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Staff Recruitment & Selection

Policy and Procedure

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Version Control

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1.10	HR Projects and Systems Manager	16/5/23	Rebranded and updated terminology.
1.11	HR Projects and Systems Manager	13/3/24	Amended clause 5.2.8
1.12	HR Projects & Systems Manager	27/06/24	Amended clause 5.2.8 re: internal offers, and added 5.2.11 re: secondment

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 Edinburgh College is committed to recruiting the most suitable people to take forward the mission, vision, ethos, values and aims of the College.
- 1.2 This policy applies to job applicants and all employees of the College.
- 1.3 This policy complies with current legislation and aims to follow best practice.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 The College will aim to ensure that during the recruitment and selection process no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender re-assignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership or pregnancy or maternity.
- 2.2 Each vacancy (or recruitment campaign) requires an electronic requisition form (which includes a business case), to be completed and approved before recruitment is commenced.
- 2.3 For each vacancy the College will select the most appropriate recruitment and selection method(s) in order to identify and appoint the most suitable person.
- 2.4 All applicants who apply under the Disability Confident scheme or those who are an Armed Forces Veteran, Care Experienced or Minority Ethnic and who meet the minimum essential criteria for the role, will be guaranteed to be shortlisted and offered the opportunity of an interview.
- 2.5 At all stages of the recruitment and selection process reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the particular needs of any applicant who informs the College that they have a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 (or has applied for the vacancy under the Disability Confident scheme).
- 2.6 Vacancies may be ring fenced to internal applicants only or advertised internally and externally at the same time.
- 2.7 Successful candidates for support roles will normally be appointed on the first point of the salary band which has been included in the job advert. Appointment above the first point of the salary band can only be agreed when there is an objective rationale for example, current salary and/or relevant experience. Any appointment above the bottom of the grade is required to be approved by an Assistant Principal or Director and the Director of HR & OD.
- 2.8 Successful candidates for lecturing roles should be appointed on the lecturing pay scale in line with the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) Agreements and placement guidance.
- 2.9 The College will provide appropriate training for all employees who have responsibility for, or involvement in, any recruitment and selection process.

3. KEY DEFINITIONS

3.1 Requisition Form

A requisition form must be completed and approved before recruitment is commenced.

3.2 Job Description

A job description sets out the key responsibilities and duties of the role.

3.3 Person Specification

The person specification lists the skills, experience and qualifications the role holder is expected to have to be able to undertake the role. Some criteria may be essential, while others will be desirable and may enhance the role holder's performance.

3.4 Job Advert

A job advert is the media used to attract potential applicants to apply for a role at the College.

3.5 APUC Agreement

APUC means Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges. APUC is a limited company which acts as the procurement centre of expertise for all of Scotland's Universities and College. APUC negotiate agreements with specific suppliers which provide benefits and costs savings which the College can access. The College's Procurement team can provide further details on the actual agreement(s).

3.6 Psychometric Testing

Psychometric testing has the potential to deliver useful information that aids the assessment of potential employees for their workplace suitability. Psychometric tests use quantitative, data-driven outputs and results to make objective and reliable assessments on a person's capacity, propensity or liability to act, react or experience, or to structure or order thought or behaviour in particular ways. Interpretations of the data gained must be administered and undertaken by a suitably trained person.

3.7 Ability Testing

Ability tests measure a person's capability in specific key skill areas. A range of standardised tests exist which will give objective information to identify if someone has the right skills needed to undertake a specific role e.g. verbal analysis, logical reasoning, numerical ability, managerial judgement, speed and accuracy in checking information, or an ability to simplify and convey details.

3.8 Selection Scoring Matrix

A selection scoring matrix should be completed for each candidate to help to objectively compare them to the role requirements and to select the most suitable person for the role.

3.9 Discrimination

In the context of the recruitment and selection process discrimination (direct, indirect or by association) would be excluding a person (at any stage of the recruitment and selection process) due to their sex, race, religion/belief, sexual

orientation, gender re- assignment, age, disability, marriage or civil partnership or pregnancy or maternity.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Senior Management team are responsible for approving this policy.
- 4.2 The College's joint management and union groups (previously LNCs) have responsibility for reviewing this policy and making recommendations to the appropriate approver.
- 4.3 The Director of HR & OD is responsible for the monitoring, application and review of this operational policy and its associated procedure and for providing training on recruitment and selection for those involved in recruiting staff.
- 4.4 All managers and key users are responsible for the consistent application of this operational policy and procedure.
- 4.5 All employees are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities/obligations under this policy and procedure.
- 4.6 Recruiting managers are responsible for:
- Completing and submitting the appropriate requisition form;
 - Attending training on the recruitment and selection of employees;
 - Drafting or updating the job description and person specification for the role;
 - Planning the recruitment process, including suitable dates for the selection process;
 - Drafting the recruitment advert;
 - Producing a shortlist of candidates, using a consistent approach;
 - Arranging suitable room(s) and refreshments (if required);
 - Deciding on the questions to be asked during the selection process;
 - Completing the required selection documentation and providing this to HR in a timely manner (e.g. interview notes and interview outcome form);
 - Making a verbal conditional offer to the preferred candidate;
 - Providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates (if requested, and after confirming appropriateness of feedback with HR);
 - Agreeing a suitable start date (only after PVG check has been completed)
 - Informing HR of agreed start date and sending HR a completed new IT starter form.
- 4.7 HR are responsible for:
- Advising on appropriate recruitment methods;
 - Advising on the planning of the recruitment process;
 - Ensuring consistency in the format of job descriptions and person specifications;
 - Reviewing and advising on the recruitment advert;
 - Establishing the correct salary level for the role;
 - Posting the recruitment advert on/in appropriate media;
 - Contacting candidates and setting up the selection process schedule;
 - Supporting the selection and where relevant the testing of candidates (if requested to do so);

- Obtaining background checks;
- Monitoring and reporting on the protected characteristics of all job applicants;
- Obtaining two relevant references for the successful candidate;
- Drafting and sending the written contract of employment, accompanying documentation, and any follow up contract information e.g. confirmation of start date with College;

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Recruitment Process

5.1.1 Requirement to recruit

Before commencing the recruitment process the recruiting manager should consider:

- Why did the previous employee leave?
- What skills and experience has the College lost?
- Do you need to bring in a new skill that none of your existing staff have?
- Has workload increased or reduced, on a permanent or temporary basis?
- Could you share work amongst existing employees?
- Could you ask part-time employees to consider full-time work?
- Could you improve efficiency within your team by rearranging tasks?
- Could you offer over-time on a temporary basis?

If, after considering the above, they believe that recruitment is still required then they need to gain the required approval to proceed.

5.1.2 Vacancy Approval

The requisition form should be completed, using iTrent, for all vacancies (or recruitment campaigns), regardless of whether or not post(s) are within establishment/budget. Approval by the Assistant Principal or Director is required.

If posts are not within establishment, and/or budget, then these vacancies require further approval from the Executive team before commencing with the recruitment process.

When completing a requisition form, it is important that the correct reason for recruitment is selected, as this determines which workflow approval process is followed.

Further details on completing the form can be gained from the iTrent Requisition User Guide.

5.1.3 Job Description & Person Specification

The recruiting manager is responsible for drafting or updating the job description and person specification using the College template. This should be reviewed by HR to ensure consistency with other roles across the College.

5.1.4 Job Advert

The job description and person specification should form the basis for the recruitment advert. The advert should be as specific as possible and focused on attracting those who fill the essential person specification criteria, and should include:

- Brief description of the College;
- Location of the role;
- Working hours
- Salary details and other benefits;
- A brief summary of the main duties and responsibilities of role;
- Details of essential requirements (obtained from the person specification) to be able to undertake the role successfully;
- Any conditions for the job offer e.g. satisfactory references, qualifications check, medical questionnaire etc.;
- Details on how to apply;
- A closing date;
- A date for the selection process (where practical it is beneficial to recruiting managers and job applicants to have the tentative date included in the advert at the start of the selection process).

5.1.5 Advertising

All vacancies should be advertised internally and will be open to all employees of the College unless specified otherwise.

Roles may be advertised internally and externally at the same time, normally for two weeks.

When advertising roles consideration should be given to advertising through the most appropriate media in order to target and attract the most suitable candidates, while managing costs effectively.

5.1.6 Recruitment Specialists

Sourcing job applicants through a recruitment selection specialist incurs significantly higher costs than other forms of advertising media, therefore, it may not be the most economical mode of recruitment in the first instance.

Should using a recruitment agency be deemed appropriate (approval is required from Director of HR & OD), then the recruitment agencies stated in the APUC Agreement should be used in the first instance. Under the APUC Agreement the College benefits from sector wide negotiated rates. HR can provide further details on the agencies in the agreement.

5.2 Selection Process

5.2.1 Planning Meeting

As early as possible the recruiting manager should liaise with HR to plan the recruitment and selection process.

The outcome of this meeting should be:

- Clear timescales for the advertising and the selection process;
- Identification of the essential criteria required for the role;
- Recruiting manager appraised of the process to draft/update the job description, person specification and advert;
- The format of the selection process including screening, tests (where relevant) and competency-based selection methods;
- Identification of potential members of any selection panels;
- Discussion of types of testing available (e.g. psychometric, ability etc.);
- Determination of the selection tools to be used;
- Consideration of suitable questions for competency-based interviews.

5.2.2 Application Forms & Protected Characteristics Information

Applicants are normally expected to apply for roles by completing our online application form. This is currently available on the College's online recruitment platform, along with the advert and job descriptions for advertised roles.

As part of the electronic application process applicants are asked to provide protected characteristics information. This information is saved separately to the application form and is not made available to recruiting managers as part of the recruitment process. Applicants are free to decline to provide this information and this action will not impact on the selection process.

Under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation HR are responsible for the security and confidentiality of the protected characteristics information. This information is used for statistical purposes, primarily the monitoring of job applicants and the profile of the workforce.

In exceptional situations when applicants are sourced through recruitment specialists, then CVs may be accepted for the recruitment process. These applicants will be asked to voluntarily declare protected characteristics information separately to their CV.

5.2.3 Shortlisting Applicants

The purpose of shortlisting is to select those candidates who, according to the information contained in their application forms, best meet the criteria indicated in the person specification.

The shortlisting manager must assess each application and record the scoring on the shortlisting form. The criteria for shortlisting must be those listed in the person specification.

HR will send out rejection emails to unsuccessful applicants advising them they have not been shortlisted and thanking them for their interest in the role.

If the initial shortlist contains too many applicants for shortlisting (six is normally a maximum guide), then the recruiting manager should redo the shortlisting process against the desirable criteria and/or by weighting particular criteria consistently across all applicants.

Those candidates who score highest when all the criteria are considered (or who have applied under the Disability Confident scheme and meet the essential criteria) should be shortlisted. When shortlist numbers are high, HR can also advise on selection methods to reduce this down to a manageable volume, while also ensuring we retain the best possible candidates. For example, telephone screening or online interviews.

Recruiting managers may wish to keep a reserve shortlist with applicants they would consider if some applicants are unable to attend the selection process or when others withdraw their application during the recruitment process. It may be necessary in this event to ensure candidates are informed of an extension to the shortlisting period.

If the shortlist does not provide enough suitable candidates the shortlisting manager should reconsider if any of the criteria listed as essential should be changed to desirable consistently across all applicants or consider re-advertising, possibly using a different advertising media.

5.2.4 Selection methods (can include as many of the following as appropriate)

- a. Panel interview (compulsory for all vacancies);
- b. Telephone interviewing (this is an effective way of assessing the suitability of applications and reducing the number of applicants for a panel interview);
- c. Mini-teach session (this is compulsory for all teaching vacancies);
- d. Written exercise;
- e. Presentation to an audience;
- f. Meeting students session;
- g. Meeting staff session;
- h. Meeting managers session;
- i. Psychometric testing;
- j. Testing for specific skills (for example, MS Office packages);
- k. In-tray exercise;
- l. Assessment centre exercises;
- m. Basic skills testing for Maths and English;
- n. Group discussion on a set topic.

In addition, the recruiting manager should organise:

- A tour of College campuses and/or
- A visit to the relevant Faculty/Department.

5.2.5 Selection Panel

Competency based interviews are the most common selection method used, but ideally these should not be conducted in isolation, as selection testing can provide valuable and practical information to inform a selection decision.

Interviews should be conducted with the intention of giving each candidate a fair and equal opportunity to show how they consider themselves to be suited to the requirements of the role, while the selection panel controls the process, in order to gain the broadest profile of each candidate in the time available.

The format and questions should be compiled in advance based on the information in the person specification. Examples of possible suitable questions can be obtained from HR. To ensure fairness all candidates should be asked the same set of open questions, however in addition to these, clarification or expansion on particular points in a candidate's application can be sought particularly with regard to seeking clarification to ensure that the College's safeguarding responsibilities are adhered to.

Weighting can be given to particular questions if the skills/experience to which they relate are felt to be more important to the role. Full and complete answers to these particular questions will then score more points in the final assessment.

The selection panel should consist of two or more people. It is advised that recruiting managers do not interview alone as a more balanced objective assessment can be reached when more than one person is involved. All recruiting managers should have completed College Recruitment and Selection training.

It is the responsibility of the selection panel to ensure that no unlawful discriminatory questions or actions are allowed.

The interview is a two-way process so time should be set aside at the interview for the panel to answer any reasonable questions the candidate may have in regards to the role or the College.

Clear, factual and objective interview notes should be kept for each candidate to record their responses to questions asked. An unsuccessful candidate can challenge their rejection if they believe they have been discriminated against. In such a case, or if an FOI (Freedom of Information) request is received all notes and records of the selection process may be disclosed.

Using a selection scoring matrix for each candidate will also help to objectively compare them to the role requirements and to select the most suitable person for the role. This form must be completed as part of the selection process.

Travel and subsistence expenses incurred as part of the selection process will not normally be reimbursed.

5.2.6 Selection Testing

Selection testing is recommended and encouraged to support the decision making in the selection process. The testing should be applied in a fair and transparent way, and in the case of psychometric or ability testing undertaken by a qualified administrator. Testing should be relevant to the post and measure one or more of the criteria outlined in the person specification.

For lecturing, specialist, supervisory and managerial level posts, in particular, it is recommended that at least one method of selection testing is used in addition to the interview. Testing can range from in-tray exercises, administrative tasks, scenarios, presentations, and technical tests to more complex psychometric and ability tests.

The benefits of psychometric and ability testing are that they offer a non-discriminatory selection method for all applicants and help identify applicants with the potential to fit the role demands and be high performers. Reasonable adjustments should be made to selection tests if requested by candidates who have a disability.

It is not advised that testing is used as the sole means of making selection decisions, they should normally be used to support and inform an interview process.

5.2.7 Selection Decision

The aim at the conclusion of the selection process, is for the selection panel to reach a consensus on the most suitable candidate, based on the objective criteria of the selection scoring matrix and testing results.

If the initial selection process does not identify a preferred candidate then further second or third stage selection processes may be an option or further testing methods could be applied to gain further information on which to make the best possible selection decision.

5.2.8 Making an offer

Once a selection decision has been made, successful and unsuccessful candidates should be told of the outcome as soon as possible.

If you are offering the role to an internal candidate, whether on a permanent, temporary or secondment basis, you must discuss the offer with their current line manager before you agree a start date.

Successful candidates for support roles should normally be appointed on the first point of the salary band stated within the job advert and this should be clarified when making a verbal offer. Appointment above the first point of the salary band, can only be agreed when there is an objective rationale, e.g. the only successful candidate is currently earning more. Any appointment above the first point of the grade is required to be approved by the Assistant Principal/Director and the Director of HR & OD.

Successful candidates for academic roles should be appointed on the academic pay scale in line with the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) Agreements and placement guidance.

The recruiting manager should ideally make the verbal offer of employment to the preferred candidate, clearly stating that it is conditional upon the receipt of the following pre-employment checks:

- Proof of the right to work in the UK;
- Two satisfactory references from the applicant's most recent employers (or personal references where the applicant does not have recent employment history);
- Satisfactory Occupational Health assessment;
- Satisfactory Disclosure Scotland PVG check;
- Satisfactory Qualifications.

5.2.9 Giving feedback

If requested, the College agree to give constructive feedback to unsuccessful shortlisted candidates on how they could have improved their performance during the selection process (this should be agreed with HR in advance of giving the feedback).

Internal candidates should be informed verbally that they have been unsuccessful, ideally by the recruiting manager. Feedback as to why they have been unsuccessful should be prepared in advance so that this can be communicated to all internal candidates, if requested.

Care should be taken when compiling feedback to ensure that it is factual, objective and relates to the criteria in the person specification.

5.2.10 Written offer of employment

In the case of internal promotions or transfers, the employee must be sent a letter confirming the variation to his or her terms and conditions of employment.

Written offers of employment will be sent to successful candidates by email.

Start dates will not be confirmed until a satisfactory PVG check has been received by the College.

Confirmation of employment is also subject to other pre-employment checks such as, satisfactory references, occupational health assessment etc.

5.2.11 Secondment

In the case of internal secondments, it is important for the managers involved to keep in mind that it is expected that once a secondment comes to an end the employee will return to their substantive post which will be 'broadly the same' as the post they left.

If the substantive post is subject to any material change during the course of the employee's secondment the manager (of the employee's substantive post) must keep their employee informed. This might include changes such as team changes, change in line manager, any departmental restructuring and any new or altered role responsibilities.

5.2.12 Special circumstances

- i. The Principal can only be appointed by the Board of Management.
- ii. Personal Relationships

If a recruiting manager, or any other employee involved in the recruitment and selection process, has a personal relationship or is related to any applicant, the employee is expected to inform HR of this as soon as they become aware that this person has applied and they will be excluded from the remainder of the selection process. For further information on this area please see 'Relationships at Work' management guidance on the manager portal.

6. ASSURANCE

- 6.1** This policy and procedure will be reviewed following any relevant changes to employment law or alternatively every three years as a minimum.
- 6.2** This policy and procedure will be approved by the Senior Management team.
- 6.3** All recruitment information, such as application forms, shortlisting forms, selection scoring matrices, and interview notes should be passed to Human Resources to be kept for six months.