

PART B

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. PURPOSE

To ensure that Queen's University Belfast operates best practice in the Recruitment and Selection of its staff. These guidance notes complement the Appointments Procedure but do not form part of that procedure and may be amended when appropriate.

2. CATEGORIES OF STAFF

Procedure will be followed when appointing academic staff, academic-related and support staff.

a. Academic Staff - Academic Staff includes Professors, Lecturers and Research Staff of the University and such other classes of persons as the Senate may, from time to time, determine. A 'Lecturer' includes Readers, Senior Lecturers, Senior Lecturers (Education) and Lecturers (Education). The term 'Research Staff' includes Research Fellows, Senior Research Fellows and Research Assistants.

b. All other Staff - Staff means the members of the staff of the University, who are not academic staff, and includes academic-related, clerical, operational and technical staff.

3. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The University is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all applicants. This is intended to ensure that the University appoints the best person for every post and that decisions are based on job related criteria. It builds upon principles which will promote equality of opportunity and therefore should be read in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Policy. Where the University has adopted an affirmative action programme to address an under representation of a particular group of persons; for example, men or women, or persons with a disability, a statement encouraging applicants from the relevant under represented group may be included in the job advertisement.

The University will provide reasonable adjustments to disabled applicants throughout the recruitment process. Forms are available in a range of formats, font size or in Braille or audio formats.

If applicants require any support during the selection process, they will be asked to disclose at application or they can contact the Human Resources Directorate (hr@qub.ac.uk).

Further information regarding Equal Opportunities matters can be found at: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/DiversityandInclusion>

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

All Panel members must respect the confidentiality of the process. Particular care must be taken in relation to sensitive personal data. It is of paramount importance that Panel members should treat all applications in the strictest confidence. Details in relation to the interview performance of any applicant should not be discussed with anyone outside of the Panel or Human Resources.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES (RESOURCING)

HR (Resourcing) will provide support and guidance on best practice in recruitment and selection and the application of the University's procedures. In particular, they will liaise with the Chair to provide advice and guidance in relation to:

Developing the job/person specification, advertising, timelines for shortlisting and interviews, identifying the most suitable means of assessment, and ensuring that appointment documentation is issued to successful applicants.

6. DEFINING THE JOB

The Job Summary sets out the key elements of the role in terms of its general purpose, its main activities and responsibilities and in relation to planning and organising, resource management responsibilities and internal and external relationships. An accurate Job Summary will mean that the right information is given to applicants when the position is advertised preventing any misunderstanding about the role.

The Employee Specification sets out the relevant criteria for the role in terms of Education and Qualifications; Experience; Other Skills and Knowledge; Presentation; Personal Qualities; and Special Factors and Other Requirements. The criteria are used to assess applicants and make selection decisions. The criteria are provided in the form of Essential and Desirable requirements where the Essential criteria outline the absolute minimum which candidates must meet and Desirable criteria relevant to the post are those preferred requirements which may indicate better performance in the role.

7. APPLICANTS

All roles will be subject to an applicant submitting an application or CV and any other information required in relation to that specific post.

Applications received after the specified closing date should not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances and at the sole discretion of the University.

On occasions where the University is made aware that a disabled applicant could not submit an application on time for a reason related to his/her disability, the University will allow that late application to be considered by the shortlisting panel provided that the shortlisting process has not yet taken place.

8. ADVERTISING

The following are examples of occasions where public advertisements may not be appropriate.

Academic Management Posts

The positions of Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Dean of the Graduate School shall be advertised externally. It is the normal practice of the University to trawl internally for Deans at Faculty level, Heads of School and other posts such as Director of Research and Director of Education as these posts are normally of a fixed-term duration. The University, however, reserves the right to advertise such posts externally.

Secondment

Occasions may arise when there are opportunities for short-medium term career development opportunities. In these circumstances and where the opportunity is for a period of more than six months, the opportunities will normally be internally trawled within the University. Where the opportunity is for a period of less than six months, reference should be made to the policy on Employees Temporarily Undertaking Additional Duties. (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/ActingUp>).

Internal Mobility

Occasions may arise to promote permanent career development opportunities and as such permanent positions may be advertised internally. The University has an affirmative action plan in place and our Diversity and Inclusion Unit will advise if an internal trawl is appropriate.

Restructuring within a School/Directorate

This occurs when new duties are allocated among existing employees and the overall head count within the School/Directorate does not increase. To advertise these duties publicly could result in an external appointment and thus leave a member of staff in a redundancy situation. In particular, it must be clearly established that no additional posts have been created and that no vacancy in fact exists.

In circumstances where more than one member of staff could be allocated additional duties which may lead to a regrading, then they must all be considered by the appropriate manager in a systematic and objective manner. This may, for example,

involve a limited internal trawl amongst the eligible staff.

Redundancy

In accordance with the agreed Redundancy Procedures all reasonable measures will be taken to avoid redundancy. If a vacancy within the University can be filled by an employee, who would otherwise be made redundant, then this vacancy does not need to be advertised and the otherwise redundant employee may be redeployed. Redeployment of staff will not occur when the vacant post is considered to be specialist in nature, for example, requiring specific qualifications and/or experience. Guidance on the application of this scheme can be found in the Redundancy Procedure.

Extension to a Temporary or Fixed-term Contract

If a temporary or fixed-term contract is nearing completion and, at the same time, another similar vacancy arises within the University, an employee may be offered this vacancy and his/her contract extended. An extension may involve a new project but will involve similar duties and, the employment must be continuous.

Named Research

This occurs when external funding has been secured on the condition that the work is carried out by named academic/research staff. To publicly advertise such a position could jeopardise the funding.

Development of Work in Hand

Occasions may arise, for example, where funding has been secured to extend a research or other project. This could be the case with doctoral students where postdoctoral development will lead to the publication of the individual's work. It will be made clear that the contract will terminate on completion of the research and be of a temporary nature.

Reserve Lists

Where a post can be filled by the use of a valid reserve list for 12 months.

9. PRE-INTERVIEW INFORMATION AND DISCUSSIONS

It is usual and reasonable for applicants for academic and senior non-academic posts to seek detailed information about the post. Applicants may also wish to visit the University to see the facilities and the work undertaken by the Faculty/School or Directorate in question.

Where it is considered reasonable to do so, arrangements will be made to facilitate such requests, as the University considers pre-interview discussions and visits to be an

important part of the recruitment process for such posts. Contact names and details of the arrangements for pre-interview discussions and visits will be made known to applicants in the advertisement, in the recruitment information pack or via the invitation to interview.

10. CANVASSING

The University recognises that it is appropriate to provide potential applicants with the fullest information through the Search or 'Pre-Interview Discussion' process. Canvassing occurs when an applicant, or an advocate of an applicant, endeavours to gain unfair advantage in relation to employment. If a member of the Recruitment Panel is approached in such circumstances, a record of the nature of the discussion should be made and reported to the Human Resources Business Partner.

Ultimately it will be for the Human Resources Business Partner to decide whether the applicant should be disqualified from the selection process.

11. TWO-STAGE SHORTLISTING PROCESS FOR COMPETITIONS ATTRACTING A LARGE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS

The Recruitment Panel may request HR (Resourcing) to undertake a screening process where all applicants will be assessed prior to shortlisting. Screening of applications is not mandatory and is an optional step within the

University's recruitment process. When deemed appropriate, an initial assessment will be undertaken based on the essential criteria set out in the Job Details. The process will be applied fully and fairly in assessing all applications received.

12. SHORTLISTING

The Recruitment Panel should assess the applications to determine which applicants are to be called for interview. At least two members of the Recruitment Panel should undertake the task of shortlisting. Where practical, they should be persons of different gender and community background.

Shortlisting dates and interview panels should be arranged by the Faculty, School or Directorate well in advance.

The Chair will ensure that the Recruitment Panel:

- (i.) Understands the process.
- (ii.) Is clear about the meaning and application of the criteria listed in the Employee Specification. The essential/desirable criteria may be enhanced, but no new criteria may be introduced.
- (iii.) Agrees the prioritisation of the desirable criteria.
- (iv.) Applies the agreed criteria consistently to all applicants.

13. FEEDBACK AT SHORTLISTING

Feedback is not provided to unsuccessful applications at shortlisting, due to the high volume of applications received.

14. SELECTION PROCESS

The primary method of selection by Queen's University Belfast is by means of Recruitment Panel which is established in respect of each post. The Panel is established in respect of each post and is asked to recommend a candidate for each role.

15. RECRUITMENT PANEL

The purpose of the Recruitment Panel is to assess the merit of each applicant and to make a recommendation for appointment. The hiring manager and or Chair should select Recruitment Panel members during the planning stage of a recruitment exercise. Panel members should be available to attend all interviews, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all candidates.

The Recruitment Panel should be comprised of individuals who are the most technically qualified to make decisions about the suitability of candidates. The University seeks to ensure Recruitment Panels represent the diversity of the organisation, and in particular, panels should contain both men and women. Where practicable this will include one member from each NI Community Background.

Under no circumstances should you have one person interviewing, regardless of grade, responsibilities or duration of post.

The size of the Recruitment Panel should be proportionate to the size and purpose of the role and will normally include the immediate line manager of the vacant post and a colleague who is familiar with the area of work. If the appointment is to a directorate providing services to the rest of the University, consideration should be given to inviting an end user of these services to join the Panel.

The recommended Panel composition detailed Table 1.

16. EXTERNAL ASSESSORS

An external assessor may be invited to participate as part of a Recruitment Panel where it is considered necessary to provide expert advice and guidance to panels on the suitability of candidates for such an appointment. The external assessor is a subject expert or other relevant representative who is not a University employee.

Clinical appointments with external bodies will have different Recruitment Panel compositions to those recommended. Where appropriate up to a maximum of three representatives from the NHS and a Royal College Representative, if required.

Director of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies Recruitment Panel to be determined by Faculty Pro Vice- Chancellor in consultation with the Vice Chancellor and Human Resources.

17. CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN WITHDRAWAL FROM A PANEL MAY BE APPROPRIATE

In circumstances where a Panel member (including an external assessor) is related or has close personal links to an applicant for a post, this should be disclosed to the HR Business Partner or Recruiter. In such circumstances the panel member must withdraw from the selection process.

18. REFERENCES

References are confidential to the members of the Panel and the contents should not be disclosed to anyone else. Referees, however, need to be made aware that the references provided can be called as evidence in legal proceedings and that, under the Data Protection Act, applicants may have a legal right to see a reference.

19. INTERVIEWS

The most effective form of interview is face to face, where the candidate meets all of the Panel members. However, it is recognised that there will be occasions when a candidate is unable to attend for interview. In these circumstances, consideration may be given to organising a video conference, Skype or telephone interview.

Table 1 Recommended levels of representation

Appointment	PVC (Including Dean of the Graduate School)	Faculty Deans and Heads of School	Professor	Academic	Clinical Academic
Specified Chair	VC or nominee	PVC or nominee	PVC or nominee	Head of School or nominee	Head of School or nominee
Minimum Panel Size	5 (Including a Pro-Chancellor)	4	4	4	4
Appointment	Research	Professional Services Director	Academic Related	Other Support Staff	Temporary Staff
Specified Chair	Head of School or nominee	Registrar or nominee	Head of School/ Director or nominee	Head of School/ Director or nominee	Head of School/ Director or nominee
Minimum Panel Size	3	4	3	3	2

*All Panel members should be operating at a comparative level to the vacancy except in some instances where specialised expertise may be required.

20. MARKING

The marking system is numerical and includes the facility to weight the factors appropriately. The framework and weightings will be agreed at the shortlisting meeting.

For academic and senior management positions guidance will be sought from the subject expert(s) on experience. An agreed panel mark will be determined for this factor.

Each panel member will be responsible for completing the remaining factors on their own Interview Rating Form, awarding an individual mark and making comments in each section of the Rating Form.

For all other posts, and, when appropriate, advice should be taken from the subject expert(s) on the first two factors, i.e. education and qualifications and experience.

21. SELECTION DECISION

A summary report of the proceedings will be recorded on the Interview Summary Sheet, clearly specifying the reasons for the decisions reached, paying particular attention to those candidates deemed unsuccessful.

22. POST INTERVIEW

All documentation in connection with the recruitment exercise will be returned to the HR following the interview and will be

retained in accordance with the University's Retention Policy.

23. NOTIFICATION TO CANDIDATES

The Chair of the Panel or nominee will normally advise the successful candidate by phone that they have been recommended for appointment.

24. SALARY DETERMINATION

The Head of School, or Director of Administration Area, and the Chair in conjunction with Human Resources, will recommend the commencing salary, probationary period and start date. Human Resources will provide the appropriate salary information relating to the post.

Specific information on how the starting salary is determined is provided in based on the University Salary Scales, the use of Supplemental Pay and Award of Related Support Packages.

Clear criteria must be used which applies to all staff on an equal basis and justification is recorded in support of the recommendation for the starting salary.

25. REDEPLOYMENT

In accordance with the redeployment section within the redundancy procedures, redeployment of staff will not occur when the vacant post is considered to be specialist in nature, for example, requiring specific

qualifications and/or experience not matched by the individual.

26. SEARCH PROCEDURE

Search arrangements may be put in place where appropriate for appointments to senior positions or positions which have proved difficult to fill. The Search Procedure is an additional mechanism to assist the normal arrangements for recruitment and selection by open competition. Search arrangements may be undertaken by a specially convened internal Search Committee or by appropriately engaged Executive Search Consultants or a combination of both. The Search Committee or Executive Search Consultants may be delegated to assess candidates in relation to the requirements of the post and recommend a shortlist to the Appointment Panel. The Search Procedure must be operated with sensitivity and care to ensure compliance with current legislation (including equality and fair employment legislation) and the Fair Employment in Northern Ireland Code of Practice.

Search arrangements may be undertaken by a specially convened internal Search Committee or by appropriately engaged Executive Search Consultants or a combination of both. The Search Committee or Executive Search Consultants may be delegated to assess candidates in relation to the requirements of the post and recommend a shortlist to the Appointment Panel.

The Search Procedure is designed to support the selection process by securing the best list of candidates applying for posts within the University. It is expected that this procedure will be used regularly for appointment to Academic and other specialised posts, particularly for Chairs, Directors and some specialised Academic positions. Executive Search Consultants may, where appropriate, be engaged to support alternative methods of attracting candidates. The Search Procedure does not in any way replace the selection process. Great care must be taken to ensure that the use of the Search Procedure is consistent with the relevant legislation and comply with University Statutes and regulations and that no candidate for a post receives preferential treatment of any sort. It follows that “search” is to be used only as a means of introducing the University (and N. Ireland) to suitable people from whom applications would be welcomed and encouraged. It should be made entirely clear throughout the process that any invitation to visit or to consider applying for posts is without prejudice to the normal operation of the Recruitment & Selection procedures and involves no commitment by the University.

“Search” is also designed to encourage an open mind about the possibility of life and employment in Northern Ireland. It is an exercise in the provision of information and the correcting of misconceptions. Partners of potential candidates should receive every encouragement to come and see Queen’s

University and Northern Ireland for themselves to allay any apprehensions they may have.

The Search Procedure should be operated as follows:

The appropriate Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Head of School or Director in conjunction with the Human Resources Directorate will be responsible for the search arrangements. Such arrangements may include the establishment of a search committee or the engagement of search consultants. The search committee or search consultants can contact appropriate individuals and advise them of the vacancy and further particulars. The intention is to assist in securing a better applicant pool. Applications for posts must be completed in order to ensure that the appropriate monitoring is taking place.

Visits to Schools/Directorates can be facilitated either prior to the receipt of a completed application or following receipt of a completed application. The purpose of the visit may be:

- (i.) to make the applicant aware of the facilities that are available either within the School/ Directorate and/or University;
- (ii.) to introduce the applicant to key people within the discipline;
- (iii.) to provide information on housing, schools and other relevant matters associated with relocation to Northern Ireland.

It is essential that, with both the search process and visits to the University, the

University is represented by a senior member of staff. Where it is necessary for a member of the Recruitment Panel to meet applicants as part of a visit to a School/Directorate, extreme care should be exercised in order to ensure that no applicant is seen to be or is receiving preferential treatment. This approach will protect the integrity of the selection procedure while introducing applicants to the University and Northern Ireland.

The Search Committee or Executive Search Consultants may be delegated to assess candidates in relation to the requirements for the post and recommend a shortlist to the Recruitment Panel. It remains however, the Recruitment Panel’s responsibility to agree the actual shortlist of candidates.

Where posts are supported by outside funding, the above principles continue to apply, but the actual “search” procedures to be used will be discussed with the external sponsor.

The engagement of Executive Search Consultants should be in accordance with the relevant University purchasing arrangements.