



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

## Recruitment & Selection Policy

<b>Policy Summary:</b>	The University's policy statement regarding the recruitment and selection of staff.
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Human Resources
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## **Introduction**

### **Principles**

In order to achieve its strategic plan objectives, the University must recruit and retain high quality staff. The recruitment and selection of staff represents a significant investment by the University and our policies and procedures are designed to ensure the highest standards of transparency, fairness and equality of opportunity.

The way in which the recruitment and selection process is managed impacts on the University's reputation with prospective employees and current members of staff. It is essential therefore, that all members of staff involved in the recruitment process provide a high quality service maintaining a professional approach at all times. This includes treating all job applicants both internal and external in a fair and courteous manner.

The University welcomes diversity amongst staff and applicants and is committed to ensuring that all activities associated with the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff are governed by the principles of equality of opportunity. No applicants will be treated any less favourably than others because of factors such as disability, race/ethnic origin, sex/gender, age, religion, marital/family status, dependency, sexual orientation, political opinion, and economic or social status.

The University monitors the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy through the collection and monitoring of relevant data. Human Resources seeks regular feedback on the effectiveness of its recruitment and selection processes and uses this feedback in conjunction with managers to inform future resourcing decisions and learning and development plans.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this policy is to provide managers and staff with a framework that enables all aspects of the recruitment and selection process to be managed fairly and consistently ensuring that

- (a) all recruitment and selection decisions are based on clearly defined job descriptions
- (b) all aspects of the sourcing of applicants and selection and appointment decisions are carried out in accordance with relevant legislation and equity and diversity principles
- (c) the best candidate for the post is selected based on an assessment of the qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience required for the post
- (d) the career development of staff as recognised in PER
- (e) the process is managed within agreed timescales and quality standards
- (f) unlawful discrimination is eliminated

To support Deans of School and Department Heads with the implementation of this policy, the University has in place a Recruitment and Selection Procedure, standard documentation and a PER process including learning and development plans to support the application of the Recruitment and Selection Procedure. All supporting documentation is available on the HR Intranet site.

### **Scope of the Policy**

The University applies the terms of this policy and procedure to all vacancies that arise. There are some instances where not all aspects of recruitment policy apply, including the appointment of hourly paid part time lecturers (separate procedures apply) and temporary appointments where the contract of employment is for three months duration or less.

Organisational change, including changes in structure, may require the application of alternative deployment and selection procedures. With advice from Human Resources, Deans of School and Department Heads will consult with staff and trade union representatives, as appropriate, should such a situation arise.

#### **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

All information gathered on individuals as part of the recruitment and selection process will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation This includes the processing of sensitive personal data. The University has a Documents Retention Policy and Privacy Notice for job applicants and all records and files in relation to the recruitment and selection process are managed in accordance with that policy.

### **Induction**

An explanation of all QMU policies should be given by the Line Manager or nominated person to all new members of staff to ensure they engage fully with the policy and process at an early stage.

### **Learning and Development**

Human Resources will provide learning and development for all staff involved in the implementation and application of this policy, facilitated by the PER process. The aim of the learning and development is to provide awareness of University policy and best practice, the legislative framework, including equal opportunities, to provide enhanced skills in managing and participating in the implementation and application of this policy.

### **Monitor and Review**

Human Resources is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and supporting procedures and will conduct an annual review. HR will update policies in line with new or updated employment legislation.

Anyone who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against as part of recruitment and selection process, should notify the Head of Human Resources.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The University is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and it is the responsibility of all QMU employees to promote equity and diversity in the application

of this policy ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability, race/ethnic origin, sex/gender, age, religion, marital/family status, dependency, sexual orientation, political opinion, and economic or social status.

## **Relevant Legislation**

### **Police Act 1997 and Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 1997**

All QMU posts require a basic level Disclosure Scotland check. Specific posts may require membership of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme or evidence of membership. Further information regarding PVG is available from the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy, available on the HR intranet site.

### **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 makes it unlawful for employers or prospective employers, to take into account offences, which are classified as, spent. An offence is spent when the person is deemed to be rehabilitated under the Act. Once the rehabilitation period has expired the offence is spent. All applicants are asked to complete a criminal record declaration at application stage.

### **Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006**

It is a criminal offence to employ an individual who is subject to immigration control and who has not been granted leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, or does not have permission to work in the United Kingdom.

To comply with the provisions of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the University requires documentary evidence that an individual has the right to work in the United Kingdom. Where a work permit is required for the successful applicant, Human Resources is responsible for securing the certificate of sponsorship to enable the individual to apply for a work permit. The work permit must be obtained before the employee begins work.

## **Responsibility for this Policy**

Human Resources are responsible for this policy. Any changes to this policy and supporting procedures will be made in consultation with appropriate bodies.

## **General Policy**

### **1.0 Core Structure**

The University manages its staffing resource in accordance with an agreed core structure. Deans of School and Department Heads are responsible for managing and advising their SMT member on the most effective and efficient deployment of their staffing complement. This includes taking into account any vacancy management targets set as part of the strategic planning process together with succession planning identified through PER. Overall responsibility for the management of the university's core complement rests with the Vacancy Approval Panel. When a vacancy arises, the Dean of School/Department Head is responsible for considering, in consultation with their Executive Board member

- (a) the consequences of not filling the vacancy
- (b) whether the position is no longer required
- (c) whether a direct replacement is required e.g. the responsibilities of the post could be carried out more effectively by another member of staff or is no longer required
- (d) the duties of the post could be re-designed to a post of a lower grade or with a reduced number of hours or whether the post could provide a developmental acting up opportunity for an existing staff member, if so refer to the Acting Up Policy
- (e) future changes in structure or staffing levels mean it would be desirable to make a temporary appointment

Having considered all the options and concluded it is necessary to fill the post, the Dean of School/Department Head, in consultation with their Executive Board member and in conjunction with Human Resources, is responsible for implementing the Vacancy Approval Procedure as set out in the Recruitment and Selection Procedure and the Vacancy Approval Procedure.

Detailed guidance is set out in the Recruitment and Selection Procedure. Advice and support on any aspect of the Vacancy Approval Procedure is available from Human Resources.

## **2.0 Job Description**

An integral part of any recruitment and selection process is the development of a job description; the job description will form the basis for the development of the competency based interview.

The job description comprises a job and person specification. The job specification describes the main responsibilities of the post and the person specification sets out a profile of the ideal candidate. The person specification will describe the essential and desirable criteria for selection. The criteria are important, as they will be used to inform the drafting of the advert, selection of the shortlist, development of competency based interview questions and provide the basis for assessing the best candidate for the post.

Not all vacancies will require the development of a new job description. Deans of School and Department Heads are however responsible for reviewing and making amendments to current job descriptions each time a vacancy arises. The job description should be developed in accordance with the standard university format. New posts, posts that have not been previously evaluated or posts that are significantly altered will require to be evaluated before the filling of the post can be authorised. In all cases the HERA job evaluation system will be used to evaluate all roles.

Human Resources will provide advice on any aspect of the development of the job description and our job evaluation procedures.

### **3.0 Sourcing Applicants**

Deciding on the best methodology for sourcing job applicants is an important part of the recruitment process. The best option or range of options will depend upon the type of post that is to be filled. The filling of all posts including posts sourced via an external agency must be processed through Human Resources unless otherwise agreed by Human Resources.

Sourcing a pool of suitable candidates including placing an external advert is expensive and must be considered carefully by the Dean of School/Department Head in consultation with Human Resources. Human Resources is responsible for managing the University's central recruitment budget for posts within the core structure. This budget will meet the cost of placing an external advert or alternatively will meet the cost of an agency fee if an appointment to QMU is made. For project funded posts the cost of recruitment should be included as part of the project costing process. Fees for the appointment of temporary staff (sourced by an agency), will be met by the School or Department.

Schools and Departments are responsible for meeting candidates' expenditure e.g. travel, incidental costs associated with the interview process and any relocation costs granted to the successful candidate.

Normally, all vacant posts will be advertised internally, including posts that are being carried out by a member of staff on a temporary contract of employment. Posts will also be advertised externally where appropriate.

### **4.0 Advertising**

A vacancy will only be advertised once VAP approval and an updated job description and supporting information are in place. The purpose of the advert is to capture interest from candidates who meet the requirements of the post and to discourage applicants who do not have the essential skills and experience from applying. The advert should be prepared on this basis.

The advert should reflect the professionalism of the University and be non-discriminatory. The use of online recruitment boards will be considered prior to advertising in newspapers and other printed media. In view of the cost of placing advertisements both in newspapers and professional journals, the advert must be succinct, with prospective candidates directed to the recruitment website for detailed information on the post and the University.

All adverts must be placed through Human Resources. Human Resources, in consultation with the relevant manager, is responsible for approving all final draft adverts prior to being submitted for publication. Guidance on drafting job adverts is available from Human Resources.

### **5.0 Composition of Appointment Panels**

Responsibility for selection rests with the Appointment Panel and while other staff may be involved in elements of the assessment processes, responsibility for the selection decision rests with the Appointment Panel. Chairs of Appointment Panels are also responsible for ensuring, as far as is practically possible; the demographics

of the University are represented in the composition of the Appointment Panel. For information on the University's guidelines for the composition of Appointment Panels please see Appendix 1.

The composition of Recruitment Panels may be adapted to suit particular appointments (where a smaller panel would be appropriate), but an appointment panel should have no fewer than two members.

For academic appointments, consideration should be given to the inclusion of a panel member from the subject area relevant to the vacancy where other panel members are not experts in the academic discipline.

## **6.0 Shortlisting**

The process of shortlisting identifies which candidates best meet the requirements of the role as set out in job description and person specification.

The Chair of the Appointment Panel is responsible for managing the shortlisting process in accordance with the terms of the Recruitment and Selection procedure, best practice and discrimination legislation. Shortlisting must be carried out based on an assessment of each candidate against the job description and person specification. This ensures all applicants are treated consistently and fairly.

The Appointment Panel is responsible for compiling the shortlist based on an assessment of the information provided by the applicant in their application. All other elements of the applicants' capabilities will be assessed as part of the interview process.

## **7.0 Disclosure of Relationship by Appointment Panel Member**

A member of an Appointment Panel is required to declare to the Chair any relationship to or interest in a candidate using the Integrity Form (Appendix 2).

Where the Chair of the panel believes the impartiality of the process is compromised he or she will seek advice from Human Resources.

## **8.0 Competency Based Interviews**

The purpose of the interview is to obtain information from the candidate that enables the panel to make a fair assessment of their potential performance in the role.

The University adopts a competency based approach to recruitment and selection and as such the interview should be based on the identified competences for the role together with the knowledge and experience requirements identified in the job description and person specification.

Competences are used to provide an indication of the actions and behaviours that are considered to be key indicators of future performance within the role. Combining the use of competences with an assessment of the knowledge and experience required for the role improves the assessment of a candidate's suitability for a role.

For further guidance on Competency Based Interviews please see appendix 3. A list of example competences and competency based interview questions are also available in appendix 3.



## **10.0 Selection**

The Chair of the Appointment Panel is responsible for ensuring that the discussion on the merits of each of the candidates interviewed is conducted in an open and fair manner. The Chair is responsible for facilitating the discussion on each candidate ensuring all members of the panel are given the opportunity to contribute their views and participate equally in the decision making process.

Each panel member is required to score each candidate once all interviews are complete. The Competency Based Interview Schedule should be completed for each candidate. This form records the Panel member's assessment of each candidate against the criteria for the post and provides substantial information for feedback to candidates. This will form the basis of the panel discussion on the comparative assessment of the candidates, facilitated by the Chair of the Panel. This will enable the Panel to reach a consensus on the preferred candidate for the post. All Competency Based Interview Schedules must be returned to HR where they are stored confidentially.

## **11.0 References**

Human Resources are responsible for obtaining all candidates references as part of the recruitment process and will take account of the applicant's wishes in respect of contacting their referees. Normally, references will be sought from the successful candidates' last two employers.

Normally a minimum of two references is required, one of which must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Where candidates only have one previous employer a character reference will be accepted as the second referee. Candidates will be advised that referees may be contacted in advance of an offer of employment being made if permission has been given.

## **12.0 Appointment**

The Chair will agree with HR the verbal offer and is required to make contact with the candidate to make the verbal offer. Human Resources will prepare written offers of employment to be sent to the candidate. A verbal offer of employment is legally binding and any conditions attached to the offer should be made clear to the candidate. The starting salary must be within the evaluated grade range for the post; normally starting salaries will be at the bottom of the relevant grade depending on the skills and experience of the successful candidate. Only in exceptional circumstances and with prior approval from the Dean/Head of Department can a starting salary in the discretionary range of the grade be offered. All offers of appointment will be subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-employment checks.

No offer of employment can be made without reference to Human Resources.

## **13.0 Pre-Employment Checks**

Offers of appointment are subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, proof of eligibility to work in the UK, submission of educational certificates, completion of a satisfactory health review and relevant Disclosure Scotland check, together with any other check required as set out in the job description for example professional registration.

## **17.0 Relocation**

Where the Chair of the panel has established that support for relocation is required where the position is grade 8 and above, they should refer to the Relocation Policy and Procedure.

### **Linked Policies**

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy  
Vacancy Approval Procedure  
Employment Status Procedure  
Interview Expenses Policy and Procedure  
Relocation Policy and Procedure