

HR Services

Policy On Recruiting and Selecting Staff



1. INTRODUCTION AND POLICY

1.1 We recognise that we rely on the skills, competencies and contribution of all our staff to deliver high quality teaching, scholarship, research and support services. The overall aim of this policy, therefore, is to recruit and retain high quality staff in order to meet the needs of our corporate and HR strategies, and our school and service plans.

1.2 We are also committed to tackling unfair and unlawful discrimination and actively promoting and celebrating equality and diversity. Our aim is that our staff should reflect the diverse profiles of our students and the communities we serve. If necessary, positive action employment measures will be considered to ensure we meet our aims of employing women and men from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and those with disabilities.

We are committed also to ensuring that we make the best possible use of the considerable talent that exists within our workforce and for creating a future pipeline of talent that is ready to compete for roles within the university.

1.3 To deliver on these commitments, our recruiting processes should, wherever possible:

1. identify the most suitably qualified individual to fill our roles;
2. provide the widest appropriate pool from which to draw diverse and high quality talent;
3. acknowledge that for some roles, UEL may have sufficient high quality staff to constitute an 'appropriate pool', thereby providing an outlet (and link) to our talent management process;
4. ensure that where an appropriate pool is not identified within UEL, that the role is advertised in the external market at the same time as it is advertised internally;
5. ensure candidates are normally selected for permanent roles on the basis of open competition, whether internal or external, and defined as a field of at least three credible candidates to be interviewed;
6. For some roles where appropriate, consider applications from within the student cohort at UEL, allowing successful students to undertake fixed-term roles (where all other considerations allow) for as long as they remain in education at UEL;
7. not confirm staff who are externally recruited (including those recruited as students - see 6 above) until they have satisfactorily completed their probationary period.

1.4 All our staff are required to adhere to this Recruitment Policy.

1.5 The Policy applies to **all** posts of up to and including a semester's duration (or four months in services) or more, whether they are new posts, established or vacant posts, externally funded posts and temporary posts.

The only exceptions are for temporary hourly-paid Lecturers working a maximum of 200 hours per academic year, temporary appointments of less than a semester's duration (or four months for posts in services) and where a member of staff temporarily takes on the full responsibility of a higher graded post to cover a short-term need. Please refer to the Pay and Grading Arrangements for Part-time Lecturing Staff for information about the employment of hourly-paid Lecturing staff)

1.6 At UEL fixed-term appointments are only made when the source of funding is temporary or when our need for the post is on a fixed-term basis. Appointments to permanent posts of members of staff can be made on the expiry of their fixed-term contracts of employment where **all** the following conditions apply:

- it is agreed between the School or Service and HR Services that it is in the interest of the School or Service to do so;
- the staff member concerned was originally appointed by a selection panel, following advertisement, and constituted in accordance with the Recruitment & Selection Policy and Guidelines. Please refer to the Pay and Grading Arrangements for Part-time Lecturing Staff for information about arrangements for hourly-paid Lecturing staff.
- the permanent post is essentially the same as the fixed term post except in the sense that it is not time-bound.

(Policy agreed by UMT in September 2003 and agreed at JSCNC in January 2004)

1.7 A temporary member of staff may be recruited to work for a maximum period of a semester or four months in services, (after any outstanding annual leave owing to the previous postholder has expired). The school or service concerned should contact 'Spring' for temporary support staff (for academic staff, a school makes its own arrangements). If 'Spring' is unable to supply someone with the appropriate skills during the timescale required, the school or service should contact an employment agency or known individual (e.g. a suitable ex-staff member) and employ him or her for a semester (or four months in services), in liaison with the relevant HR Manager.

1.8 The employment of students will normally be through 'Spring'. On an exceptional basis, however, students recruited via our Employability Team on a short term basis, for example, may be employed directly by UEL on short term contracts of less than four months.

It is not possible to employ UEL students in an administrative job in his or her own school or a service office where he or she might have access to examination, course scripts or other confidential materials.

1.9 All staff are required to attend our Staff Recruitment and Selection Skills workshops before they can participate in a job interview panel. Please visit the Learning and Development Unit's website which contains information about forthcoming workshops: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/development/>

1.10 Information about job applicants is confidential and it is essential to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at every stage to comply with the Data Protection Act. All documentation and other data must be kept securely.

1.11 Relatives, (including partners) of current staff shall not be appointed as staff (temporary or permanent) in the same section of a school or service as an established staff member, nor be appointed as the staff member's manager, direct reportee or where the current staff member is the senior or overall manager of a service, school or section. Staff members should not participate in shortlisting or appointment panels if they are related to an applicant for the post being recruited and should declare their relationship to the Chair of the selection panel on being asked to participate in shortlisting and/or selection panels.

1.12 UEL will take note of Universities UK guidelines for Higher Education Institutions in the appointments of senior staff (our UMT level roles). Please see link to <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Newsroom/Media-Releases/Pages/UniversitiesUKpublishesguidetorecruitingseiorstaff.aspx>

1.13 Some of the tasks associated with our recruitment and selection processes have been automated via the introduction of an e-recruitment system. 'Vacancy Management' is web-based software which enables job applicants to apply on-line to our website and for recruitment and selection panel members to view and shortlist job applications on-line. Please refer to our Vacancy Management Guidelines at <http://www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/documents/emhandbook/vacancy.pdf> for full information about the operation of our Vacancy Management system.

1.14 If job applicants or staff members require further information about our staff recruitment and selection processes, or have suggestions or complaints about them, please contact HR Services or visit our website: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/>

Our website includes all of our employment policies, including:

- This Policy
- Our Equality and Diversity Policy
- Our Disability Employment Policy

You are advised to read those policies, as they relate to the recruiting processes that are set out in the accompanying annexe and appendices.

ANNEXE

STAGE ONE: Pre-Advert - Establishing the need to recruit:

Main points covered in this section:

1. Obtain budget approval from Financial Services if you wish to recruit to a new or replacement post prior to completing the necessary recruitment documentation.
2. Where additional office space is required for the new post, Facilities Services need to be consulted prior to completing the necessary recruitment documentation.
3. New posts may need to be evaluated using HERA.
4. An application to recruit form, draft advert, job description and person specification must be completed prior to the post being advertised.

When a staff member leaves our employment, his or her school or service should consider if the post needs to be replaced, or whether new skills and responsibilities are needed in a different post, or whether the post is no longer needed. Information and feedback from exit interviews with staff who are leaving can provide very useful information to help decide what type of post is needed. In the case of a new post the school/service will need to define its function and purpose in relation to current and future requirements and to staffing levels within the school/service; referral should be made to the school or service annual/strategic plan.

If a new or replacement post is needed, the school/service should obtain email confirmation from Financial Services that the budget for that post exists and where additional office space is required for a new post, email confirmation from Facilities that such accommodation is available.

If the post is new, advice should be sought from HR Services regarding the appropriate grade. In most cases HR Services will use a HERA desktop process to determine the grade.

Having obtained budget confirmation, the Dean of School/Director of Service should complete the following recruitment documentation for the proposed vacancy: For further information about how to complete the documentation below, please see Stage 2 of this annexe.

1. Application to Recruit Form (**see Appendix 1**)
2. Job Description
3. Person Specification
4. Draft advertisement

5. Assessment of requirement for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with barred list checks if the appointee is likely to come into contact with vulnerable groups including children during their work, he or she will not be issued with a contract and must not start work until HR Services has obtained clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service. The job advertisement must mention whether an enhanced DBS check is required for the vacancy.

Once this documentation has been completed it must be sent electronically to your relevant HR contact by 5.00 p.m. on a Tuesday for advertising the following week.

STAGE TWO: Preparing for Recruitment:

Main points covered in this section:

1. Advertisements should normally be placed internally first if there is a suitable pool of candidates. If there is an insufficient pool of suitable candidates, the vacancy will be advertised both internally and externally at the same time.
2. Temporary staff engaged through 'Spring' and other agencies are eligible to apply for internally advertised vacancies from the first day of their temporary assignment except for those vacancies earmarked for redeployment of UEL staff arising from restructuring or possible redundancies.
3. All recruitment panels must be properly constituted (**see Appendix 5**) and must include women and men and where possible staff from groups of different ethnic origin.
4. The purpose of a job description is to provide a clear statement of the duties, objectives and standards required by the job. The more accurate and informative the job description is, the more likely it will be to attract applicants with the right skills and experience, often making shortlisting and interviewing easier and less time-consuming for everyone involved.
5. The person specification establishes the essential and desirable skills, knowledge, experience and competences required for the job. Essential criteria are necessary pre-requisites, whilst desirable criteria are those which it would be advantageous for the candidate to possess. The person specification contains the criteria against which candidates are assessed via the application form, interview and relevant assessment tests, A person specification should normally comprise no more than twelve criteria.

Advertising of Posts

All agreed appointments of a semester's duration [or four months for posts in services] or more will be advertised and subject to a competitive selection procedure. Advertisements should normally be placed internally first, unless no suitable pool of candidates may exist in which case the vacancy will be advertised both internally and externally at the same time, except in the following circumstances:

- (a) Where staff may need to be redeployed to other posts, the post will be advertised internally only in the first instance (please refer to our Managing Organisational Change and Redundancy Policy, our Code of Practice for the Management of Sickness Absence and our Disability Employment Policy);
- (b) Where a post is funded by an external research grant and where the grant is obtained by providing the name and CV of a candidate. There will be no advertisement for this post, as the individual is transferring to UEL's employment;
- (c) Where a school or service wishes to offer an internal secondment opportunity to UEL staff. A secondment is a temporary assignment of a member of staff to another part of UEL for a specific purpose, for a defined period of time, normally up to a maximum of 12 months the post will be advertised internally only. Examples of secondment opportunities may include working on a specific project or covering a period of maternity leave. Recruiting managers should consult with HR Services to determine whether the use of an internal secondment is appropriate. The main purpose of a secondment is to provide the staff member with a development opportunity and it should be of benefit to all concerned. At the end of the secondment period the staff member will return to their substantive post. Internal secondments will be made available to all UEL staff via the UEL website and applicants will be subject to a formal interview.

Before the advertisement can be placed, the Dean of School/Director of Service needs to arrange the dates and membership of the shortlisting and selection panels, in compliance with our rules on the Constitution of Appointment Panels. It is the responsibility of the relevant Dean of School/Director of Service to ensure that recruitment and selection panels are properly convened. The availability of panel members must be checked and confirmed. It is also the responsibility of the school or service concerned to arrange external panel members.

In the case of senior appointments the school/service should arrange for an external assessor to be a member of the panel. The Chair of the panel must approve any external assessors. The role of the external assessor is primarily to ensure comparable standards across the sector or within the relevant professional area to support the Chair of the panel in ensuring impartiality. The external assessor will be the only member of the panel not required to have attended UEL's Recruitment and Selection Training.

Appointment panels should be drawn up to be representative, for example, a mix of women and men and where possible staff from groups of different ethnic origin. All panels must include women and men (**see Appendix 5**).

The aim of advertising is to attract a wide range of suitable candidates from diverse backgrounds in line with our equality and diversity objectives and targets. HR Services places the advertisements in the media. All vacancies are advertised internally on our website.

Vacancies that are to be advertised externally will normally be advertised:

- online in relevant media which may include an appropriate national journal or newspaper;
- in our sector's website 'jobs.ac.uk'

- on our website; and
- in Job Centres

HR Services will advise Deans/ Directors on appropriate media.

In the case of support posts graded F and above and management grade posts, where a limited response from suitably qualified applicants is anticipated by HR Services, schools or services may advertise the vacancy with a number of employment agencies, concurrent with the external advertisement in the media. This will be arranged directly by schools and services with the agencies concerned, in close liaison with HR Services. However, in all cases job applicants must complete our on-line application form and be subject to the same recruitment process as other applicants.

HR Services will notify the local Disability Advisory Service of all permanent and temporary vacancies lasting a semester (or four months in services) or more.

All advertisements will include a statement about UEL's equality and diversity policy.

Preparing a Job Description

In order to prepare a job description or update a previous one it may be helpful to undertake a simple job analysis as outlined below and use the model job description in **Appendix 3** as a template:

- write a short paragraph defining the purpose of the job
- make a comprehensive list of all the tasks involved
- group the tasks listed according to priorities so that key tasks emerge
- define the contextual aspects of the job e.g. functional relationships with other people
- determine issues of responsibility e.g. to whom, for whom and what for (e.g. budgets and resources)

The purpose of a job description is to provide a clear statement of the duties, objectives and standards required by the job. It should help schools/services to establish the requirements for the job in order to assess future developments within the structure. A job description provides information to both applicants and to staff involved in the shortlisting and interviewing process and is an essential starting point in the recruitment and selection process. A well written job description describing a school or service's achievements and plans will help to 'sell' the vacancy in what may well be a highly competitive area. The more accurate and informative it is, the more likely it will be to attract applicants with the right skills and experience and this often makes shortlisting and interviewing easier and less time-consuming for everyone involved.

Job descriptions must include the following elements:

1. The job title, which should be short, meaningful to someone outside UEL and reflect the broad range of duties
2. The name of the school/service
3. The grade, campus and location of the post
4. The job title of the person to whom the postholder is responsible
5. Managerial or supervisory responsibilities for staff
6. The main purpose of the job
7. Main duties and responsibilities

Job descriptions must include reference to equality and diversity issues in relation to the function and tasks of the post. As a minimum requirement all staff are required to work in accordance with UEL's equality and diversity policies but, for example, in a teaching post this could be expressed as a requirement to deliver teaching and learning to students from a diverse and multicultural range of backgrounds.

A job description is not an exhaustive list of activities and staff members may be asked to carry out other tasks appropriate to the role. The 'Main Duties' section is necessarily a summary of key tasks and should normally not be excessively long and its length should be proportionate to its summary nature. It is important to ensure that job descriptions are not drafted so as to imply for example that only people of one gender or ethnic group with no disability can perform the job.

Further Information/Details about the School/Service

Links to the web pages of schools and services are provided on our recruitment website. The job description may also include a telephone number or e-mail address for potential applicants to contact to discuss the post further.

Preparing a Person Specification

On the basis of the job description, the person specification establishes essential and desirable criteria for the post i.e. the skills, knowledge, experience and competences required for the job. Essential criteria are necessary pre-requisites, whilst desirable criteria are those which it would be advantageous for the candidate to possess. The person specification must be based on clear, specific and measurable criteria relevant to the job. An applicant's suitability against particular criteria can be assessed via the application form, interview or relevant job tests. It is essential that the person specification be drawn up carefully as it will contain the criteria against which candidates are shortlisted and selected. The person specification will also help potential applicants to self-select on

the basis of the essential requirements. The more clear and precise the person specification is the more consistent and straightforward the later stages of the process. A person specification should normally comprise between nine to twelve criteria. A standard person specification template is available in **Appendix 4**.

HR Services will combine the criteria in the person specification with HERA role competencies, for example, communication, planning and organising, teamwork and motivation, liaison and networking. This will condense and focus the person specification on the skills and experience required and will assist in decision making because person specifications will be more specific and will detail more fully the level of decision making, planning, communication and organising required for each role.

Particular care must be taken when devising a person specification to ensure that the essential and desirable criteria or requirements do not unlawfully discriminate against particular groups of people either directly or indirectly. Examples of this are:

- placing an age limit on applicants;
- stipulating a UK qualification (when a non-UK equivalent may be as high a standard, if not higher);
- requiring a driving license when in fact very few posts in UEL require one;
- requiring unnecessarily high formal qualifications which may discriminate against disabled people, many of whom may have been disadvantaged by the education system.
- Stipulating a number of years experience required

The following provides examples of issues to be considered, as each relates to the post requirements. It is not comprehensive, as particular posts will have specific requirements attached to them:

Educational Qualifications and Achievements

Consider the relevance of past qualifications and attainments, e.g. what should applicants know and what should they be qualified to do. The minimum levels of qualification for appointments to Lecturer/Senior Lecturer and to posts graded at Grade F and above are set out at the end of this section of the Annex.

Be clear as to why a particular educational qualification is required, so as not to define as essential qualifications higher than are necessary and which could unnecessarily restrict the number of people able to comply.

Knowledge and Experience

This should refer to specific knowledge or experience e.g. a subject specialism, knowledge of Health and Safety legislation or employment law or experience of supervision or working in a particular field. Experience and knowledge can be gained both from previous employment and by other activities such as voluntary work etc.

Competences

This should list work-based competencies which are relevant to the job and the appropriate standards. Skills and abilities which are specified as essential must be demonstrably necessary to the role. Examples include communication and IT skills, the ability to work unsupervised or to work as an effective team member.

Personal Attributes or Qualities

This should include personal attributes or behaviour that will enable the successful candidate to function effectively, for example, all staff are expected to comply with UEL's equality and diversity policies. Therefore an essential minimum requirement under this area would be an understanding of and commitment to equality and diversity in a diverse and multicultural environment. For teaching staff it may be essential they have the ability to deliver teaching and learning to student from diverse and multicultural backgrounds. Other personal qualities could include the candidates being self-motivated, having the ability to lead, motivate and encourage others or a commitment to high standards of performance.

It is at this stage that positive action to redress any imbalances in staffing numbers must be considered. In accordance with school/service HR plans and diversity targets, Deans of Schools/Directors of Service should consider, for example, if men or women, perhaps from minority ethnic groups, or with disabilities are under-represented in their school/service. The advertisement and job description could state, for example, that 'we particularly welcome applications from members of minority ethnic communities, as they are currently under-represented in this post'. HR Services will advise as to the appropriate wording in particular cases.

Filter Questions

Our e-recruitment system enables us to use filter questions as a means of screening out applicants who do not meet some of the essential criteria before those applicants go on to complete our application form. The basis of a filter question is that it requires a 'yes' or a 'no' answer. For example, where a degree is an essential requirement for a post the filter question would be "Do you have a degree?" If the applicant indicated that she or he did have a degree they would be able to proceed to complete their application. If an applicant indicated that she or he did not have a degree she or he would receive an automated message stating that unfortunately she or he would not be able to proceed to complete her or his application, as a degree is an essential requirement for the post. Other examples of filter questions would be where a particular professional qualification is essential or where previous

experience of higher or further education is required.

HR Services will work with recruiting managers to identify those posts for which it would be appropriate to use filter questions based on the essential criteria for the post. No more than three filter questions would normally be used.

Preparing the advertisement

The purpose of the advertisement is to encourage the best applicants to apply for the vacancy and the basis for the advertisement should be the job description and person specification. The advert should 'sell' the post and the school/service in positive terms. It should also be relevant, factual and clear and should define the key elements in the job description and person specification and should include the closing and interview dates.

Schools/services should prepare a draft advertisement defining the key elements of the post. HR Services will provide advice on the content and style in conjunction with our advertising agency and will be responsible for the final draft. Sample adverts are also available from HR Services (**see Appendix 2**).

Advertising the post

HR Services will instruct our advertising agency on the placement of advertisements and all job advertisements will normally be placed in the media within 10 working days of approval.

No post can be advertised without the prior approval of the DVC and/or relevant PVC and consultation with HR Services. All recruitment costs are charged to the school or service budget, except in the case of posts funded by bodies outside UEL (which may be charged these costs).

Response to the advertisement

Job applications to UEL are made via our on-line application form, but where it is not possible for applicants to apply on-line, HR Services will send out recruitment packs to job applicants within 4 working days by 1st class mail within the UK and by airmail for overseas applicants.

Job applicants can access the following via our recruitment website:

<http://jobs-vm.uel.ac.uk/Vacancies.aspx> :

- an application form and equality and diversity monitoring form;
- the job description and person specification;
- background information about the post and school/service;
- information about UEL;
- our Equality and Diversity Policy;
- information about the benefits of working at UEL.

All job applicants are required to complete our application form and equality and diversity monitoring form. Applicants are advised on the website that the equality and diversity data will be stored on HR Services' confidential database and that it is used anonymously for statistical reports. Applicants may also submit a curriculum vitae in addition to the application form.

For some posts (mainly academic) Deans of Schools may also request applicants to send in a sample of their work, e.g. a copy of a recent publication. After the interviews have been held these should be returned to the applicant either by the School or by HR Services.

Some applicants may be unable to complete an application form, for example, a candidate with a disability, in which case applications in alternative formats will be acceptable.

Minimum qualification levels for making new appointments

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer

In general we shall not appoint anyone unless they already have a PhD or Professional Doctorate (or are confirmed by their supervisor as being six months off successful completion of a doctorate at the time of application).

If for any reason a Dean of School wishes to depart from this principle, he or she must obtain written permission from the DVC before the advertisement for the vacancy is placed.

Posts on Grade F and above

In general we shall not normally appoint anyone to a post graded F or higher unless they hold a UK degree (or equivalent).

If for any reason a Dean of School or Director of Services wishes to depart from these principles, he or she must obtain written permission from his or her line manager, following consultation with the Director of HR Services (or nominee) before the advertisement for the vacancy is placed.

[Policy on minimum qualifications approved by UMT in September 2003]

STAGE THREE: Shortlisting

Main points covered in this section:

1. Shortlisting is undertaken online via UEL's Vacancy Management System.
2. Shortlisting should always be completed by the Chair of the Panel (or nominee) and at least one other member of the selection panel.
3. Shortlisting should occur against the selection criteria set out in the job description and person specification - no other criteria should be introduced.
4. The Chair of the panel will electronically submit the final shortlist to HR Services for validation. When HR Services have validated the shortlist, the Chair will be sent an Interview Selection Form, including details of any tests or presentations required. The Chair should complete the form and send it to HR Services electronically.
5. In circumstances where a candidate with a disability meets all of the essential criteria it is essential to include them in the shortlist.

Shortlisting

Our Vacancy Management system enables recruitment and selection panel members to view and shortlist applications received on our website. Panel members are able to access this information remotely from any computer with internet access and view job applications in real time as they are submitted by applicants, without having to wait for the closing date.

Please refer to our Vacancy Management Guidelines at <http://www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/documents/emhandbook/vacancy.pdf> for full information on how to score and shortlist applications using Vacancy Management.

Shortlisting should be carried out as soon as possible after the closing date and ideally should be done by all members of the selection panel. As a minimum the Chair (Vacancy Owner) or nominee and one other member of the selection panel (Vacancy User(s)) will shortlist. Those with responsibility for shortlisting will consider all the application forms. It is often easiest if the staff involved in shortlisting meet together and review the applications 'on-line'; there is no need to print them off. The panel members must not circulate candidates' applications or other personal information about them outside the panel. Once the recruitment and selection panel members have scored all of the applications the scores are submitted electronically to the Chair (Vacancy Owner).

Shortlisting will be based on the selection criteria as described in the job description and person specification and no other criteria should be introduced at this stage. It is also wrong to stereotype applicants and assume someone will not 'fit in', e.g. because of their age, gender or disability. Not only may this be illegal and in breach of our policies but it may also deprive the school or service of a potential asset.

Those involved in shortlisting should be aware that many overseas qualifications are comparable or superior to those awarded in the UK; in case of uncertainty about the status of a qualification, please contact The International Office. Applicants who do not meet all the essential criteria for the post should not be shortlisted. If there are a large number of candidates who (on paper) meet the essential criteria, consideration may be given to the desirable criteria, which should be ranked before shortlisting commences.

In circumstances where a candidate with a disability meets all of the essential criteria it is essential to include them in the shortlist so that we meet our commitments under the Positive About Disability 'two ticks' scheme. (please see our Disability Employment Policy). HR Services will check all shortlists to ensure compliance with this policy. The selection panel may discuss with the disabled candidate at interview, as to how or whether their disability would affect their ability to do the job and what sorts of adjustments may be required to help them.

The Chair of the panel will electronically submit the final shortlist to HR Services for validation. When HR Services have validated the shortlist the Chair will be sent an Interview Selection Form, including details of any tests or presentations to be undertaken (**see Appendix 6**), by HR Services. The Chair should complete the form and send it to HR Services electronically. Normally a maximum of 6 candidates should be shortlisted.

Job applicants who are not shortlisted are automatically advised by the Vacancy Management system once the final shortlist has been confirmed by HR Services.

Please note that guidance on presentations for Deans/Associate of Schools or academic posts is given is attached at Appendix

The names of the candidates included on the shortlist must be kept as confidential.

The shortlisting documentation will be kept by HR Services for up to a year for monitoring purposes and in case unsuccessful applicants pursue litigation under sex, race, disability, age or other legislation.

Job References

Because of research showing the unreliable nature of job references, it is our policy to use them only to confirm the decision of a selection panel. For this reason care needs to be taken in the interpretation of references and the weighting given to them, as they can be subjective, or sometimes vague or unhelpful.

Job references are confidential and are only given by HR Services to the Chair of the selection panel. The Chair is required to keep references confidential until after the selection panel has made its initial conclusion. The references can then be used to confirm a decision. Until that point the Chair has privileged access to references because there may be issues which arise from them which the Chair will want to discuss with the candidate(s) and it is the Chair's sole responsibility to do so. In so doing the Chair will be mindful that the references are confidential under the Data Protection Act and that the prior permission of the referee will need to be sought if specific mention is to be made of issues referred to in the reference.

HR Services will take up references before interview, except where a candidate has ticked the 'No' box on the application form (but in such cases references will be taken up after interview if the selection panel wishes to appoint the candidate). HR Services will write to the referees, enclosing a copy of the job description and person specification.

STAGE FOUR: Interview, Assessment and Decision Making

Main points covered in this section:

1. On receipt of the interview selection form, HR Services will invite candidates to interview by email within two working days.
2. Selection tests are very helpful aids in assessing the suitability of candidates for posts. They need to be objective and relevant to the appropriate criteria in the person specification.
3. The interview should be informative and helpful to candidates and the questions from the panel should be related to the requirements of the job (the person specification and job description). The Chair of the panel is responsible for ensuring that comparable questions are asked of each candidate during the interview.
4. In order to be able to assess candidates' suitability for the job, the interviews should be structured so as to gain factual evidence of past experience, behaviour and achievements. The candidates should, therefore, be encouraged to do most of the talking.
5. After interview all unsuccessful candidates should be informed either verbally or in writing as soon as possible (within 5 working days of the interviews), normally by the Chair of the selection panel.

Invitation to Interview and Interview Arrangements

Once the Interview Selection Form has been sent electronically to HR Services by the Chair of the panel, the relevant HR Assistant will liaise with the shortlisted candidates, inviting them to interview within two working days of receipt of the shortlist. It is expected that candidates will normally be given at least two calendar weeks' notice of interviews. Details about the selection tests and timetable will also be notified in the email, so instructions from schools/services must be clear.

Whilst the use of video or telephone conferencing may be used to assist in shortlisting candidates based abroad, normally they will be asked to travel to UEL for the interview in person. Exceptionally the Chair of the panel will decide whether candidates abroad will be interviewed instead by telephone or by the use of UEL's video conferencing facilities; in the latter case UEL will pay for the reasonable cost incurred by the candidates in using local facilities. The relevant HR Assistant will liaise with the Chair of the panel to discuss the arrangements for this. Further information and guidance about interviewing via video conferencing is available from HR Services. Where the Chair decides that video or telephone conferencing is not appropriate for interviews, the school or service may pay for the applicant's economy fare travel expenses to attend an interview at UEL and that may include the cost of hotel accommodation.

In the email inviting them to interview, candidates are advised that they need to bring with them to the interview (i) original copies of the certificates of the essential qualifications for the post and (ii) an original document providing proof of eligibility to work in the UK or (iii) an original Identity Card for Foreign Nationals, in line with UK immigration legislation.

The original document providing proof of eligibility should be given by the candidate to the School or Service administrative staff member who greets them on arrival. The administrative staff member should then check the document, following HR Services' guidelines on checking the document's authenticity referred to above. Copies of the proof of eligibility of candidates should be sent to HR Services, where they will be retained in the vacancy file except in the case of the successful applicant where the copy will be retained on the candidate's personal file.

Full information about the employment of migrant workers is provided in our Procedures for the Employment Migrant Workers on the HR Services' web site at www.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/documents/emhandbook/migrant.pdf. Please contact HR Services for any advice regarding this.

The length of interviews will vary with the seniority of a post. They will normally last a minimum of 30 minutes up to an hour.

It is good practice to arrange for candidates to meet members of the school/service informally and have a tour around the area they would be working prior to the start of the interview/tests. This is solely to enable candidates to find out more about the facilities within the school/service and the post itself. If these meetings involve discussions with the selection panel members, any questions a panel member wishes to ask candidates about their application or their career should be raised at the formal interview and not during the informal meeting.

Shortlisted external candidates are advised in the interview invitation e-mail that they will be reimbursed reasonable travel expenses for second class rail fares, buses or underground. For academic and senior support staff posts, international economy travel expenses, including hotel overnight accommodation, may be paid for candidates who are based outside of the UK where the Chair decides that it is not appropriate to arrange to interview such candidates via UEL's video or telephone conferencing facilities.

We do not normally pay for taxi fares or meals/refreshments incurred to or from interviews. Applicants are asked to send their interview expenses to the school or service concerned and a cheque is then sent to them. These will be met from the appropriate school or service budget.

Once the shortlist is confirmed by HR Services, the Chair and other members of the recruitment and selection panel will be sent a panel pack electronically by HR Services to print out. The panel pack will comprise:

- interview schedule
- copies of the application forms (any supporting materials will have to be printed separately);
- Interview assessment form
- Job description, person specification and job advertisement
- Selection Panel Record Form to be completed by the Chair **(attached in Appendix 8)**

The Chair of the selection panel, in consultation with HR Services, should ensure that candidates with a disability or special needs are provided for fully at interview.

The school or service concerned will inform the security officer on duty at the relevant Reception Desk of the interview arrangements in order that they can provide candidates with directions to the appropriate room.

Selection Tests

The use of selection tests is helpful in assessing the suitability of candidates for posts. They need to be objective and relevant to the appropriate criteria in the person specification.

For example, for some administrative jobs, a Word, Excel, 'in-tray' or other skills test may be useful (e.g. drafting correspondence, a prioritising exercise or devising a spreadsheet). The school or service concerned should prepare the test materials. HR Services can advise on their preparation and have a library of selection tests available for us, including IT skills tests.

The tests should normally be held in the school or service concerned and there should be a member of its staff on hand to monitor the candidates and to offer appropriate advice and guidance.

For academic posts, shortlisted candidates may be asked to make a presentation to prospective colleagues prior to their interview. **(PI (Please refer to the Guidelines on Presentations in Appendix 7))**. HR Services will confirm the arrangements for presentations in the letter to candidates inviting them for interview.

All tests/presentations will, however, culminate in a formal interview.

The Interview

The panel members must not circulate candidates' applications or other personal information about them outside the panel.

The interview should be informative and helpful to candidates. Care should be taken to ensure that the interview timetable is realistic and that short breaks are built into the schedule. The school/service is responsible for ensuring that a member of staff greets the candidates as they arrive.

Panel members must ensure that they are prepared for the interview. They need to have read the papers fully beforehand and have prepared core questions to ask each candidate. Ideally the panel members should notify each other of proposed core questions before the panel meets. The panel members should normally meet 30 minutes before the interviews to decide which core questions each panel member will ask of each candidate. The questions should be related to the requirements of the job, i.e. the person specification and job description. The Chair of the panel is responsible for ensuring that comparable questions are asked of each candidate during the interview.

In order to be able to make an assessment of the candidate's suitability for the job the interviews should be structured so as to gain factual evidence of past experience, behaviour and achievements i.e. to gain as much information as possible. The candidate should, therefore, be encouraged to do most of the talking.

The Chair of the panel is responsible for making the candidate feel at ease and carrying out introductions. The Chair should also explain the format of the interview, making it clear that there will be an opportunity for questions at the end.

Some interview tips:

- Use a warm-up/ice-breaker question to put the candidate at ease and build their confidence
- Try to find out what the candidate does know, as well as what they don't
- Use open questions which do not prompt 'yes/no' answers e.g. 'tell me about your previous job'; 'give me an example of a project you have managed'; 'tell me about your teaching experience'; 'what techniques do you use to ensure you meet deadlines?'
- Avoid leading questions e.g. 'you have a lot of relevant experience, don't you?' which will receive a predictable answer. Instead it would be more effective to ask 'you have a busy role, please give me an example of how you prioritise'
- Ask questions which are relevant to the selection criteria
- Try to make the interview business-like but not too formal. It should be a structured conversation, so although each candidate should be asked broadly comparable questions, the response from a candidate may well prompt further 'unscripted' questions.
- Demonstrate that you are listening e.g. nodding, agreeing, maintaining eye contact, leaning slightly towards the person
- Recognise and be aware of any prejudices, stereotypes, preconceptions and misconceptions that you may have as an interviewer.

If a job involves working unusual hours e.g. some evenings, or shift work, these hours should be clearly set out in the job description. Practical issues may be discussed during the interview, but comments about childcare or other domestic arrangements should be avoided, as they may well be perceived as being intrusive or unlawfully discriminatory.

Candidates should be told by the Chair when they could expect to hear the outcome of the interview.

Appointment Decisions

Individual panel members use the Interview Assessment forms during and after the interviews.

Following the interviews, the panel discussion should systematically consider the facts and evidence gained for each candidate against the person specification. The discussion will in most cases lead to agreement and consensus on the overall decision. Where there is failure to agree the final decision will be the responsibility of the Chair. The Chair is responsible for recording formally the overall panel assessment of each candidate against the selection criteria and noting reasons for selection/rejection on the Interview Assessment Form. The Interview Assessments Forms used by individual panel members are then destroyed and the only record of the Panel's decisions will be the Chair's Interview Assessment Form.

The Chair of the panel is also responsible for completing the Selection Panel Record Form in **Appendix 8**, which specifies the name of the successful candidate, whether they should be on probation and any other factors relating to the appointment. Failure to complete the Selection Panel Record Form properly may result in errors in appointment letters. The Chair of the Panel will determine the salary point. In the event of a proposal on a salary point outside the advertised range the matter will be referred to the appropriate member of the Vice-Chancellor's group for decision. The Chair should also collect and return to HR Services all sets of interview papers and notes taken by the panel and any references received.

The Chair's interview papers for unsuccessful candidates will be kept by HR Services for up to a year for monitoring purposes and in case unsuccessful applicants pursue litigation under the Equality Act 2010. The papers of the other panel members, however, will be shredded immediately, except for the Selection Panel Record Form, which will be placed in the appointee's personal file in HR Services.

After Interview

The Chair of the panel may contact the panel's preferred candidate to advise of the next steps regarding references. The Chair may offer the post verbally to the successful candidate only after receipt of at least one satisfactory recent job reference by HR Services. The Chair should state that it will be "subject to the terms of a contract of employment which will be sent to you shortly by HR Services".

HR Services will issue letters of appointment and contracts of employment to the successful candidate within 6 working days of all the necessary documentation. A copy is sent to the Dean of School/Director of Service. The contract of employment will not be sent to the candidate until two satisfactory references have been received and proof of eligibility to work in the UK provided.

The letters of appointment may include the following conditions of appointment. That:

- medical clearance has been obtained from our Occupational Health Unit; and
- HR Services has received written clearance from the national Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). **In such cases the appointee may not start work until written clearance has been received.** [This condition is only applied where the appointee's work is likely to bring them into regular contact with children or vulnerable adults - please refer to UEL's Policy on the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups for more information]. **The Dean of School/Director of Service concerned must inform HR Services of that when that person is offered a job at UEL.** Hr Service will arrange background checks with DBS; and
- Satisfactory completion of a UEL probationary period and reference to the appropriate probation scheme.

The first day of employment can be any day of the month. To provide for continuity of service (for appointees from other universities) the first day of employment at UEL should be the day after the person leaves their current employer (even if the next day is a Saturday).

After interview all unsuccessful candidates shall be informed either verbally or in writing as soon as possible (within 5 working days of the interviews), normally by the Chair of the selection panel. Verbal feedback shall be automatically offered to internal candidates

and to those external candidates who request it. The Chair of the panel should normally provide it by referral to the Interview Assessment Form. If a candidate is not satisfied with this feedback, he or she should write to HR Services, setting out their reasons for dissatisfaction. HR Services will discuss the letter with the school or service concerned and reply in writing.

If the successful candidate wishes to consider the offer of employment for a few days a deadline of not more than 5 working days should be agreed. In such circumstances the Selection Panel Record Form should be sent to HR Services immediately after the offer has been made with a covering note stating the situation. If there is another appointable candidate this should be clearly noted and HR Services will then send him/her a holding letter. Once the Chair has been notified of the candidate's decision, he/she should inform HR Services by e-mail and a final rejection letter is sent by HR Services to the second choice candidate. If the first choice candidate does not accept then the Chair is informed and a decision is made about offering the job to another candidate or re-advertising the vacancy.

Unsuccessful Recruitment

If an appointment is not made to a vacancy following external advertisement, the school or service concerned should review the advertisement and job description to ensure they are attractively worded, at the right salary level and are not deterring suitable candidates by requiring inappropriate skills, qualifications or experience. The school or service concerned may either re-advertise the post or ask external recruitment agencies to put forward completed UEL on-line job application forms from candidates whose skills and experience meet the essential criteria in the Person Specification. Such candidates should be shortlisted and interviewed in the normal way.

Revised Policy and Appendices - 21st December 2012

Appendices

- [Appendix 1 - Application to Recruit Form](#)
- [Appendix 2 - Sample Advert](#)
- [Appendix 3 - Job Description Template](#)
- [Appendix 4 - Person Specification Template](#)
- [Appendix 5 - Constitution of Appointment Panels](#)
- [Appendix 6 - Interview Selection Form](#)
- [Appendix 7 - Guidelines for Presentations](#)
- [Appendix 8 - Selection Panel Record Form](#)
- [Appendix 9 - Interview Expenses Claim Form](#)

Additional Policies

- [Exit Interview Policy](#)
 - [Expiry of Fixed-Term Contracts](#)
 - [Staff Relocation Scheme](#)
-