consideration on a regular basis.
- The Personnel Services Manager will attend the University's Staffing Committee Meetings to note the outcome of the decisions made with regard to the requests submitted for consideration.
- The Personnel Services Manager will take responsibility for advising Deans/Heads of the outcome of the considerations.
- If approval is granted to recruit/replace, a Personnel Services (PS) representative will be allocated to assist the Faculty/Service/Unit with their recruitment campaign.
- The Personnel Services representative will liaise with the Faculty/Service/Unit to agree the specific schedule for the recruitment campaign, which will cover –

The contents of the application pack – with the Personnel Services representative giving guidance where necessary to ensure appropriate use of terminology in the job/person specification, advertising text and general background information of the School/Service structure.

At this stage it will also be necessary to agree the timetable of dates for advertising and media publication coverage, closing date for applications, panel members for the shortlisting/selection process, suitable dates for interview, interview/assessment venues and assessment methods to be adopted.

- It is important to allow at least one week from the closing date for the shortlisting of applications to take place, followed by a further two weeks for invite letters to go out to selected applicants. This timescale should be applied even if the vacancy is restricted to internal staff only.

Note - where possible proposed dates for interview should be indicated in the advertisement.

## **SECTION 2 – GUIDANCE - PREPARING THE JOB/PERSON SPECIFICATION AND ADVERTISING TEXT**

- Base your decisions on what skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities (behaviours) the role -holder needs to have to do the job. The Job Description should outline the duties required of the role-holder. The Person Specification gives the skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities required to carry out the duties.
- Avoid references to age. For example, avoid asking for “so many years” experience. This may rule out younger people who have the skills required but have not had the opportunity to demonstrate them over an extended period.

An applicant could challenge a “time” requirement and you may have to justify it!

- Educational and vocational qualifications have changed and developed over the years. You need to ensure that the qualifications specified do not disadvantage people of different ages.

Questions you need to address:

Are the qualifications really necessary to do the job?

Are they still current?

Can the skill level required be specified in other ways?

If you are going to be specific about qualifications, you need to be sure that you can justify their need in objective terms.

You should also make it clear where equivalent or similar level alternative qualifications will be considered.

- Be clear about what skills, knowledge and experience you actually need for the role and what is merely desirable or reflects your personal preferences.
- Write your advertising text using information contained in the job and person specification. Avoid using language that might imply you would prefer someone of a certain age, such as “mature”, “young”, “energetic”, “dynamic”.

- Base your requirements on ability and not on **x** number of years experience.

For example, instead of stating “you must have **x** number of years in a specific role”, use terminology such as:

“You need to have experience of managing a team of people, which has involved performance management, coaching.”

“You should have experience of controlling costs and managed a budget of £**x** pounds.”

“You need to have managed the delivery of excellent customer service.”

### SECTION 3 – ADVERTISING PROCESS

- As from 01 April 2009 all external vacancies must be advertised in Job Centre Plus for a minimum period of two weeks.
- The University pays an annual subscription to advertise University of Bolton job vacancies on the jobs.ac.uk website
- All vacancies are circulated on an internal bulletin and placed on the University's intranet site.
- Advertising should be used to encourage a diverse range of applicants. It is important not to focus on publications that represent a niche market or age boundary. Selecting the publication in which to advertise should be focused on the interest of the audience, e.g. choosing a specialist publication as opposed to Times Higher Education Supplement for a science-related or construction/civil engineering vacancy.
- Legislation based on protected characteristics exists to protect people against discrimination.
- From the 1 October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their age.
- The age legislation will affect the way recruitment, including advertising, is undertaken.

Date of Birth and reference to age-related information, e.g. dates attending school/college, when qualifications were obtained, have been removed from the University's application forms.

- The Personnel Services representative allocated to a recruitment campaign has the responsibility for liaising with the Faculty/Service/Unit representative to discuss and agree the content, timescale and cost with regard to the external advertising of a vacancy.
- Advertising costs, whether using local or national press coverage, are expensive.

- The Personnel Services representative will liaise with the Personnel Services Manager to determine whether the cost of the advertisement is acceptable.

Where the cost appears exorbitant, efforts will be made to reduce the cost by adjusted the overall size of the advertisement without detracting from the content.

- The general University recruitment budget can only cover the cost of an advertisement in one publication.
- Faculty/Service/Units wishing to use multiple media coverage will need to fund the additional costs incurred.
- Where it is necessary to re-advertise a vacancy due to an unsuccessful recruitment campaign, the associated costs will need to be met by the Faculty/Service/Unit.
- It is worth emphasising that time and effort spent at the initial preparation stage of any recruitment process is more likely to result in a cost effective and successful outcome without the need to repeat the exercise.

## SECTION 4 – FACULTY/SERVICE/UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

- The job and person specification are the key documents in the selection process and they should describe the profile of the role and the qualities required to do the role effectively.
- You need to be sure that when you specify a requirement you are satisfied that it really is needed to do the job. The inclusion of ‘unnecessary’ criteria can go against the principles of equal opportunity.
- Essential criteria (Priority 1) are those which applicants **must have** to carry out the responsibilities of the role.
- Desirable criteria (Priority 2 and 3) are extra requirements, which **may be** considered should an insufficient number of applicants be short-listed against Priority 1 criteria, or where candidates cannot be separated on the basis of Priority 1 criteria.

Care should be taken when specifying Priority 2 and 3 criteria. They should still be linked to the role and responsibilities, not personal preferences.

- Careful consideration of the requirements of the role will allow for a consistent method of approach to identify and measure people against clearly-defined criteria and ensure a discrimination free process.
- Short-listing of application forms should be undertaken independently by a minimum of two people from the Faculty/Service/Unit. The short-listing panel and date for the short-listing exercise will have been agreed with the Personnel Services representative at the initial stage of the recruitment process.
- The Chair of the selection panel has the responsibility for ensuring that the scoring of application forms is undertaken strictly against the detail provided by applicants on the basis of the job and person specification criteria.
- The assessment/score forms provided to Faculty/Service/Unit representatives with the application forms at the shortlisting stage must be completed in full.

A thorough breakdown of the short-listing scoring is required for the Chair of the selection panel to provide feedback to an applicant wishing to establish

why their application did not meet the criteria sufficiently to proceed to the selection stage.

- Once the short-listing exercise has been completed, the Faculty/Service/Unit short-listing panel will meet with the Personnel Services representative to compare their scoring and agree which applicants should be invited for interview.
- Should there be any inconsistency with the independent scores, the panel, including the Personnel Services representative, will re-visit the application forms in question to enable a consensus to be reached on the applicants to be invited to the next stage of the selection process.
- The Personnel Services representative will not allow invitations to be sent out to applicants unless full information is available as to any assessments, role play, presentation - topic, timing etc. that will be required to be undertaken as part of the selection process.

It is preferable that methods of assessment are considered and advised in the documentation submitted at the initial process stage when the request to fill/replace the vacancy is prepared.

If this has not been possible, the Chair of the selection panel must be in a position to provide details of what and how an assessment exercise will form part of the selection process at the point when the shortlisting panel meets with the Personnel Services representative.

- It is the responsibility of the Faculty/Service/Units to arrange the interview room, assessment room, supervision of assessments and waiting area for candidates. Unfortunately Personnel Services does not have sufficient resource capacity to undertake these tasks on behalf of the Faculty/Service/Unit.
- The cost of providing refreshments from the general Recruitment budget has now become prohibitive. As such Faculty/Service/Units must undertake both the ordering and cost of providing any refreshments and/or lunch for their candidates.
- The general Recruitment budget will be used for interview expenses submitted by candidates, although this will be restricted to covering travel expenses within the UK only, plus any overnight hotel accommodation that may be necessary.
- Candidates travelling from outside of the UK will be expected to pay for their own travel costs where this is in excess of an agreed allowance of £200 from the general Recruitment budget, which has been based on equivalent average UK travel and hotel costs.

- The Faculty/Service/Units may choose to fund some or all of the additional costs of candidates where interview expenses exceed the maximum £200 allowance.
- Interview expenses will be processed by the Personnel Services representative, where possible by means of reimbursement of expenses on the day of the interview through petty cash if the amount involved is small, or with reimbursement being arranged by cheque payment via Finance to candidates as soon as possible after the day of the interview.
- Faculty/Service/Unit representatives involved in the recruitment campaign have the responsibility for ensuring that documentation and recorded score sheets used at both the short-listing and selection stage are available to the Personnel Services representative.

In all instances decisions made must be recorded and retained for a period of twelve months within the job file held in Personnel Services.

- All representatives involved in the recruitment and selection process must sign the declaration form to indicate that their involvement does not present a conflict of interest.

## **SECTION 5 – PERSONNEL SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Approval of a vacancy will be advised to the Dean/Head of Service as soon as possible and a Personnel Services representative nominated to assist the Faculty/Service/Unit with the recruitment campaign. The Personnel Services representative will have responsibility for agreeing the contents of the application pack, offering guidance where necessary to ensure appropriate use of terminology in the job/person specification, advertising text and general organisational background information.
- The Personnel Services representative will agree with the Chair of the selection panel the media coverage for the specific vacancy. Where this involves external advertising the Personnel Services representative will ensure that the Chair of the panel is kept fully informed of dates for publication, closing dates and advertising costs to be funded by the Faculty/Service/Unit if multiple media coverage is requested.
- The Personnel Services representative will maintain a record of costs - advertising and interview expenses - associated with the recruitment campaign, using the spreadsheets set up within Personnel Services at the start of each financial year.
- The Personnel Services representative will also have responsibility for ensuring the Recruitment listing is kept up-to-date as the recruitment campaign for which they are the nominated representative progresses so that other Personnel Services team members have the full picture of the recruitment activity being undertaken.
- The Personnel Services representative will ensure that the content of the application pack is presented in a standard template format and available to be sent out by the time the advertisement first appears, whether being advertised for internal only or for both internal/external applications.
- The Personnel Administrators will ensure that they respond to requests for application packs generally within 24 hours and no later than 48 hours.
- The Personnel Administrators will ensure that sufficient copies of returned application forms are available to the designated short-listing panel representatives within 48 hours of the closing date for receipt of applications.
- The Personnel Services representative will be responsible for checking if any applicants have declared a disability on the Personal Information Section of their application form.

In circumstances where a disability has been declared, the Personnel Services representative will need to score the application form independently to establish if the applicant fulfils the essential (Priority 1) criteria.

If, from the evidence provided, it appears that the applicant does fulfill the Priority 1 criteria, the Personnel Services representative should wait until the short-listing meeting is held to collate the panel scores to find out if the person has been short-listed by the panel representatives.

If the applicant has been short-listed, the Personnel Services representative should advise the panel that adjustments may be needed to the arrangements in order for the candidate to attend the interview. For example, there may be a need to organise the venue on a ground floor, allow longer time to complete the assessment exercise.

If the applicant with the declared disability has not been short-listed, the Personnel Services representative needs to inform the panel members that the applicant appears to fulfill the essential requirements and, therefore, must be invited to interview.

The PS representative will contact the candidate to establish if, and what, particular arrangements need to be put in place in order for them to be able to attend the interview/selection process.

- The Personnel Services representative will also check the Personal Information Section of the application forms of short-listed candidates to establish if they have declared a criminal conviction. If so, the Personnel Services representative will send out a form to the candidate requesting that they provide additional information about the conviction and requiring the form to be returned under confidential cover to Personnel Services prior to their interview.
- The Personnel Services representative will withhold the information provided, unless the candidate is successful and it is deemed necessary (due to the nature of the role) to inform the Chair of the background to the conviction. At that stage a decision will be made as to whether an offer of appointment should still be made.
- The Personnel Services representative will be responsible for liaising with the Faculty/Service/Unit during each stage of the recruitment process.

It is particularly important to ensure that the Chair of the panel is notified when candidates withdraw from the interview at short notice, leaving the arrangements to be revised and panel members informed, or reserves to be invited if appropriate.

- The Personnel Services representative has the responsibility for ensuring all documentation and decisions recorded throughout the recruitment campaign are handed over from the Faculty/Service/Unit representatives, to be placed in

the job file within Personnel Services and retained for a period of twelve months.

## **SECTION 6 – GUIDANCE – INTERVIEW/SELECTION PROCESS**

- Once agreement has been reached on which applicants are to be invited to interview, the panel representatives, including the Personnel Services representative, should agree the format and programme for the day prior to invite letters being sent out.
- If special arrangements are required in order for an applicant with a declared disability to attend the selection process, the Personnel Services representative will undertake to sort out the arrangements. External provision may be needed to support the candidate, which could delay the planned interview date depending on their availability.
- At interview it will be the responsibility of the Personnel Services representative to ensure that the selection process is conducted in a fair and ethical manner.
- The Personnel Services representative will take an active part in the selection/interview process, not merely an observer of the process, and will be in a position to answer any questions posed by candidates that are HR-related, e.g. contractual matters.
- Questions should be compiled and agreed that specifically address the criteria and will give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the precise skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities (behaviours) that they have which are relevant to the job requirements.

Age-related or discriminatory questions need to be avoided – e.g. “How would you feel about managing older/younger people?”

- Focus on the candidate’s ability to do the job, not how many years experience they have.

- Assessments should be designed to predict performance in the role.
- If candidates are required to undertake a presentation, the audience should have been briefed as to the specific criteria that is being assessed by the presentation and be provided with an assessment/score sheet to complete.

To enable consistency and fairness of the process it is necessary for the selected audience to be able to attend the presentations of **all** candidates.

- Where more than one candidate demonstrates the required skills and knowledge, the one who offers the best skills mix should be appointed.

- It is essential that the selection panel base their scores strictly against the criteria outlined in order to determine the person to be offered the appointment.

Decisions need to be checked for bias and to ensure that the outcome from scoring is based on merit against the criteria set.

- Should the person to be appointed have a declared disability, the Chair of the panel, in conjunction with Personnel Services, will need to undertake an assessment of the reasonable adjustments that may be required/possible for the offer of appointment to be viable.

Access to Work, linked to the local JobCentrePlus, provides a useful source of advice and assistance and can arrange to undertake an assessment of what reasonable adjustments or equipment aids could be feasible and/or available.

- All documentary evidence, interview notes, score sheets/assessment, used by individual members of the selection panel must be handed to the Personnel Services representative to be retained in the job file for a period of twelve months.
- Although the Chair of the selection panel has the responsibility for informing candidates of the outcome of their interview and providing feedback if requested, the selection panel must agree as a whole on the feedback to be given.
- Avoid reference to lack of experience in feedback. Focus on positive feedback, informing a candidate of specifics - what they needed to do to make the difference.
- The Chair of the selection panel will determine, in conjunction with the Personnel Services representative, the commencing salary for the role.

- The Personnel Services representative will have the responsibility for arranging for the initial offer letter to be sent out when acceptance of the appointment has been confirmed.

Subsequent contractual documentation and a start date will be finalised by Personnel Services once the required stipulations contained within the offer letter have been met, i.e. medical clearance, receipt of satisfactory references, verification of qualification award certificates if applicable, eligibility to take up employment in the UK, CRB check if applicable.

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