



**RESULTS OF AN EQUALITY IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT ON THE STAFF  
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY**

**February 2006**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is for information and presents the results of an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy for the University of Ulster and follows the EQIA consultation document issued in February 2005.

Two meetings of the HEEC Consultation Panel were held as part of the EQIA consultation process. The meetings were well attended by constituent groups and a lively and informative debate took place in regard to the EQIA. Pre-consultation meetings were also held with a number of groups including the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. In addition the University received four written responses. We believe that the proposed actions and the revised Policy will promote equality of opportunity between all Section 75 groups, and we would like to thank all those who have contributed to this EQIA.

Further copies of this report are available on the University's website at [www.equality.ulster.ac.uk/consultation.html](http://www.equality.ulster.ac.uk/consultation.html)

If you have any queries about this document and/or its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:

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## **SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the University in carrying out its functions relating to NI have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

and, without prejudice to these obligations, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Act requires the University to produce an Equality Scheme outlining how it intends to fulfil its responsibilities under the Act. Following consultation on a draft Scheme the University's Equality Scheme (the Scheme) was approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in July 2002.

As part of the commitments within the Scheme the University carried out a screening exercise on all of its existing policies to identify which policies have an impact on equality of opportunity, or have the potential to better promote equality of opportunity, and should therefore be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).

Following consultation on the screening exercise the University decided to conduct an EQIA on its policy for recruitment and selection of staff.

## **SECTION 2 THE POLICY**

### **Policy Aims**

The aims of the Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy are:

- to recruit the best person for the job given all the circumstances;
- as far as practicable, to make suitably qualified individuals aware of vacancies and encouraged to apply;
- to promote fair and equitable access to employment;
- to provide a flexible response to the staffing requirements of the University;
- to contribute to the University's Human Resources Strategy; and
- to contribute to the University's reputation as an outstanding regional University with a national and international reputation for quality.

### **Policy Background**

The University's Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy was last formally reviewed in the early 1990s. Case law emerging from the Fair Employment Tribunal, at that time, led many employers in Northern Ireland to develop Recruitment and Selection Policies which were inflexible. The University followed this trend but was keen to develop a new policy which was more flexible and more in tune with current labour market conditions.

## SECTION 3 DATA COLLECTION

A wide range of data and research was considered during the EQIA, including;

- University of Ulster's Recruitment Monitoring Data;
- University of Ulster's Staff Profile;
- University of Ulster's Article 55 data;
- 2001 Census data;
- Pre-consultation Meetings with The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, The Womens Training Network, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and Disability Action; and
- Relevant Case Law and Research.

## SECTION 4 INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO MITIGATE ADVERSE IMPACT

At the time of the EQIA consultation report, the University highlighted the following actions to eliminate or mitigate the adverse impacts identified. Consultees were invited to comment on the actions and the data on which they were based.

- 1. Positive Action Programme (Gender Equality)**  
The University will develop a positive action programme which will include specific outreach measures to address the issues identified in the EQIA Consultation Document. In developing this programme the University will seek guidance from the Equality Commission and other bodies with an interest in promoting gender equality.
- 2. Affirmative Action Programme**  
In 2003 the University completed its fourth review under Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998. Arising from this review the University developed an outreach affirmative action programme to increase the flow of applicants from any underrepresented community. This programme was agreed with the Equality Commission. The University will continue to implement this programme.
- 3. People with a Disability**  
The University recently completed a survey of disabled staff. Arising from this the University developed an action plan to address the needs of staff with a disability. The University will implement this action plan. It will also liaise with the Equality Commission and other bodies with an interest in disability issues in regard to the implementation of the action plan.
- 4. Policy Development**  
Previous Recruitment and Selection Policies have included substantial guidance on procedural issues associated with the recruitment and selection process. Best practice in this area would indicate that we should adopt a broad 'principle-based' approach to the new policy rather than detailing procedural issues in a prescriptive manner within the actual policy.

A 'principle based' recruitment and selection policy is not intended to be a complete guide to every scenario that may be encountered in the recruitment process, rather it is intended to set standards to help promote best practice and compliance with relevant legislation. That being said there is a need for procedural guidance, however this is best

placed in a procedure manual, which can be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the dynamic environment in which the University operates.

A copy of the draft policy is attached as Appendix 1.

## **SECTION 5 FORMAL CONSULTATION**

The EQIA Consultation Report was made available to the public for widespread consultation on 11 February 2005.

The following actions were subsequently taken:

- Prominent advertisements were placed in six local and regional newspapers inviting the public to comment;
- This report was distributed to the University's standard list of consultees (made up of over 200 key representation bodies);
- An all-staff and all-student email was posted to advise of the consultation exercise;
- The Consultation was launched as a news item on the homepage of the University's website;
- A copy of the EQIA Consultation Document and proforma response document was posted on the University's website;
- An article was published in the University's Staff Newsletter, UU News;
- Posters were displayed in prominent locations across the University's five locations to encourage staff to respond;
- Two meetings of the Higher Education Equality Consultation Panel was convened; and
- The report was made available by request in alternative formats (no requests were received).

## **WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS**

Written submissions to the EQIA consultation document were received from the following:

- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland;
- Disability Action;
- Age Concern NI; and
- A University of Ulster Student.

A summary of written comments received and the University of Ulster's responses is provided as Table 1.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION EQUALITY CONSORTIUM CONSULTATION PANEL**

Two consultation meetings were organised with members of the Higher Education Equality Consortium (HEEC) Consultation Panel. The University of Ulster and Queen's University jointly arranged these meetings. The first meeting took place on 16 March 2005 and the second on 5 May 2005. Members were provided with background information on the EQIAs by a presentation from the University of Ulster and Queen's University, before being invited to comment on the recommendations.

The following seven organisations attended these meetings from the HEEC Consultation Panel:

- Training for Women Network
- Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
- Youthnet NI
- Women's Support Network
- NUS USI
- Disability Action
- Age Concern NI

A summary of the discussions and responses by the University of Ulster is provided as Table 2.

## SECTION 6 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND AGREED ACTIONS

Table 1: Written Comments and Responses to the EQIA on the University of Ulster's Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy

EQUALITY COMMISSION'S COMMENTS	RESPONSES / AGREED ACTIONS
<p><b>Academic Promotions</b> The Commission recommends that the academic promotions policy and procedures are equality impact assessed.</p>	<p>The University rigorously examined this policy during the screening exercise in 2003, and felt it was not appropriate to conduct a full EQIA. The National Framework Agreement<sup>1</sup> will be implemented by 2006 and the EQIA on Job Evaluation will be carried out. The University will continue to monitor and review the promotions policy annually.</p>
<p><b>Provision of Information</b> The University's current written recruitment and selection policy and procedures and additional information on the proposed amendments were not supplied with the consultation document. In the Commission's view this documentation ought to have been provided to consultees in a single package.</p>	<p>The existing policy is so old that the University decided it would not be meaningful to send to consultees.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring</b> The Commission recommends that the University 'take steps' to obtain relevant quantitative data about applicants and employees in those areas where none currently exists (dependants, sexual orientation and political opinion).  The Commission also recommends that the University develop the means to monitor data across equality categories.</p>	<p>The University's new Sexual Orientation Working Group will look at recommendations for gathering quantitative data. The University has recently completed a re-monitoring exercise of staff and has now updated information on staff with dependants. Monitoring forms have been amended to include a question on dependants for all new applicants. The University is awaiting guidance from the Equality Commission on monitoring political opinion as well as sexual orientation.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of Impacts – Methodology</b> In respect to the <i>religious belief</i> category the University relied on the findings of its 4<sup>th</sup> Article 55 review and the Commission notes that the comparative analysis conducted by the University was based on the 1991 Census data, not on updated comparative analysis based on the 2001 Census data.  The methodology used when conducting the</p>	<p>The University is currently preparing its 5<sup>th</sup> Article 55 Review and will be using comparative data from the 2001 Census.  Noted.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The National Framework Agreement was negotiated at national level between the trade unions representing employees in the Higher Education sector and the Universities & Colleges Employers Association. The Agreement is intended to modernise the existing pay and grading structures.

<p>Article 55 reviews is extremely appropriate for analysing the other equality categories for the purposes of conducting an EQIA on recruitment and selection policies.</p> <p>In other equality areas such as race and disability, the consultation paper does not indicate whether a similar style of Article 55 analysis was conducted. It would have been particularly interesting to examine, for example, data in respect of the progress of disabled applicants through the various selection stages.</p>	<p>The number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff and staff with a disability were low, therefore detailed analysis was excluded to protect anonymity.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of Impacts – Proposed Amendments to the Policy</b></p> <p>The Commission is aware that the University intends to produce a new written recruitment and selection policy and procedure. This will create another opportunity to examine the detail of the provisions and to consider their equality implications.</p> <p>The University should pay due regard to the recommendations and advice contained in the equality codes of practice when preparing the new policy and procedure. In particular, the University should have regard to the new code of practice on employing disabled people, which the commission will publish on 16<sup>th</sup> June.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>This will be given due consideration.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of Impact- Ethnic Origin</b></p> <p>It is noted that the EQIA examined the ‘race’ element in respect to <i>ethnic origin</i> only, with particular reference to ethnic minorities. In the Commission’s view the analysis was narrowly focused on the category. It ignores, for example, the <i>nationality</i> element of the <i>racial group</i> definition. The Commission recommends that the University re-examine this issue.</p>	<p>The nationality element of the racial group definition was analysed in this EQIA. No adverse impact was identified. It must be noted that large numbers of speculative applications do not return a monitoring form indicating a nationality.</p>
<p><b>Consideration of measures to mitigate adverse impact</b></p> <p>Commission previously endorsed the affirmative action programme, which the University adopted following the conclusion of the 4<sup>th</sup> fair employment triennial review.</p> <p>Commission welcomes gender equality and disability action plan and looks forward to contributing to the University’s development of appropriate action plans.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Assistance from the Equality Commission is welcomed.</p>

The Commission recommends that the University give consideration to developing an employment equality plan.	This will be given due consideration.
<b>AGE CONCERN'S COMMENTS</b>	<b>RESPONSE / AGREED ACTION</b>
<p>With regard to age, why is there no entry at Grade 1 clerical? This might be contrary to the EU Directive on age, which comes into force at the end of next year.</p> <p>Does the University cross-reference any of the categories? E.g. age, disability, religion and ethnicity.</p> <p>Does the University have information on the ages of new entrants generally?</p>	<p>New grading structure will be implemented with job evaluations, and existing grades will cease to exist.</p> <p>Proportions of staff by race and disability were low; therefore detailed analysis has been excluded to protect anonymity.</p> <p>The University has statistical data on the age of new appointees.</p>
<b>DISABILITY ACTION'S COMMENTS</b>	<b>RESPONSE / AGREED ACTION</b>
<p>Advertisements should be welcoming and encouraging to disabled people; and offered in accessible formats.</p> <p>Application form – sensitive when inquiring about disability for reasonable adjustments, promote social rather than medical model of disability.</p> <p>Are interview panels trained on disability legislation?</p> <p>Consider waiving educational qualifications for disabled people who have attended special schools.</p> <p>Consider waiving interview – try 4-week work placement and investigate supported employment. Revise practice of Grade 2 entry level – investigate apprenticeships, and trainees as entrant process for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Ensure induction procedures facilitate disabled people.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>All staff that sit on interview panels receive appropriate training including equality legislation.</p> <p>This would be subject to the needs of the post. Staff within Human Resources and the Equality Unit will meet with Disability Action to discuss further.</p> <p>The University is supportive of schemes such as supported employment and that would facilitate disabled staff. The University does not have any apprenticeships. Issues raised to be discussed with Disability Action.</p> <p>Noted. The Staff Development Unit ensures that induction procedures meet the needs of disabled staff.</p>
<b>UU STUDENT'S COMMENTS</b>	<b>RESPONSE / AGREED ACTION</b>
<p>Equality impact assessments not seen to be an essential part of ensuring that a degree course caters for the needs of single parents i.e. University holidays do not coincide with primary and secondary school holidays during; crèche facilities over-subscribed; timetabling of lectures takes no account of the primary school day; and Library at Magee non-child friendly.</p>	<p>Comments not related to Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy, but are relevant to EQIA on Student Recruitment and Admissions and will be forwarded to EQIA Sub-group accordingly.</p>

Table 2: Summary of Comments from Members of the HEEC Consultation Panel

COMMENTS RECEIVED	RESPONSE / AGREED ACTION
<p>Gender equality is an issue for female staff in clerical/secretarial jobs in relation to status and pay. Has the University any plans to carry out an equal pay review?</p>	<p>The University is intending to undertake an equal pay review.</p>
<p>The effect of the policy on multiple identities should be recognised and addressed. For example, ethnic minority women affected by the dynamics of ethnicity and gender.</p>	<p>Noted. Due to small numbers of staff from an ethnic minority, the presentation of statistics from both categories by job group may have identified individuals.</p>
<p>Do ethnic minority statistics include both internationally recruited and NI domiciled ethnic minority groups? More detail of recruitment of local NI domiciled ethnic minority groups, (e.g. Irish Traveller and second/third generation Chinese community) particularly in junior posts would be helpful; and also a comparison with overall population figures for ethnic minorities in NI.</p>	<p>Ethnic minority statistics include both international/Northern Ireland domiciled staff. Number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Staff could be reviewed by Northern Ireland domicile only. However, due to low numbers of staff from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, statistics would not be made public to protect anonymity. However, the University is keen to gather qualitative information on local BME groups and will continue to consult with local organisations to consider their needs.</p>
<p>Are retention rates included in this EQIA?</p>	<p>Retention rates are not included in the analysis of this EQIA. The University does analyse leavers for the Annual Monitoring Return and also by responses to an Exit Questionnaire focusing on equality issues.</p>
<p>More details needed on specific interventions for disabled applicants.</p>	<p>Noted. Staff from Human Resources and the Equality Unit will meet with local disability organisations to progress this work.</p>
<p>Welcome the development of a gender equality strategy.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Consider staff networks for under-represented groups i.e. disabled staff, staff from an ethnic minority and consider profiling staff from under-represented groups through publicity/marketing of the University.</p>	<p>The University will review information in welcoming packs for new staff to highlight relevant equality groups/networks. The Equality Unit is co-ordinating a Working Group on Sexual Orientation and a Disability Discussion Forum. The effectiveness of these groups will be reviewed, and the University will consider the possibility of creating other forums for under-represented groups, such as staff from an ethnic minority.</p>

## **SECTION 7 KEY FINDINGS**

The University believes that for the majority of employees and the majority of jobgroups the composition of employees and applicants are in line with expected proportions. The findings from the data collection, research, pre-consultation and formal consultation exercises are set out below:

### **Gender**

In regard to Gender the overall composition of the workforce and applicants is in line with expected proportions. However the data showed that the proportion of females is lower than would be expected in the Academic and Technical jobgroups. The female proportion of the Engineering Faculty is lower than would be expected; and the male proportion of clerical and secretarial staff is lower than would be expected. In the Physical Resources Department certain job types are either predominantly male or predominantly female e.g. security staff are predominantly male.

Findings from the consultation exercises related to the issue of an equal pay review and support for the development of a Gender Equality Positive Action Programme.

### **Religion**

In 2003 the University concluded its fourth review under Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998. This included a detailed analysis of employees and applicants by community background. Under representations were identified as part of the Article 55 review process. The Protestant proportion at the Magee campus and the Catholic proportion in certain job groups at the Jordanstown campus is lower than would be expected.

These areas are addressed by the University in the outreach affirmative action programme arising from the Fifth Article 55 Review, endorsed by the Equality Commission in November 2005.

### **Disability**

The University's Equality Unit carried out a survey of disabled staff in 2004. The survey indicated that there were 45 (1.3%) employees who considered they to have a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA). Arising from this the University developed an action plan to address the needs of staff with a disability. The University will implement this action plan.

Through consultation, Disability Action raised issues including schemes such work placement and supported employment; encouraging advertisements and accessible application forms. The University is supportive of schemes such as supported employment; and advertising and application forms have been reviewed as part of the revised Staff Recruitment Policy.

## **Ethnic Origin**

The non-white proportion of the workforce at 93 (2.6%) is higher than the non-white proportion of the population of Northern Ireland which is less than 1%. The University believes that the composition of employees by ethnic origin is in line with what would be expected, however the University is keen to gather qualitative information on local BME groups and will continue to consult with local organisations to consider their needs.

## **Marital Status**

The marital status profile of staff indicates that the Recruitment and Selection Policy is not producing any adverse impacts. The consultation process did not indicate any adverse impacts.

## **Age**

The University believes that the age profile of staff is in line with what would be anticipated. A comment was received in relation to the introduction of the entry grade, Grade 1 Clerical. A new grading structure will be implemented with the job evaluations associated with the National Framework Agreement.

## **Persons with Dependents**

A quantitative analysis on the impact of the policy on people with dependents was not yet possible. Monitoring forms have been amended to include a question on dependents for all new applicants. The University has a comprehensive suite of family friendly policies to help employees balance their working responsibilities with their other responsibilities. The consultation process did not indicate any adverse impact for those with dependents.

## **Sexual Orientation**

Data is not collected on the sexual orientation of employees and applicants. Having reviewed qualitative information there was no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact in respect of a person's sexual orientation. The consultation process did not indicate any adverse impacts.

The University's new Sexual Orientation Working Group will look at recommendations for gathering quantitative data.

## **Political Opinion**

Data is not collected on the political opinion of employees and applicants. Having reviewed qualitative information there was no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact in respect of a person's political opinion. The consultation process did not indicate any adverse impacts.

## **SECTION 8 CONCLUSIONS**

Taking into account the comments from the consultation exercise and the outcomes in the EQIA Consultation Document, the University of Ulster will take the following actions:

1. Implement the revised Policy Statement on Recruiting and Selecting Employees (attached as Appendix 1). The University believes that the Policy is a vehicle which can help promote equality, diversity and inclusively; and is committed to compliance with the relevant employment equality legislation and the associated codes of practice.
2. Develop a Gender Equality Positive Action Programme to include specific outreach measures;
3. Implement the new revised Affirmative Action Programme agreed with the Equality Commission arising from the Fifth Article 55 Review;
4. Implement the Action Plan arising from the 2004 staff disability survey to address the needs of staff with a disability; and
5. Explore the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic groups through consultation with local representative organisations.

In addition to the above measures, the University had already committed to the following:

6. The Equality Policy and Practice Unit will carry out an internal survey of women's attitudes to promotion as a goal to support equality strategies as outlined in the Human Resource Strategy I; and
7. Carry out an equal pay audit to ensure fair and transparent practices. This will be incorporated into the review of the equal pay process as part of the National Framework Agreement and the 2006/07 EQIA on the job evaluation exercise.

## **MONITORING**

The Human Resources Department maintains a database on all recruitment activity. This database holds personal data in regard to each applicant and the outcome of their application. The information on the database will be used on a continuous basis to help inform future recruitment activity. The Human Resources Department will also prepare an annual report on recruitment activity and the workings of the Recruitment and Selection Policy over the preceding twelve months. This report will be delivered to the most senior decision making bodies in the University.

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 is intended to be updated and developed on a continuous basis to reflect the dynamic environment in which the University operates.

**UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER**  
**POLICY STATEMENT**  
**ON**  
**RECRUITING AND SELECTING EMPLOYEES**

## 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 we intend to recruit and select such individuals. The University recognises that one of the most important task which managers are asked to do is select new employees. This policy is intended to provide a flexible, efficient and effective response to the highly competitive labour market in which the University operates.

Unlike the previous Recruitment and Selection Policy, this Policy adopts a broad 'principle-based' approach rather than detailing procedural issues in a prescriptive manner. It is not intended to be a complete guide to every scenario that may be encountered in the recruitment process, rather it is intended to set standards to help promote best practice and compliance with relevant legislation. That being said there is a need for procedural guidance, however this is best placed in a procedure manual, which can be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the dynamic environment in which the University operates.

This Policy was developed following an Equality Impact Assessment under the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. Widespread consultation has taken place on the contents of the policy.

This document sets out the University's Policy on:

- Sound Recruitment and Selection Principles.
- How we will deal with complaints.
- The role of the Human Resources Department.
- Training for those involved in recruiting and selecting employees
- How the Policy and associated procedure manual will be monitored and reviewed.

## 2. SOUND RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PRINCIPLES

The University has identified the following four broad principles for sound recruitment and selection.

- The recruitment and selection methodology adopted for each recruitment exercise must be 'fit for purpose'.
- All selection decisions must be based on merit.
- 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.

These broad principles allow the University to deploy flexible and innovative recruitment techniques whilst at the same time setting out best practice.

### 2.1 The Recruitment and selection methodology adopted for each recruitment exercise must be 'fit for purpose'

Most employers in Northern Ireland have adopted inflexible recruitment and selection techniques with prescriptive procedural steps which must be followed in all circumstances. The University considers that this is an inappropriate response to the needs of the contemporary business environment. Before embarking on any recruitment exercise the University will identify the most appropriate recruitment and selection techniques taking

account of guidance on best practice and relevant employment equality legislation from the Human Resources Department.

The University will continue to advertise posts widely in media which will ensure, as far as is practicable, that it reaches 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.

The University will also continue to exploit and develop the opportunities presented by information and communication technology. Vacancies will be advertised on appropriate websites, as well as conventional media, and applicants will be given the opportunity to obtain application packs electronically. Opportunities to achieve administrative efficiencies through information and communication technology will continue to be developed.

Selection techniques in Northern Ireland tend to focus on shortlisting and interviewing. While these are, and will continue to be, important selection techniques they are by no means the only techniques which are available. Other techniques available to the University include, psychometric testing, assessment centres, specific job related tests, presentations, assessed public lectures and 'un-seen' presentations. The selection panel must identify the selection technique which will allow applicants to fully demonstrate their ability to meet the challenges of the vacancy.

## **2.2 All selection decisions must be based on merit**

All decisions made through out the selection process must 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. These skills and attributes must be closely related to the needs of the job and the assessment criteria must be made available to potential applicants.

The use of job descriptions and personnel specifications are central to this process. These documents are the foundation of sound recruitment and selection and great care should be taken when they are being developed. Essentially, all selection decisions must be based on the criteria in the personnel specification and any criteria used in the personnel specification must be relevant in terms of assessing an applicant's ability to carry out a duty or duties set out in the job description. If a decision is made, for example, not to shortlist an individual it must be made relative to the criteria in the specification and that criteria must be a test of applicants ability to carry out duties in the job description. Guidance on developing job descriptions and personnel specifications is included in the procedure manual.

In the event that no applicant matches the criteria, or if there is significant doubt about the appointability of an individual no appointment should be made. The University believes that a 'good' vacancy is better than a 'bad' appointment.

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

The Recruitment and Selection Policy is a vehicle which can help promote equality, diversity and inclusively. The University embraces these concepts and is committed to compliance with the relevant employment equality legislation and the associated codes of practice.

The University will continue to advertise employment vacancies in media that will be accessible to all sections of our diverse society. The wording and format of advertisements will be accessible and free from unlawful bias. A statement which encourages and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity will be included in all advertisements.

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

The University believes that equality of opportunity and the principle of selecting on merit are closely linked. As a consequence of the principle of selecting on merit, the best person for the job will get the job irrespective of their gender, community background, religion, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or political opinion.

### **2.4 All selection decisions must be justifiable and well documented.**

Confidence in the recruitment and selection process will be enhanced if selection decisions are justifiable and clearly communicated to applicants. It would be impossible for all applicants to be happy with the outcome of a recruitment exercise, as inevitably some applicant will be unsuccessful. Applicants should however have confidence in the process that lead to the selection decision.

The justification for the selection decision, whether that is a shortlisting decision or the decision of an appointments panel, will be relative to the criteria in the personnel specification and the duties in the job description. If it is decided that an applicant cannot be appointed that decision must be capable of justification relative the criteria for the post and duties required of the post.

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

Applicants can expect to receive accurate and timely information throughout the recruitment and selection process. All enquiries in regard to a recruitment exercise will be dealt with in an efficient manner.

## **3. HOW WE WILL DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS**

Enquiries from unsuccessful applicants and complaints in regard to recruitment exercises will be responded to promptly.

Given the large volumes of applications which the University receives and the resources available, there is a limit to the amount of feedback which can be given to individual applicants. All applicants will receive written notification of the outcome of their application. Applicants who are not satisfied with the outcome or who require further details should write to the Head of Recruitment and Policy. A written response outlining why the application was unsuccessful will be given within 21 days.

Where an unsuccessful applicant is a current employee and her/his manager is on the interview panel, the manager is encouraged to offer direct feedback to the applicant.

#### **4. THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

The University's Human Resources Department provides a specialist recruitment service through its Consultancy and Recruitment Services Unit. Each Faculty and Department in the University has a nominated Human Resources Adviser who will deliver professional advice on recruitment issues.

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 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 Human Resources Adviser 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 Human Resources Adviser 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 FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN RECRUITING AND SELECTING EMPLOYEES**

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 that have attended appropriate training.

#### **6. HOW THE POLICY AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURE MANUAL WILL BE MONITORED AND REVIEWED**

The Human Resources Department maintains a database on all recruitment activity. This database holds personal data in regard to each applicant and the outcome of their application. The information on the database will be used on a continuous basis to help inform future recruitment activity. The Human Resources Department will also prepare an annual report on recruitment activity and the workings of the Recruitment and Selection Policy over the preceding twelve months. This report will be delivered to the most senior decision making bodies in the University.

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 is intended to be updated and developed on a continuous basis to reflect the dynamic environment in which the University operates.

## **7. A FINAL THOUGHT**

The University is committed to appointing well-qualified, high quality and high performing staff to help achieve its objectives. This Policy has established a sound framework of principles on how it intends to recruit and select such individuals.

The University can only achieve its objectives if it continues to appoint employees of the highest calibre. The calibre of the University's appointees is the ultimate demonstration of the success of this Policy.