



Recruitment Policy

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1. Purpose and scope

1.1 Recruiting the right candidate is one of the fundamental steps managers take to ensure that we continue to offer our students the highest quality of teaching supported by excellent support services and to ensure the continued success of the Group.

1.2 The Group is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and this commitment is fundamental to the recruitment and selection of applicants.

1.3 The Group is also committed to embedding recruitment processes that proactively address imbalances in the ethnicity profile of the workforce at all levels.

1.4 This Recruitment and Selection Policy applies to the recruitment of permanent and fixed term contract staff, however the principles of this policy should be adhered to when recruiting temporary and casual staff and applying acting up or secondment arrangements. This policy does not apply to Senior Post Holders whose appointment procedures are defined by statute.

1.5 It is the responsibility of all recruiting managers and staff involved in recruitment and selection to adhere to this policy and to read it in conjunction with College safeguarding policies. The HR team can provide advice at each stage of the recruitment process.

1.6 Candidates will be treated fairly, equitably, with respect and courtesy so that their experience of the Group is positive, irrespective of the outcome. The recruitment process is an important public relations exercise, which can enhance the reputation of the Group.

2. Statutory responsibilities

2.1 The Group is committed to equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection, therefore the principles of the Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and related documents are inherent in this policy.

2.2 The Policy sets out how to ensure that our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 are adhered to and safer recruitment practice is followed to ensure that our recruitment and selection process assists in deterring, identifying and rejecting those who may be a safeguarding risk to our students.

2.3 To meet our requirements as a Disability Confident Employer, the Group has committed to interviewing any candidate who has declared a disability and meets the essential criteria for the position advertised.

2.4 As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the College complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, the Group is

permitted to ask questions about whether an applicant has any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings which would not be filtered in line with current guidance. The Group's policy towards Criminal Checks and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders is set out in section 11.

2.5 In accordance with the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations, less favourable treatment will be justified on objective grounds. However, the Group will consider whether it is possible to offer fixed-term employees certain benefits on a pro-rata basis.

3. Principles

3.1 Budget approval for the establishment of a new post or the filling of a vacancy must be obtained from the relevant authorisation channel before recruitment commences.

4. Recruitment and Selection Process

4.1 When a vacancy arises the opportunity should be taken to review the position in order to establish whether the post should be replaced or if there is a need to amend the post with additional or different responsibilities/variation of duties/level/ grade.

4.2 Where a new post is created or the duties and responsibilities of the existing post have been amended, the role must be evaluated by the HR Team using the job evaluation process.

4.3 When requesting a role to be evaluated consideration must be given to other roles which are the same or similar to ensure equal pay for work of equal value. The HR team can provide guidance on the evaluation process.

Job description

4.4 Prior to commencing the recruitment and selection process there should be a review of the job description to ensure that it is still relevant and accurate.

4.5 Job descriptions should clearly set out the duties and responsibilities that the employee is expected to carry out and should conform to the Group format.

Person specification

4.6 The person specification should detail the essential skills, experience, abilities and expertise required to do the job. Desirable criteria may also be listed and should include the qualities that would be beneficial to the role but are not essential. We encourage managers to carefully consider which requirements are 'essential' and to use desirable criteria wherever possible in order to open up roles to potential disabled applicants, who will automatically be offered an interview if they meet the minimum (essential) criteria.

4.7 Criteria that impact disproportionately to the disadvantage of specific groups may be discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and should be avoided at all times. When composing person specifications, managers can seek guidance from the HR Team at any time.

4.8 Each requirement or criterion of the person specification must be relevant to the job description and not stipulate the length of experience required in terms of specifying the number of years' service or ask for higher levels of qualification than is required for an individual to be able to carry out the responsibilities required of the role.

4.9 Particular qualification(s) or membership of a professional body may be essential for some posts and these must reflect the minimum requirement necessary to carry out the job to the required standard. UK qualifications should be stated but other than required membership of a UK professional body, it should be stated that overseas equivalents will be accepted.

4.10 Criteria which are subjective and for which little evidence is likely to be obtained through the selection process should be avoided. For example, criteria such as 'a flexible approach', 'dynamic', 'energetic' are subjective and difficult to assess and can also be considered discriminatory.

4.11 Care must be taken if physical requirements are specified, as the Equality Act 2010 requires employees to make reasonable adjustments to a workplace or the way work is carried out to make the role suitable for applicants with a physical disability. It is therefore important that any physical requirement is stated with these considerations in mind.

5. Advertising

5.1 All permanent posts will normally be advertised internally and externally unless they are being filled as a result of a reorganisation.

5.2 The advertising period will normally be for a minimum of two weeks but these arrangements may be varied at the discretion of the Group. The HR team are solely responsible for the placing of advertisements on the Group website and any agreed external media. Recruiting managers must not place any advertisements on behalf of the Group at any time.

5.3 Where a Team has an established Deputy they will be expected to act-up without having to follow the normal recruitment process. Temporary acting up arrangements within a Team may be advertised to a discrete group of staff once discussed with a member of the HR Team. Acting-up opportunities will not be created unless a substantive post holder is absent for more than four weeks and should not exceed twelve months. The exception is to cover for long-term sickness. There may be exceptional circumstances where, at the discretion of the CEO and Group Principal, an individual may be nominated to act into the position.

5.4 Occasionally, it may be necessary to use a recruitment agency or a head-hunting organisation. This method will only be used where there is evidence to demonstrate that it is necessary, for example where previous recruitment campaigns have been unsuccessful and/or the post is a senior one. This approach must be discussed and agreed with the HR team prior to going ahead. Any costs associated with this will be the responsibility of the local area. Discussions should always be held with the HR Team who will be able to advise on which agencies can be used and can support with the negotiation of costs.

5.5 The safeguarding requirements and to what extent will the role involve contact with the children and will they be engaging in regulated activity must be included in all advertising. The advert should also include the college's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children making it clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken.

5.6 The Advert must also specify the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and person specification and whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

6. Shortlisting

6.1 The following arrangements apply to the shortlisting process but may be varied at the discretion of the Group on a case-by-case basis:

- the applications, with the equality and monitoring data removed, will normally be provided to the shortlisting panel within 24 hours of the closing date,
- shortlisting will normally be carried out by a minimum of two members of the selection panel but this may be varied at the discretion of the Group,
- shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the person specification. The shortlisting panel should avoid dismissing applicants who appear to be overqualified for the role,
- applicants who have declared that they have a disability and meet the minimum criteria should automatically be offered an interview,
- shortlisting decisions should be recorded using the standard shortlisting form provided by the HR team and signed off by the Chair of the shortlisting panel or recruiting manager,
- in most instances the HR team will invite the successful applicants to the interview,
- the applicants will be asked if there are any particular arrangements or reasonable adjustments that are necessary,
- shortlisted candidates should be asked to complete the Shortlisted Candidate Declaration Form of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children; for example; criminal history, barred list information etc.

7. Interviews

7.1 Interviews are usually the main component of the selection process but it may be more suitable to assess the skills and competences of an applicant by using other methods at the interview stage.

7.2 The recruiting manager should consider whether the interview may be supplemented by a presentation, work-based tasks or a work-related assessment. If these methods are to form part of the interview, then the applicant should be informed of this prior to the interview where relevant. For some roles it may be appropriate to assess the applicant's ability to react to an unknown situation or to provide information at short notice as part of the overall selection process. All applicants for teaching posts will undertake a micro-teach activity as part of the recruitment process. This will provide an opportunity for the panel to assess the applicants approach to their teaching, learning and assessment. All applicants unable to provide evidence of English and Maths level for teaching posts will also undertake the BKSb initial assessment for numeracy and literacy as part of the recruitment process. For literacy and numeracy tests, Level 2 is the expected standard of skill level. For literacy, Level 3 is the expectation for teachers of English, including ESOL, and for numeracy, Level 3 is the expectation for teachers of Maths. The HR team can advise on the best course of action in this instance.

7.3 Where possible, the date of the interview should be included in the advertisement for the post or alternatively allow the candidates ample notice, ideally 5 working days of the interview date.

Interview panel

7.4 It is advisable that the interview panel is decided at the advertising stage so that those selected can be available for short listing on the dates advertised.

The interview panel will consist of at least two. Consideration should be given to the following:

- the Chair of the panel must have undergone safer recruitment training, for posts following a restructure, a member of the HR team may be in attendance
- panel members should normally be of the equivalent or higher grade of the vacant post
- the diversity profile of the panel. Chairs should aim for panel members to be a diverse group and demonstrate a mix of characteristics, specifically in relation to age, disability, ethnicity and gender
- the panel must include the line manager of the vacant post
- for all internal applicants interviewing, a member of HR must be present on the panel
- in the instance that a panel member has a close personal or family relationship with a candidate, they must disclose this to the recruiting manager and take not part in the selection process

7.5 If a manager new to the Group has yet to attend the mandatory recruitment training, they must discuss the recruitment process with the HR Operations Manager or their relevant HR Business Partner.

Interview questions

7.6 Interview questions should be prepared in advance of the interview date and relate to the criteria and person specification for the role. Supplementary questions should be used to probe for further information or clarification where candidate answers are incomplete or ambiguous.

7.7 Interview questions should be phrased to ensure that they are not discriminatory or are unrelated to the role. For example, it is legitimate to ask for confirmation of whether an individual can comply with the working pattern of the post, however it is not appropriate to ask applicants for the details of childcare or dependents arrangements.

7.8 Each applicant must be asked the same standard questions with further probing or clarification depending on the answers given, all interviews should have a Safeguarding question and Equality and Diversity question.

7.9 It should also be decided prior to the interview how any other methods used, such as a presentation are marked and their contribution to the overall interview score.

Weighting criteria

7.10 In some instances, it may be applicable to weight the criteria required for a role. This is when a decision is made to consider some criteria as more important or relevant to have than others. This can be used to decide between two equally scored candidates or if a candidate meets some of the criteria or not others. The HR team can provide advice at all stages of interview preparation.

7.11 Interview notes must be taken by all members of the interview panel so that an informed decision is made based on the content of the answers given. Notes should be clear and concise and relate to the answers given and how an applicant demonstrates their knowledge, skills and abilities to do the role. These must be provided to HR following the interview(s).

7.12 Where possible it is advisable to score each candidate after their interview to avoid forgetting information. Each panel member must review their interview notes and mark each question with a score. There must not be an open discussion between panel members to agree on a score for a candidate but this will take place after the interviews have been complete or when all panel members have scored the candidate individually.

7.13 Each answer against the criteria should be scored on a range of 1-5 using the scoring system provided on the interview marking sheets.

7.14 In line with the Equality Act 2010 we are committed to the use of positive action to encourage and support the appointment of applicants from under-represented groups where relevant

7.15 The Data Protection Act allows all candidates to request a copy of the notes from their interview and in the event of an Employment Tribunal the Group would be expected to provide the interview notes for each selection made.

7.16 The selection decision should be documented by the Chair of the interview panel.

7.17 It is the responsibility of the interview Chair to ensure that the completed interview paperwork, along with the applications/CV's are returned to the HR team with the details of the interview outcome and salary to be offered. An offer will not be made to the successful candidate before this paperwork is returned unless approval is granted by the Director of Business Intelligence, Information Systems and People or Principal. Recruitment documentation will be retained by the HR Team for a minimum of 12 months from the date an appointment outcome is notified in case of a complaint to an Employment Tribunal and to satisfy UK Visas and Immigration requirements where a certification of sponsorship is required.

7.18 Where there is an international candidate and a candidate from the UK who are equal after the selection process is complete, and both meet the requirements of the role, the candidate from the UK must take precedence and be offered the role. This reflects statutory employment requirements.

8. Re-organisation and redeployment

8.1 Managers should liaise with the HR Team for advice on the procedure for redeploying staff that have been displaced following an organisational restructure.

8.2 Any member of staff who left the Group on the grounds of redundancy can only be considered for employment when 18 months has lapsed since their leaving date. This also applies for temporary, consultancy and contract roles within the Group.

8.3 Recruiting managers who wish to employ a member of staff where 18 months has not lapsed since their leaving date must present a business case demonstrating their reasons which must be agreed by the Director of Business Intelligence, Information Systems and People.

9. Disability Confident

9.1 The Group is a Disability Confident employer with a commitment to recruit and retain employees with disabilities and health conditions. Further advice and guidance are available from the HR Team.

9.2 Where successful candidates, or where an employee becomes disabled, and have special employment needs the Group will make reasonable changes to premises or employment arrangements.

10. Safer Recruitment

Pre-employment checks

10.1 The Group must act reasonably in making decisions on the suitability of a prospective employee based on checks and evidence, including criminal record checks (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks, together with references and interview information.

10.2 The level of DBS certificate required, and whether a check for any prohibition, direction, sanction, or restriction is required, will depend on the role that is being offered and duties involved.

10.3 As the majority of staff will be engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate which includes barred list information will be required for most appointments. An individual will be considered to be engaging in regulated activity if, as a result of their work, they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training instructing, caring for or supervising children,
- will carry out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children,
- engage in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

10.4 For all other staff who have an opportunity for regular contact with children who are not engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate, which does not include a barred list check, will be appropriate. This would include contractors who would have the opportunity for contact with children and who work under a temporary or occasional contract

10.5 In addition to obtaining any DBS certificate as described above, any member of staff who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching.

10.6 Where there is an urgent need for someone to start who does not have the appropriate DBS Certificate, this may be possible provided (i) the DBS application process has commenced and (ii) an appropriate risk assessment has been completed and signed off.

10.7 If a DBS check is returned, or a self-disclosure is made by the applicant regarding details of convictions, the Recruiting Manager must immediately seek advice from the HR team. A meeting with HR will be arranged and consideration will be given to the following:

11. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

11.1 Given the nature of posts at UCG they are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as such the Group is entitled to ask questions about a prospective or current employee's criminal record. Current employees may be rechecked as determined by the Group.

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11.2 As set out in section 10 above the Group will obtain information about a criminal record through obtaining a DBS Certificate. Where a DBS Certificate shows a criminal record the HR Team will make an assessment to determine whether there is any relevance to the role within the Group.

12. Work Experience, Volunteering and Internships

12.1 A volunteer is a person who gives freely of their time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. Volunteering may be for a limited time in order to complete a particular project or may be on an ongoing basis. Within the Group, a supervised volunteer who regularly teaches or looks after children is not in regulated activity.

12.2 In all cases a DBS check, as outlined in section 10, will be obtained.

13. Right to work in the UK

13.1 It is a criminal offence to employ someone who does not have the right to live and work in the UK. The Group is therefore required to check the eligibility of all prospective employees.

14. Qualifications

14.1 If there are qualifications which are essential to the role, the successful candidate will need to provide evidence of these.

15. References

15.1 Any offer of employment will be conditional on two references being received that are satisfactory to the College. The HR Team will determine who to approach for a reference based upon the employment history detailed in the application form and, should there be any discrepancy, attempt to resolve this with the applicant. Where the prospective employee has not been in employment references will be taken from their academic background. It would not be normal for an employee to have started until all pre-employment checks have been completed. However, in discussion with the HR Team, exceptions may be made where there is an urgent business case.

15.2 The College will only provide a reference that confirms the dates of employment; an employee's job title; the reason for leaving and a brief outline of the key duties of their role. Similarly, the College will only request such information when seeking an employment reference.

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15.3 The HR Team will respond to all reference enquiries and will ensure that any agreed reference is provided by the College. Any personal reference must not be written on College headed paper or in any way that suggests that the contents are endorsed by the College. It must include a disclaimer that any future liability to either the College or the organisation seeking the reference is accepted.

16. Certificates of sponsorship

16.1 If the appointee is a national of a non-EEA country a Certificate of Sponsorship may be required. Only the HR Team is authorised to issue certificates of sponsorship.

16.2 The process can take up to three months and staff cannot under any circumstances be employed until permission is given.

17. Mandatory Training

17.1 All managers involved in the recruitment and selection process must have completed the current Recruitment and Selection training as advised by HR (which will include Safer Recruitment and the Groups' internal Recruitment and Selection workshop.)

18. Induction and probation

18.1 Induction is the final stage of the recruitment process. It is College policy that all new staff undergo a planned induction. Managers are responsible for ensuring that probationary assessments are conducted in accordance with the Probationary Policy.