



University of Sussex

Recruitment And Selection Procedures For Appointing Committees

(Academic Faculty posts)

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Glossary

The post title of the person responsible for recruitment in any campaign can vary. For simplicity the term Head of Department has been used In this document to describe this function.

Introduction

These notes have been produced to assist members of Appointing Committees in their task of choosing the best person for a vacancy. They have been written to be applicable to appointments for academic posts.

Chairs of Appointing Committees should ensure that all members of the Committee have seen these notes and abide by them.

The aim of these notes is to aid the effectiveness of recruitment campaigns – i.e. effectively and efficiently appointing the person who best fits the requirements of the post.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Recruitment And Selection Guidance Notes For Appointing Committees – academic staff and apply to all academic staff within the University excluding clinical academics in BSMS. For clinical academic appointing procedures please contact the Personnel Officer for BSMS.

RECRUITMENT

Action Required Before Advertising

An Appointing Committee can only make an informed and objective choice if it knows what the duties of the post are and what skills and experience are being sought. Proper planning by the Chair of the appointing Committee at the initial stage of recruitment is essential in terms of the effectiveness of the selection process and the maintenance of equality of opportunities.

Documentation

The Head of Department should send to Human Resources

- The further particulars - Example **Appendix A** Recruitment And Selection Guidance Notes For Appointing Committees.

The further particulars are produced by the Chair of the Appointing Committee to give as full a picture as possible about the post, the school or unit and the University. You should aim to inform as well as attract. In the main you should clearly set out what the post entails and what is expected of the successful applicant.

Further particulars are subject to the approval of the Vice Chancellor and you should stipulate the area of research required, or state that it has been left open. This is important if the preferred candidate requires a work permit, as the specialist requirement mentioned in the advertisement will be an important factor in the work permit application

A presentation should normally be part of the selection process and the following paragraph should be inserted into the further particulars:

“As part of the interview process, short-listed candidates will be required to The identity of such short-listed candidates will therefore be known to those who attend the, and the names, application and lists of publications of short-listed candidates will have been available in School Offices to members of the Department (School of). However, applicants may specify at the time of applying that their application should remain confidential throughout the appointing process. Please indicate whether you wish this to be the case for your application, in which case appropriate arrangements to maintain confidentiality will be made.”

- Job Description – Example **Appendix B** Recruitment And Selection Guidance Notes For Appointing Committees.
- Person Specification – Example **Appendix C** Recruitment And Selection Guidance Notes For Appointing Committees.
- Approvals including selected advertising media and dates

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/staffing/personnl/forms.shtml#ad>

Please note that it will never be possible for an advert to be placed without the appropriate approvals and it can take a week or even longer in the case of absences for approvals to be completed.

- The text of the advertisement.
- Please refer to Recruitment And Selection Guidance Notes For Appointing Committees for notes on the production of adverts and the selection of media

Human Resources normally will place adverts. In no circumstances should any other University unit or school place adverts in any media without the express authorisation of a Personnel Officer.

Pre-advert Planning Timetable

When consideration is being given to placing the advertisement the Chair should plan a provisional timescale for the whole process. Scheduling of short listing, interviews etc should not be left until after the closing date as this inevitably builds in delay. Below is an example of a typical timetable:

- Approvals sought – this can take up to **one week**
- Advertisement sent to Human Resources **ten days** before advert is to appear in the press. Dates for submission vary by publication this information is available from Personnel Assistants
- Advertisement appears in press – closing date at least **two weeks** later, potentially this can be up to a month if it is likely that the successful candidate needs a Work Permit – please consult your Personnel Officer
- Closing date – collection of application forms **two days** after post has closed
- Circulation of applications to rest of Appointing Committee – **two days** after collection
- Initial meeting to consider applications – **two days** after applications have been circulated.
- Shortlist selected for interview – Personnel informed – interviews to take place at least **one week later** provided that applicants have previously been advised of the date (e.g. in the advertisement or further particulars). If applicants have not been forewarned then the interviews should take place at least **two weeks** after final short-listing has been carried out.

Using the above as the minimum amount of time needed between the advertisement being sent to Human Resources (Personnel) and interview date, the whole process takes six weeks. However the above has assumed that all meetings and discussion have been pre-planned. **If planning has not been properly considered interviews could take place much later with candidates being offered other posts.**

Confidentiality

All proceedings of Appointing Committees, including the names of candidates, are strictly confidential and must not be divulged to those who are not members of the Appointing Committee, other than authorised University officers. The Chair of the Appointing Committee may decide at the time of advertising that certain details of short-listed candidates who are called to give a presentation should be available to members of the selected audience by way of a brief resume of relevant information.

This process may be followed only if the further particulars of the post have stated that this will happen and that the candidates may specify at the time of application that their application should remain confidential throughout the appointing process. In such cases, the Appointing Committee should decide how the confidentiality could be maintained whilst still requiring the candidate to give a presentation.

Distribution of Applications

The applicants will return their applications to Human Resources where they will be numbered and collated.

The Chair of the Appointing Committee (or nominated contact) should give Personnel at least two days notice of their intention to collect the applications; this will be after the closing date. Original applications will not be sent in the internal post.

Accompanying the applications will be a list of all candidates. The Chair of the Appointing Committee is responsible for arranging photocopying and distribution of the applications to the other members of the Appointing Committee. For professorial posts Personnel will photocopy application forms

Any applications received after the deadline can be considered if the panel wishes. If this is the case they can be collected by arrangement from Human Resources / Recruitment.

Long listing

In discussion with the other Panel members it is for the Chair of the Appointing Committee to decide whether the Committee would like to select a long-list of candidates or whether they would prefer to go straight to shortlist.

Long listing entails selecting candidates on whom the Committee would like to take up references. The Committee can then use the references to help decide who should be selected for interview. When considering whether to use a long list the Head of Department should bear the following in mind:

- The proposed timescale for interview - at least two weeks should be allowed for references to be requested and returned.
- For various reasons some candidates may not wish references to be taken up at an early stage. Using references as a selection method would therefore unfairly disadvantage such candidates.
- Often not all of the requested references arrive in time to be useful; once again this may disadvantage a candidate through no fault of their own.
- Taking references at an early stage can create an expectation that the applicant has been selected for interview.
- No more than two references should normally be taken up for each candidate.
- Where an applicant has specified more than two referees the Head of Department **MUST** indicate to Personnel which references they would like.

The list of all candidates supplied to the Head of Department should be used to indicate which candidates have been selected for long listing. The Vice-Chancellor does not normally participate in long listing.

These instructions should also confirm whether applicants not on the long-list should be rejected at this stage.

Short listing

The selection of those to be interviewed. The pro forma in Appendix D should be used in all instances, this details the desirable and essential criteria set out in the Person Specification. The Chair of the Appointing Committee must return a copy of this form to Human Resources / Recruitment along with all the notes made during the shortlisting process and the Interview Schedule - a list of candidates to be called for interview detailing times and location and, where appropriate, those for whom references should be called prior to interview.

Each application is compared by the panel members against the criteria listed. Those whose applications most closely meet the criteria will progress to either further short listing or to the final selection stage. As part of our commitment to good practice in employing disabled people, prescribed in the Two Ticks symbol programme, you will interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria as set out in the Person Specification and consider them on their abilities. Human Resources will advise the Chair of the Appointing Committee if any disabled candidate who you have indicated on your short-listing sheet meets the minimum criteria has not been short-listed.

There are no guidelines on the number or proportion of applicants who should be short-listed for interview. It is good practice to interview a number that can be accommodated in one day. Therefore if there is a large number of apparently suitable applicants, the Committee need not short-list all of them.

A further review of the applications against the criteria should be used to select the final group to be interviewed. This should be done with reference to the desirable criteria and the depth of experience and the focus of the application to the essential criteria. It is important at this stage not to let subjective views come in to play.

References

Human Resources / Recruitment will call references for those long – listed or short-listed. Please allow two week for referees to respond.

References received by e-mail through recognised official accounts are as acceptable as those received on headed paper. If the validity of a reference is doubted then you should consider contacting the referee by telephone to confirm the details.

Professorial posts

References returned electronically will then be forwarded on to all members of the Panel, or to a named departmental contact for collation. If references are forwarded to individual Panel members they must take responsibility for collation.

SELECTION

Methods of Selection

The methods of selection adopted by an Appointing Committee should include an interview, this can be face to face, via video links or through conference telephone calls. To improve reliability, the selection process includes consideration of the information in the candidate's application form and where they are called, in references. Appointing Committees should bear in mind the full range of skills, aptitudes and experience for all the duties of the post, and should ensure that they explore fully each candidate's application in these respects. The Committee should do this through appropriate questions during the interview, and might also wish to set tests to examine particular skills. For example, all teaching faculty posts have teaching as an important element of the job, and Committees may wish to ask candidates to give a presentation. If a candidate has not had the experience to make such a test appropriate, the Committee nevertheless should determine whether he or she has those aptitudes that underpin competence in teaching, and not simply knowledge of the discipline.

All methods of selection must be valid in that they will indicate whether a candidate meets certain selection criteria. You must take care that adjustments are made to any selection process where required by a disabled person.

Please refer to the section on equality and diversity in the Recruitment And Selection Guidance Notes For Appointing Committees.

Notes on the preparation required for interviews as well as on their conduct can be found in the Recruitment And Selection Guidance Notes For Appointing Committees

MEMBERSHIP OF APPOINTING COMMITTEES

In all cases it is desirable that the membership should consist of both men and women. Under no circumstances should anyone be interviewed by only one interviewer.

The composition of Appointing Committees is determined by the head of the relevant unit under authority delegated by the Council through the Vice-Chancellor. In all cases it is **essential** that the Chair of the committee has received training in recruitment and selection techniques and that a member of the Committee should be familiar with the working conditions of the post.

For Professorial posts: ¹Membership should include at least the following:

- The Vice-Chancellor (Chair),
- Three permanent non-probationary members of the academic staff appointed by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, to include the relevant Dean and

¹ The current membership of a Professorial Appointing Committee is set out on page 77 of the 'Organisation of the University 2012/13' document on the Governance website.

- at least one member of the relevant Department or School,
- At least one external assessor appointed by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the foregoing members of the Committee,
- A non-probationary member of the academic staff belonging to the relevant Department or School elected by the academic staff of that Department or School*.
- If the internal membership of the Committee does not include a representative of the relevant discipline or field of interest, a second external assessor should be appointed.

AND although not officially specified in regulation:

- An independent Professor from outside of the Department (if not included above).
- Committees may co-opt others onto the panel at the discretion of the Chair.

*Election can take place very simply by email with suggested members circulated to the Department by the Head of Department or Dean.

Once established and approved by the Vice-Chancellor the names of the members of the Appointing Committee will be given on a memorandum from the Vice-Chancellor Inviting members to serve on the Committee.

Please note that the Vice-Chancellor is ALWAYS the Chair of Professorial Appointing Committees. However as he is **not** involved in organization at the initial stages the Head of Department is the person nominated by the Vice-Chancellor to oversee the organizational process.

NB: For appointments made to the Brighton and Sussex Medical School please refer to the Personnel Officer for the Medical School.

For Non-Professorial posts

Membership should be confined to permanent members of the academic staff and to external assessors of academic staff status from other institutions and should include at least the following:

- a Chair appointed by the Vice-Chancellor: the Vice-Chancellor will normally appoint either the Dean of the relevant School or the relevant Head of Department (if the person appointed as Chair would be a member of the Committee in one of the following categories, he or she will not be replaced in that category);
- an academic member of SMG as designated by the Vice-Chancellor;
- the Dean(s) of the relevant School(s) or nominee(s);
- the Head of Department or nominee;
- one member of the teaching staff of the Department elected by the teaching staff
- members of that Department*.
- the Chair may co-opt up to two further members of the teaching staff, not more than one of whom should be from the Department, in the light of the particulars of the post.
- If the Committee contains no one from the relevant field of interest: at least one external

**Election can take place very simply by email with suggested members circulated to*

the Department by the Head of Department or Dean.

Once established the names of the members of the Appointing Committee will be given on a memorandum from the Vice-Chancellor inviting members to serve on the Committee.

For appointment of less than one year it is not always necessary to have all of the above members sit on an Appointing Committee. However in these cases composition should be discussed with your Personnel Officer.

NB: For appointments made to the Brighton and Sussex Medical School please refer to the Personnel Officer for the Medical School.

FINAL SELECTION

Majority Voting

In all cases it is desirable that decisions should be arrived at by consensus rather than by voting, but if voting is necessary the Chair has a casting vote as well as an initial vote.

Recommendation on Appointment

The Chair can contact the successful candidate to inform them that a recommendation will be made to Personnel to offer the appointment but care should be taken to ensure that the candidate is aware that the post will be offered subject to satisfactory references, Occupational Health clearance, proof of eligibility to work in the U.K. and the approval of the Vice - Chancellor. Please be careful not to enter into discussions that could be construed as contractually binding and to make clear that the formal offer will be only be generated by Human Resources.

It is appropriate to state what the recommendation to Human Resources will comprise (including salary recommendations) but it must be made clear that no offer is being made.

To help ensure consistency in starting salaries across the University please contact your Personnel Officer before any recommendation above the starting point for the grade is made.

Recommendations on appointment are to be sent to Human Resources/recruitment on an Appointment form this can be found at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/staffing/forms/foffer.doc>

This will ask for reasons for appointment and non-appointment.

Chairs of panels must also return all application forms and interview notes. Human Resources will keep these with all other documentation relating to the post. Applicants who claim discrimination will often serve questionnaires upon an employer seeking comprehensive details of the whole selection process, without documented information tribunals are free to make inferences that may be detrimental to the University's case. Candidates can also ask to see these papers using the Freedom of Information Act.

Professorial appointments

The Vice-Chancellor should telephone the preferred candidate and any reserve(s). However it is the responsibility of the Head of Department to telephone all those who were not successful and to provide constructive feedback.

Once the preferred candidate has accepted the Head of Department should enter their details on an Appointment Form. (See above)

At the same time as forwarding the form with details of the appointment to be made, the Vice-Chancellor and/or the Head of Department should confirm to the Human Resources Division whether the other interviewees should be officially rejected

The Chair of the Appointing Committee should enter the successful candidate's details on the Appointment Form. The form will contain the following, in addition to the applicant's name and number as well as authorising signatures:

- Starting date of the appointment, and termination date in the case of fixed term appointments. As Chair of the Appointing Committee you are reminded you should refer to the 'Policy on the use and management of fixed term appointments'.
- Probationary period. The probationary period is set in the appropriate terms and Conditions of Service, unless explicitly waived or reduced with the approval of Human Resources.
- Starting salary. This is set by the Department Head in discussion with the Personnel Officer or by the Vice Chancellor.
- Any other consideration that the Committee wishes to include in the formal contract.

Human Resources will only send a letter when the form has been received. Please note that a letter of appointment will be sent out within two working days from receipt of the form. Please advise the Appointee that this is the case, and not that they will be sent a letter the day after a decision has been reached.

Unsuccessful Candidates

The Chair should contact the unsuccessful candidates by telephone, to inform them of the decision and to provide constructive feedback. Once this has been done the Chair should inform Personnel, who will write to the applicants officially confirming the Panel's decision.

It is good practice for the Chair to speak promptly to any internal candidates who are unsuccessful to inform them of the decision and to give feedback on their candidacy, if requested.

Equality and Diversity

The University is working to promote diversity and the equality of opportunity for all. To support this endeavour the University's Equalities Unit (equalities-unit@sussex.ac.uk) is available for all staff to give help and advice on any equality areas concerned with race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, part time working etc.

Details of the guidance relating to equality and diversity and how this specifically relates to recruitment and selection can be found in the Guidance Notes.

Feedback

It is best practice and reflects well on the image of the University if feedback is given when requested in as full a manner as possible to those who are not short-listed or who have been unsuccessful at interview. Human Resources / Recruitment will draft feedback letters following the return of a feedback request form that they will send to the Chair of Appointing Committees upon receipt of a request for feedback from an unsuccessful candidate. Feedback should refer to the notes made at either the short-listing or interview phase and will therefore concentrate on the candidates' application against the Person Specification. We would normally expect feedback to be supplied to Human Resources / Recruitment within ten days.

Organisational Responsibilities

Organisation of the process is split between Human Resources (Personnel) and the Department. The table below has been written to clarify the stages inherent in the procedure, specifying who takes principal responsibility at each stage:

Professorial Appointments;

Process	Who administers	Completed
Placing of the advertisement in the press	Personnel - Personnel Assistant	
Personnel informed of Committee composition	Head of Department	
Obtain approval for Committee composition from the Vice-Chancellor	Personnel	
Liaise with the Vice-Chancellor regarding possible interview dates (If not previously arranged)	Personnel	
Liaise with main departmental contact to confirm interview date	Personnel	
Booking of Committee room or Vice-Chancellors Office	Personnel	
Informal approach to external assessor	Head of Department	
Official invitation to external assessor	Personnel	
Accommodation booked for external assessor	Personnel	
Collation and photocopying of all applications	Personnel	
Collection of application forms	Head of Department/ Departmental Coordinator	
Committee convened for long-listing/ Long-listing carried out via email	Head of Department	
Personnel informed in writing of those selected for long-listing on the list provided	Head of Department	
References taken up by email wherever possible and forwarded onto the Appointing Committee	Personnel	
Application papers of long-listed candidates sent to the External Assessor for comments	Personnel	
External Assessors comments forwarded to the Head of Department for circulation to the rest of the Committee and copied to the VC.	Personnel	
Long-listed references circulated to the Committee (but not the external assessor)	Personnel	
Short-listing takes place	Panel	
Personnel provided with names of the final shortlist plus timings for the day with consideration being given to arrangements for lunch	Head of Department	
Presentation arranged	Head of Department	
Short-listed candidates invited for interview	Personnel	
Interview day: Room booked Lunch arranged Accommodation arranged	Personnel in liaison with Head of Department	
Notes taken on decision	Head of Department	

Non Professorial Academic appointments

Process	Who administers	Completed
Interview day: Room booked Lunch arranged as necessary Presentation arranged	Head of Department	
Placing of the advertisement in the press	Personnel	
After closing date collation and numbering of application forms	Personnel / Recruitment	
Collection of original application forms only – photocopies will NOT be provided	Head of Department	
Applications photocopied and distributed to the Appointing Committee	Head of Department	
Committee convened for long-listing/ short-listing	Head of Department	
If appropriate Personnel informed of long-listed candidates on the list provided	Head of Department	
References taken up on long-listed candidates by email if possible and forwarded to the Appointing Committee	Personnel / Recruitment	
Committee convened for short-listing	Head of Department	
Personnel provided with names of the final short-list plus a clear timetable for the day with consideration being given to arrangements for lunch	Head of Department	
Short-listed candidates invited to interview	Personnel / Recruitment	
Accommodation arranged	Personnel / Recruitment	
Notes taken on decision	Head of Department	

GGC 01 March 2005