



ULSTER UNIVERSITY

**POLICY ON
RECRUITING AND SELECTING
EMPLOYEES**

(Last Reviewed 2010)

1. Background

The University is committed to appointing well-qualified, high quality and high performing staff to help achieve its objectives. This policy sets out how this is to be done and is intended to provide a flexible, efficient and effective response to the highly competitive labour market in which the University operates.

The Policy adopts a broad 'principle-based' approach rather than detailing procedural issues in a prescriptive manner. It is intended to set standards to help promote best practice and compliance with relevant legislation. Procedural guidance will be provided in a procedure manual, which will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the dynamic environment in which the University operates.

This Policy was developed following an Equality Impact Assessment in compliance with the University's Equality Scheme under the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. Widespread consultation has taken place in regard to the policy.

This document sets out the University's Policy on:

- Sound recruitment and selection principles.
- Dealing with complaints.
- The role of the Human Resources Department.
- Training in recruitment and selection procedures.
- Monitoring and reviewing the policy and the associated procedure manual.

2. Sound Recruitment & Selection Principles

The University has identified the following four broad principles to underpin its recruitment and selection policy.

- **All selection decisions must be based on merit.**
- **The recruitment and selection methodology adopted for each recruitment exercise must be 'fit for purpose'.**
- **Applicants from all sections of the community should be given equal opportunity to compete in the process.**
- **All selection decisions must be justifiable and well documented.**

Within these broad principles the University will deploy flexible and innovative recruitment techniques to ensure best practice in the recruitment and selection of high calibre staff.

2.1 All selection decisions must be based on merit

All decisions made throughout the selection process will be based on merit. This is important both from an equality perspective and from a business perspective. It is a demonstration of the University's commitment to equality of opportunity and the quality of the service it delivers.

Selection on merit helps ensure that an individual has competencies which will allow her or him to meet the challenges of working in a modern dynamic university. Selection on merit essentially means that the best person for the job gets the job. The selection techniques deployed must give applicants the opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the skills and attributes to undertake the roles and responsibilities of the post.

Those applicants who best demonstrated on the application form their ability to fulfil the criteria will be shortlisted and called to the next stage in the selection process. Appropriate selection techniques will then be applied and the person who demonstrates that they best fit the personnel specification through meeting the competencies of the job will be appointed.

The use of job descriptions and personnel specifications are central to this process and are the foundation of sound recruitment and selection. Guidance on developing job descriptions and personnel specifications is included in the procedure manual.

In the event that no applicant has demonstrated their ability to fulfil the criteria, or if there is significant doubt about the appointability of an individual, no appointment will be made.

(Note: The University has also made a commitment to avoiding compulsory redundancies and to facilitate this has put in place a Redeployment Register. A separate guidance document is available in regard to the Redeployment Register and Redeployment interviews.)

2.2 The recruitment and selection methodology adopted for each recruitment exercise must be 'fit for purpose'

In every recruitment exercise the University will identify the most appropriate recruitment and selection techniques, taking account of guidance from the Human Resources Department on best practice and relevant employment equality legislation.

The University will advertise posts widely in media which will ensure, as far as is practicable, that they reach a wide pool of applicants.

The labour market for well qualified academic staff is particularly dynamic and competitive. Each School in the University should have in place a search committee, which will help identify appropriate potential applicants and sources of applicants. Guidance on these issues is included in the procedural manual. Search committees should take guidance from the Human Resources Department in regard to equality implications of search activity.

The University has put in place an e-recruitment system which enables applicants to:

- search for and view current job vacancies on-line;
- apply for vacancies on-line;
- track progress with their applications on-line;
- retrieve and view previous applications on-line; and
- register for email alerts.

The University will use a wide range of selection techniques including, psychometric testing, assessment centres, specific job-related tests, presentations, assessed public lectures and 'un-seen' presentations. Selection panels will identify the selection techniques which will best allow applicants to demonstrate fully their ability to meet the challenges of the particular vacancy.

2.3 Applicants from all sections of the community should be given equal opportunity to compete in the process

The University is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity and complying with the law and best practice. Employment vacancies will be advertised in media that are accessible to all sections of our diverse society. A statement which encourages and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity will be included in all advertisements. A copy of the University's Job Advertising Guidelines are available on the University's website.

The selection techniques and criteria that are used will be fair, free from unlawful bias and will be appropriate to the post.

It is the University's intention that, on the basis of equality of opportunity and the principle of selecting on merit, the best person for each vacancy will be appointed. The University will not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of gender, age, community background, religion, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or political opinion.

(Note: The University has also put in place separate procedures to ensure that all appointments are in compliance with the requirements of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006.)

2.4 All selection decisions must be justifiable and well documented.

It is essential that all selection decisions are well documented. Standard proforma documentation is available to assist selection panels.

All selection decisions, whether at shortlisting or appointment stages, will be documented and be justifiable on the basis of the criteria in the personnel specification and the duties in the job description.

Applicants will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the selection process in a timely manner. All enquiries in regard to a recruitment exercise will be dealt with in an efficient and open way.

3. Dealing with complaints

The University will respond to any enquiries from unsuccessful applicants or any complaints in regard to the recruitment exercises promptly and openly.

All applicants will receive written notification of the outcome of their application after shortlisting or appointment. Applicants who require further feedback or who wish to make a complaint can do so. The University has a complaints procedure in place to help facilitate complaints and feedback requests. A copy of the recruitment complaints procedure is available on the University's website.

4. The role of the Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department will: process requests to fill a vacancy; contribute to the development of the job description and personnel specification; provide professional advice in terms of how best to fill that vacancy; arrange advertising; issue and receive applications; contribute to selection decisions where appropriate; and to communicate selection decisions to applicants. Professional advice will also be given in regard to labour market conditions, employment and equality legislation, job grading, remuneration, advertising media and selection methodologies.

It is not necessary for a HR Business Partner to attend each and every selection panel meeting. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and, if it is agreed that it is of value to the process, a HR Business Partner may attend.

It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department, rather than the selection panel, to agree appropriate terms and conditions of employment with the successful applicant.

5. Training in recruitment and selection procedures

All members of selection panels must receive training in sound recruitment and selection techniques and the University's Recruitment and Selection Policy. This training must include guidance on employment and equality legislation.

Appropriate training will be provided for panel members who have not been involved in recruitment previously and also for those who have been on panels previously, but who have not attended a training session within the last five years.

The Human Resources Department will maintain a central record of all staff who have attended appropriate training.

6. Monitoring and reviewing the Policy and the associated procedure manual

The e-recruitment system holds information on all recruitment activity including personal data in regard to each applicant and the outcome of their application. This information will be used on a continuous basis to help inform future recruitment activity. The Human Resources Department will prepare appropriate reports on recruitment activity and the workings of the recruitment and selection policy for the most senior decision making bodies in the University in regard to recruitment activity and will include at least an annual report for the most senior decision making bodies.

The University also retains equal opportunities monitoring information on applicants. This data will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the University's Equal Opportunities Policy and its Equality Scheme.

The associated procedure manual will be updated and developed on a continuous basis to reflect the dynamic environment in which the University operates.