



**THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S EXCEPTIONAL TALENT POOL
PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

(Effective from 17 May 2017)

1. BACKGROUND

The University is committed to open competitive recruitment in line with best practice and relevant legislation and codes of practice. The vast majority of vacancies will be filled through normal competitive recruitment however, there may be some very exceptional circumstances where it comes to the attention of the University that a world-class academic may be interested in working for the University. 'The Vice-Chancellor's Exceptional Talent Pool' has been established to provide a procedural vehicle for dealing with any such situations as part of the University's strategic investment in staff for *five and fifty* strategic plan.

The exceptional talent pool will only be used in a very small number of cases where the potential exists to recruit a truly world-class academic and where there is a clear and significant strategic gain for the University. The exceptional talent pool will normally be used where the University wishes to make a strategic investment in a particular area and will not normally be used to fill vacancies that arise due to resignations, promotions and retirements.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

The University has developed a generic personnel specification which must be satisfied by all applicants to the exceptional talent pool (see Appendix One). The generic specification includes criteria which sets standards very substantially above the norm. It is intended that only truly 'world-class' academics will satisfy the criteria for the exceptional talent pool.

In order to apply for the talent pool please forward a CV and supporting statement to **Mr Paul Davidson, Head of HR Business Partnering Services at p.davidson@ulster.ac.uk**. The supporting statement should address each of the criteria in the personnel specification and should detail the applicant's views on how they will deliver significant strategic gain for the University.

The applications received for the exceptional talent pool will be reviewed by the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group on a regular basis. Where the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group identifies an applicant who appears to meet the talent pool specification and is working in an academic discipline where strategic investment is appropriate, a selection process will be initiated.

NOTE: The University is under no obligation to draw applicants from the exceptional talent pool. It will only be used in situations where exceptional talent has been identified and the University is in a position to make a strategic investment in the relevant area.

As part of their regular review of applications for the exceptional talent pool, the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group will remove from the pool applicants who do not satisfy the specification or who work in a discipline area where strategic investment is not appropriate.

3. THE SELECTION PROCESS

Where a decision is made to initiate a selection process the applicant identified from the exceptional talent pool will be required to undergo a robust assessment process. The purpose of the assessment process is to test the veracity of the claims made in the written application and to allow the applicant to put forward a detailed proposition in regard to the strategic gain to be achieved through their appointment.

The University may deploy a range of assessment techniques e.g. a formal interview, a presentation, an assessment centre, a formal review of the applicant's research, an assessed public lecture etc. The exact techniques may vary depending on the discipline and the particular circumstances of the application.

The applicant may be invited to meet with a range of academic leaders in order to further explore their proposition in regard to the strategic gain to be achieved through their appointment.

There may be situations where an applicant meets the criteria for appointment but the University is not in a position to make a strategic investment at that time. In such circumstances the University may place the application on hold.

4. IMMIGRATION CONSIDERATIONS.

The exceptional talent pool process will not satisfy the UKVI Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT). Where a post is filled using a recruitment methodology that does not satisfy the RLMT it will not be possible to obtain a 'Work Visa' from the UKVI. Successful applicants who do not hold a UK or EU passport may however make a personal application to the UKVI through their 'Exceptional Talent' immigration route. The University will support the applicant in making an application through the 'Exceptional Talent' immigration route.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S EXCEPTIONAL TALENT POOL

SELECTION CRITERIA

When an application is received for inclusion on the Vice-Chancellor's Exceptional Talent Pool an initial assessment will be made of whether the applicant is working in a discipline area in which the University wishes to make a strategic investment. If the applicant is not in an appropriate discipline area the application will progress no further.

If the application is in an appropriate discipline the following criteria will apply.

1. The applicant must present a compelling proposition as to how their appointment will produce a 'step change' in the performance of the discipline area at Ulster.
2. The applicant must present a range of evidence sources to verify that they are a world-class academic. The assessment of 'world-class' will be made relative to the applicant's career opportunities. Evidence sources could include:
 - An exceptionally strong record of high quality peer reviewed publications that demonstrate international excellence and impact;
 - An exceptionally strong track record, sustained over several years, in securing substantial research funding;
 - Evidence of international esteem e.g. membership of grant awarding committees, editorial boards, national committees and high profile scholarly activity;
 - 'Landmark' awards, publications or prizes
 - Evidence of the ability to deliver a transformational change in either learning/teaching or civic leadership.
3. The applicant must present a convincing proposition as to how they will ensure that their appointment will contribute to the financial sustainability of their School.
4. In considering applications, the University will apply a principle of additionality i.e. it will not be sufficient for the applicant to simply replicate skills, expertise and achievements that already exist in the University, s/he must have additional skills, expertise and achievements.

NOTE: The University is under no obligation to draw applicants from the exceptional talent pool. It will only be used in situations where exceptional talent has been identified and the University is in a position to make a strategic investment in the relevant area.