Recruitment, Selection and Support for new Academic Staff at the University of Bristol

New Policy Document

KEY:

Policy/Procedure: Unboxed text

Guidance: Shaded box
INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the policy, procedure and supporting guidance on all aspects of academic recruitment and selection once a recruitment need has been identified.

POLICY

The University of Bristol is committed to ensuring that it has the right people in place to achieve its vision and mission in an increasingly competitive international market for the best academic talent.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an effective platform to face the challenges of this environment, while ensuring that the University’s commitment to ensuring equality, diversity and transparency throughout the organisation is upheld. It is recognised that recruiting academic staff is a strategically important activity that needs to be undertaken professionally and with the full engagement of all those involved.

A positive approach to diversity allows for the selection of the best person for the job based on merit alone and free from bias on the grounds of factors such as age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or religious belief, that are not relevant to the person’s ability to do the job. Employers that take this approach are more likely to be seen as a fair, positive and progressive place to work by the diverse society that they are part of. This philosophy underpins the University’s Equality and Diversity policy and the best practice principles outlined in this document.

The emphasis here is not only on robust selection criteria and effective decision-making, but on proactively representing the University as an attractive destination for talented academics and recognising that the recruitment and selection process is two-way.

Integral to this policy is a partnership approach in which Personnel Services will work closely with the recruiting department/faculty on co-ordinating the recruitment and selection process and a smooth introduction for new academic staff.

SCOPE

For the purposes of this policy ‘Academic Recruitment and Selection’ refers primarily to recruitment to all professorial posts and to posts on all other levels of Pathway One of the Academic Career Pathways. However, the principles on which the policy is based may also be applied to posts located on Pathways Two and Three.

There is guidance to supplement this policy for clinical appointments.

Click here for guidance on recruitment and selection for all other vacancies, including senior professional/administrative posts.
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Initial planning

Prior to requesting senior level authorisation to recruit, or initiating the first stages of recruitment to an externally funded post, the Lead Recruiter (usually the Head of Department) should contact the Academic Recruitment Team to highlight the recruitment need and initiate early stage planning.

Early contact with the Recruitment Team is required to initiate a short discussion of any issues that are likely to reduce time-scales and improve the effectiveness of the recruitment if they are considered at the outset, such as:

- Obtaining full budget authorisation to recruit to replacement and new roles
- Considering whether it would be appropriate to advertise the post over several profile levels to encourage a more diverse candidate pool (this may impact on the case for vacancy authorisation)
- Any potential for filling the vacancy through redeployment
- Intended time-scale for the recruitment process
- Exploring potential links with related academic vacancies in other departments or faculties to ensure high-impact publicity
- The likely requirements for publicity (e.g. to enable the recruitment team to investigate a campaign strategy)

Prior to the Selection Process Planning Meeting it is recommended that further thought is put to issues such as:

- Thinking about who the potential candidates are e.g. are they UK or overseas? Are they likely to be going through parallel processes at other HEI’s? etc.
- Ideas for a publicity strategy, including networking activity, media advertising and any appropriate positive action
- The need for concerted networking activity along-side advertising, potentially to include departmental visits early in the process
- The potential for keeping vacancies ‘open’ until filled (with a fixed notional deadline for applications in response to advertising). This practice allows more flexibility in recruitment time-scales and can be useful in cases where the initial recruitment drive does not result in an appointment
- Ideas for a tailored and appropriate selection process and who should be involved
- Who should be involved in the Selection Panel and the Search Committee (ideally achieving diversity of representation, and a gender balance)
- Identifying funds available to assist induction and start up in the role (for instance a start up lump sum, pool of travel grants for new staff to access etc).

Authorisation to recruit

After having discussed the recruitment needs with a member of the Recruitment Team, authorisation must be obtained for all posts funded either fully or partially from the core
salary budget. The authorisation pro forma is completed by the Head of Department and the Dean. The Dean will then seek the required authorisation.

Click here for further information about current recruitment authorisation requirements.

Click here for the relevant Practical Steps Application for Approval to Fill a New/Vacant HEFCE-funded Post pro-forma.

**Optimising time-scales**

Ideally, it is recommended that planning for academic recruitment is begun in the summer term, to enable stronger competition with other institutions in the UK and internationally and a strategic approach to planned appointments. An example time-frame is provided below. There will be times when unplanned recruitment needs arise, or time-scales differ from those below. In such cases the lead in time may be shorter.

An example time-frame (aligned with the US recruitment cycle) would be as follows:

- Summer – Establish fundamental staffing requirements and meet with the Academic Recruitment Team to determine recruitment strategy and time-table
- September/Autumn – Targeted networking activity
- October/November – Advertising
- February/March - Selection process
- March/April – Negotiations with the selected candidate
- July – New appointees start (ahead of September, for settling in period)

Although there is no stipulation for the length of time a recruitment cycle should take, there are best practice lead times for key parts of the recruitment and selection process, as outlined below. Whether the process takes place over a concentrated period of time or a more protracted one will vary depending on the specific circumstances of the recruitment exercise. However, a key component will always be planning to enable effective use of flexible recruitment and selection processes which, in addition to mandatory components, offer optional methods to be employed according to need.

Actual time-scales will need to be discussed with the [Academic Recruitment Team](#) but will typically include the following:

For roles up to and including profile level d:

- Generally a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of publication date if print media is selected
- A minimum of 3 weeks from the vacancy going live to the closing date
- 1 week for the short-listing process
- A minimum of 2 weeks’ notice of invitation to the selection process for short-listed candidates
For professorial (level e) appointments:

- Generally a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of publication date if print media is selected
- A minimum of 4 weeks from the vacancy going live to the closing date
- A maximum of 1 week to produce a long-list
- A minimum of 4 weeks until the short-list can be determined (as this is dependent on the receipt of reports from External Assessors)
- A minimum of 3 weeks’ notice of invitation to the selection process for short-listed candidates

Observing best practice lead times makes for a more efficient, smooth and effective selection process for both recruiters and candidates. The benefits include:

**Advertising lead time**
- Allows time for departments to carry out networking and informal publicity
- Allows adequate time for a broad pool of potential candidates to access information on the vacancy
- Increases the chances of attracting a strong pool of applicants
- Ensures equal opportunity of access to vacancy information

**Long-listing/Short-listing**
- Allows time for applications to be reviewed by all those involved and for discussion over this vital part of the selection process
- Enables the recruiting department to conclude the arrangements for the selection process, which may be impacted by the quality and length of the short-list

**Notice to candidates**
- Candidates are able to attend and perform to the best of their ability, having been given adequate time to prepare, arrange time off work, make travel arrangements and arrange cover for care of dependents
- Candidates in general are made to feel respected and valued as they are not put under undue pressure by our process
- Referees and external assessors are allowed sufficient time to respond to our requests in advance of the selection process
- The University presents a professional image to candidates and other external contacts

**Describing the job and the person**

Either before or immediately after obtaining authorisation to recruit, the Lead Recruiter should work with other relevant parties to draw up a draft job description and person specification for the role, using one of the relevant templates.
Some points to consider when producing the job description and person specification:

- The precise essential and desirable requirements for the role should be articulated openly and clearly
- Clearly identifying the areas of specialism that are sought within a broader subject area can result in a stronger field of candidates
- Fit with faculty-wide and cross-faculty research themes should be considered
- The job and person requirements must align with the appropriate Role Profile on the relevant Academic Career Pathway
- Advertising over several profile levels can encourage a more diverse candidate pool. Where it is intended to advertise flexibly over a number of profile levels, the person specification requirements should be adjusted accordingly. Further guidance on using the role profiles to provide more flexibility in recruitment is available from the Academic Recruitment Team.
- It is worth considering at this stage how the level of the vacant post might relate to academic grades in overseas institutions (e.g. US and East Asian). The Academic Recruitment Team can advise on this.

Click here for further guidance on issues to consider when putting together the job description and person specification.

Deciding who will be involved

A designated member of the Academic Recruitment Team will provide advisory and administrative support to ensure a smooth-running and professional process, and they will also liaise with candidates and the selection panel, maintaining a close working relationship with the Lead Recruiter (usually the Head of Department).

Having obtained authorisation to recruit, the Lead Recruiter must identify the Core Members of the Selection Panel. Each core member must be involved in at least one supplementary selection method and attend the Decision-making Meeting (please see the SELECTION PROCESS section which begins on page 12). Normally all core members will also attend the Selection Process Planning Meeting.

A gender balance and diversity of representation should be achieved within all groups and panels involved in the selection process where possible.

Different elements of the process including search committee, specialized interviews, seminar/presentation/lecture will bring other interested parties/subject experts into the decision-making process. The Lead Recruiter will also therefore need to consider which Complementary Panel Members might be involved in this respect.

It is vital that all parties involved are properly briefed on their role and are clear as to how their input is to be taken into account in the decision-making process. This will be discussed in detail at the Selection Process Planning Meeting.
It is important that diversity of representation and a gender balance is achieved across all of these groups, where possible.

**Core Membership** of the Selection Panel should comprise:

- Dean or nominated representative as chair (Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominated Pro-Vice Chancellor for Professorial posts)
- Head of Department
- Relevant departmental representative(s) (preferably including at least one non-professor for Professorial posts)
- A relevant external panel member (e.g. from a related department or external to the University)
- A Lay Member of University Council (for Professorial posts)

One member of the panel is identified as the Lead Recruiter for the process and for liaison with the Academic Recruitment Team.

**Complementary Membership** of the Selection Panel may include, for example:

- Other department/faculty members as part of the Search Committee
- Subject expert(s) as key audience members for research seminars/evaluation of research papers
- Other members of the department/faculty or a related department/faculty/research group as appropriate as members of specialized interview panels, structured discussion groups etc.
- An external member from another institution or partner organisation

Other members of the Selection Panel should be selected as appropriate to the chosen elements of the Selection Process.

**The Search Committee**

The Lead Recruiter will set up a dedicated Search Committee for each vacancy, to be led as appropriate by a Lead Networker and made up of representatives from the department and elsewhere who can play a proactive role in the search activity as required.

Not all members of the Search Committee will necessarily need to be involved in the later stages of the selection process.

Further guidance on the role of the Search Committee can be found in the section on [Targeted Departmental Networking](#) below.
Selection Process Planning Meeting

A Selection Process Planning Meeting will be held for each authorised vacancy or group of vacancies. Normally all core members will attend, plus complementary panel members as appropriate, and a member of the Academic Recruitment Team to advise.

The Selection Process Planning Meeting will be underpinned by the strategic aims for recruiting to the role. Its purpose will include:

- Finalising the job description and person specification for the role(s)
- Determining the most effective methods of publicity, including networking activity and media advertising
- Deciding on what elements will be included in the selection process
- Selecting External Assessors where appropriate to the role (mandatory for professorial posts)
- Confirming who will be involved in each part of the process, and their specific responsibilities
- Considering the logistics of how the selection process will fit together
- Deciding on feedback mechanisms and record keeping for different elements of the process
- Discussing how to ensure a high quality experience for the candidates
- Considering level of support for new appointee(s) and research start-up funds where appropriate
- Considering likely candidate expense costs

A member of the Recruitment Team will work closely with the Lead Recruiter throughout the process and further liaison/meetings will be arranged according to need.
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

There are numerous and diverse ways in which to promote academic staff vacancies, and these will be carefully considered at the Selection Process Planning Meeting. A combination of media and other promotional activity ensures wide coverage and equality of opportunity in accessing information about vacancies while effective media choices drive high quality responses from the targeted applicant pool.

As a minimum, the following must be utilised:

- A tailored media/publicity strategy for every vacancy or group of vacancies, which may include a tailored microsite
- Targeted departmental networking achieved through a dedicated Search Committee
- Advertisement on University of Bristol recruitment website (BORIS)
- Advertisement on jobs.ac.uk website
- Detailed information for candidates (See Appendix 1)

Optional media choices:

- Advertisement on targeted websites (both the web versions of print media and specialist jobs sites)
- Advertisement in print, in a publication such as a broadsheet newspaper or a specialist academic journal may be considered, however this option should not be used unless it is felt that advertising in printed media in addition to the web is likely to add value
- Other types of print media exposure, such as links to editorials or feature articles should be considered. These will require longer-term planning.

A tailored media/publicity strategy

This will involve a planned and reasoned approach to timing, media, competitive edge, consideration of advertising campaigns, use of enhanced web presence etc.

The Academic Recruitment Team will provide data for previous vacancies and general advice in developing the strategy. Expert advice is also available from the University’s advertising agency TMPW.

The world wide web has become a much more effective medium than print advertising in most cases, providing both targeted and universal coverage. The University’s web site follows strict accessibility guidelines and is therefore accessible to all users, including those using assistive technologies.

Vacancy microsites

Microsites are individual web pages or clusters of pages featuring individual vacancies or related groups of vacancies, which function as a supplement to the University’s primary recruitment website and provide easy access to a wealth of information for those seeking, and new to, academic roles at the University. In this way they act as special features to inform and promote particular roles and drive potential candidates to apply.
For further details of the information that may be included, see Appendix 1.

**Targeted departmental networking**

The University’s media response statistics show that use of academic networking alongside web-based advertising produces the highest volume and quality of applications in comparison to other forms of promotion. Such activity should be broad enough and make a concerted effort to encourage a diverse pool of applicants and will be used alongside other forms of publicity.

The networking activity will be achieved primarily through a dedicated Search Committee of mixed composition where possible, led by the Lead Networker who will provide consistency and guidance. The Academic Recruitment Team will work closely with the Lead Networker to provide assistance and support.

Not all members of the Search Committee will necessarily be involved in the later stages of the selection process, however the Lead Networker will involve all relevant department/subject (and Faculty) members, including as diverse a range of staff as possible, in promoting the vacancy through:

- Email networks, online forums and subject lists
- Conferences, particularly any that include a ‘job fair’ element
- Seminars, book fairs and any other subject specific forums
- Making direct personal contact with individuals (either face-to-face, by phone or email as appropriate)
- Proactively seeking recruits from other employment sectors
- Targeting high calibre candidates
- Targeting early career academics with potential e.g. post docs/second authors
- Targeting groups who are currently under-represented in the Department/University
- Targeting women (especially in the fields of Science, Engineering and Technology)
- For professorial posts, earlier contact with External Assessors may be considered an opportunity to facilitate publicity.

Networking activity will be strategically planned and informed by:

- The disciplinary culture and the nature of the role in question
- Knowledge of the established and emerging ‘stars’
- Whether potential strong candidates are largely UK based or overseas
- Targeting the ‘passive’ constituent, as well as those actively seeking a new role
- How best to utilise developing areas of academia

The Lead Networker also co-ordinates record-keeping of networking activity.

To ensure on-going activity to embed the networking approach, all academic staff members are encouraged to:

- Present the department and University as a potential opportunity for employment in interactions with external colleagues
- Use academic networks on a more general basis, to build up a knowledge bank of potential stars
• Establish and capitalise on links with institutions for the purposes of marketing the University as a potential employer
THE SELECTION PROCESS

Key Principle

The key principle of the University of Bristol's selection process for new academic staff is to operate robust, transparent, fair and effective selection processes, working flexibly within a best practice framework involving all relevant stakeholders.

The selection process may take place over a concentrated period of time or a more protracted period, as appropriate and depending on the number and location of short-listed candidates, the timescale for appointment etc.

The need for all candidates to be seen on the same day and a decision made immediately, while on occasion necessary, is not an overriding principle. Spreading the process over a number of days, or an even longer period, allows for a broader and more considered assessment of the evidence provided; it can also improve the experience for candidates by creating a more relaxed and confidential environment for meetings. Arranging the process in shorter time slots on any given day or number of days also alleviates diary pressures for panel members.

As part of the process the candidate eventually selected will ideally have had the opportunity to visit the University on more than one occasion. This enables a personalised approach to candidate contact and better informed decision-making by both parties.

Building a tailored selection process for your vacancy

The University uses a tailored approach to recruitment and selection, recognising the unique circumstances of individual departments, roles and candidates. This is achieved through the use of a ‘toolkit’ system where the process must involve mandatory ‘core’ elements, but where recruiters select the most appropriate supplementary options from a menu of selection methods as outlined below. A minimum of two of the supplementary selection methods must be selected in order to ensure a broad range of evidence to enable an effective outcome.

Mandatory ‘core’ elements of the selection process

1. Selection process planning meeting

A Selection Process Planning Meeting will be held for each authorised vacancy or group of vacancies. Normally all core members will attend, plus complementary panel members as appropriate, and a member of the Academic Recruitment Team to advise.

Further details and guidance on this meeting can be found here.
2. Long-listing and Short-listing exercise (Long-listing is mandatory only for professorial posts)

Long-listing and short-listing should be undertaken by a minimum of three members of the core selection panel, including the Lead Recruiter, and a gender balance should be achieved where possible.

In order to assist with long-listing/short-listing, recruiters may decide to select an appropriate supplementary selection method from the list below, for example telephone discussions, external assessors reports, assessments of the candidates’ research work etc.

The outcomes must be recorded, including the reasons applicants are not long-listed or short-listed.

This is a vital stage in the selection process. Measuring how all applicants match up to your selection criteria is crucial to enable you to objectively assess which of the applicants you wish to consider further by including them in the next stages of the selection process. Comprehensive consideration should be given to each applicant’s CV, including, for example, any career breaks and the reasons for these.

In cases where there is a large number of applicants or a field that is particularly strong or includes a diverse range of potentially suitable candidates, a long-listing stage may be introduced to assist in reducing the field to a manageable short-list. It may be deemed necessary to draw on additional evidence to assist at this stage, for example an assessment of candidates’ research work.

It is important to maintain the confidentiality of candidates in line with best practice and data protection legislation. Therefore candidates’ CVs and application forms should be made available only to selection panel members and as appropriate to their level of involvement in the selection process.

Click here for further guidance on long-listing and short-listing and documentation for recording outcomes.

3. Primary panel interview

This is an overview discussion with each short-listed candidate undertaken by the Chair and a minimum of two other members of the core selection panel. The outcome must be recorded.

A primary panel interview by all core members of the selection panel may be used, but a more effective approach combines the overview provided by the primary panel interview with smaller, specialized interviews (see supplementary selection method option e. below) and/or other supplementary selection methods, divided between different panel members.

The primary panel interview serves the purpose of:
• A core interview covering general question areas pertinent to the role that are not covered by other supplementary parts of the process and that are specifically relevant to the Dean or nominated panel chair (e.g. inter-faculty or cross-faculty issues etc)
• Drawing together or probing any specific issues or areas of questioning that have arisen from other parts of the process
• Giving candidates the opportunity to meet in an appropriate and meaningful manner with the panel chair who in most cases will be the Dean or his/her representative.

Pro-formas to assist in recording the outcome of the primary panel interview (which can be tailored according to need) is currently being developed by the Academic Recruitment Team.

4. Presentation to school/faculty staff and students

Candidates will be invited to deliver a presentation on a relevant research or academic topic (in the style of an undergraduate or postgraduate lecture) to an audience of academic staff and students from the department/faculty and other invited participants depending on the focus of the talk. The audience, arrangements and recording of feedback will be planned according to the type of talk being given.

This element can be arranged to take place at same time as an informal visit or other parts of the selection process.

It is recommended that selection panel members attend the presentations in addition to other department members, and as a minimum, the Lead Recruiter must provide selection panel representation in order to collate and provide an overview of feedback. In addition, the role of the Lead Recruiter is to provide a check of consistency in terms of the quality of the audience’s feedback.

Besides providing an assessment of teaching style and other elements of the selection criteria, asking candidates to deliver a talk is a beneficial way of involving department and relevant faculty staff and students in the appointment process. Candidates are also able to acquire a feel for the department and its culture, particularly if this element is combined with a chance to meet department members informally.

Further guidance and suggested audience feedback sheets are available from the Academic Recruitment Team.

5. References

Three references (ideally one of which should be from a referee currently working in an overseas institution) are requested for candidates for academic posts. The references should provide an assessment of research, teaching and administration. References are typically introduced at the decision-making meeting and are used to support the panel’s decisions, rather than as a primary decision-making tool.
6. External Assessors’ reports (Mandatory only for professorial posts)

A list of External Assessors (typically 6 and including a gender balance and a mix of UK and overseas contributors) will be selected at the Selection Process Planning Meeting. External Assessors will be asked to provide reports on all long-listed candidates in order for their comments to be used to assist in short-listing candidates.

External Assessors are academics distinguished in their field who are selected by key members of the selection panel to provide independent, comparative evaluations of candidates on the basis of their CVs. Assessors may also choose to read some of the candidates’ work if they are not already familiar with it. A cross-section of External Assessors should be used so as to provide fair and comprehensive evaluation, for example a gender balance involving both overseas and UK commentators is recommended.

The identity of External Assessors is not normally disclosed to candidates and their role is distinct from that of a referee. For professorial posts External Assessors provide reports on all long-listed candidates which are used to assist the Core Selection Panel in short-listing. Such reports could, however, be used in the selection process for other levels of academic posts either at the same stage, or as an additional assessment of short-listed candidates.

Use of External Assessors posts other than those at professorial level should be carefully considered and reasonable time must be allowed for reports to be produced. Recruiters wishing to utilize External Assessors for non-professorial posts should discuss this with a member of the Academic Recruitment Team.

7. Decision-making meeting

All core members of the selection panel consider the outcomes of the different elements of the selection process and all other available evidence and make a final decision on who they wish to appoint, and, if relevant, reserve candidates. Logistically it may often be appropriate to hold this meeting at the end of the Primary Panel Interviews.

Pro-formas to assist in recording the outcome of the decision-making process (which can be tailored according to need) is being developed.

8. Communicating with the successful and unsuccessful short-listed candidates

Click here for guidance on the use of references.
The Selection Panel Chair, the HoD or the Lead Recruiter will liaise with the successful candidate to discuss the offer, salary package and other high level discussion points. This will happen when the full selection process has been concluded and will not therefore necessarily mean communicating a ‘same day’ decision, thus allowing the panel more time to conclude decision-making, and the candidate some time and space to reflect on the attractions of the post prior to the offer being made.

A ‘post-offer’ follow-up visit by the selected candidate may be necessary, and may help to inform the candidate’s decision on whether to accept; although the need for this may well be negated if a pre-visit has already been included in the selection process.

The same person should also make contact with the unsuccessful candidates personally to inform them of the outcome or request that formal communication is sent from the Academic Recruitment Team. In most circumstances it is preferable for the outcome to be communicated directly by someone who was involved in the decision-making process, and who has built up a relationship with the candidates.

Click here for guidance on making the offer, managing the expectations of reserves and informing unsuccessful candidates, including letter templates.

Personnel Services, in collaboration with the International Office for overseas candidates and the administrative contact within the department, will liaise with the Lead Recruiter and the appointed candidate on practical issues and support related to the new appointee’s terms and conditions of employment, formal contract/offer letter, interview/relocation expenses, immigration requirements etc.

Planning for supporting the new member of staff before, during and after they commence in the role will follow on from these discussions. See the Supporting New Staff section below.

**Supplementary selection methods: menu of best practice options**

In order to ensure a broad range of evidence to enable an effective outcome, at least two of the selection methods listed below must be included in the selection process.

Each core member must be involved in at least one Supplementary Selection Method in addition to the Planning Meeting and Decision-making meeting.

*a. Candidate visit*

Short-listed candidates are invited to visit the University to meet key contacts, see the facilities, find out about research agenda, teaching practice, general environment etc. This may involve lunch or dinner with representatives from the department. Candidates will be invited on individual rather than group visits to facilitate a personalised approach.

Although the emphasis will be on informality for this part of the process, and the objective is partly to allow the candidates to ‘fact find’ and get a feel for the role, it will be made explicitly clear that feedback from the visit will form part of the selection process.
Depending on the nature and level of the role, visits may be arranged separately from
the formal selection process, or organised as part of the main selection event.

A summary of feedback from each visit must be recorded.

Further guidance on arranging candidate visits and structuring the feedback process,
along with pro-formas (which can be tailored according to need) can be obtained from
the Academic Recruitment Team.

b. Telephone discussions

These can either be used as an alternative to a visit if this is not included in the process
or is logistically difficult, or as an initial or ‘first’ interview for long-listed candidates by
relevant members of the core (and supplementary) selection panel in order to help form
a short-list.

The purpose of, and outcomes from, the telephone discussions should be recorded.

Telephone discussions, particularly if used as an aid to short-listing, should be carefully
planned and executed and should also be focused on key elements of the person
specification in order to provide a consistent assessment that is aligned with the other
components of the selection process.

Candidates should be given adequate notice of the time of the call, be provided with an
outline of the purpose of the call, and the phone call should be set up as a
teleconference with at least two panel members.

A pro-forma to assist in recording the outcome of the telephone discussion (which can
be tailored according to need) is being developed.

Click here for guidance on the use of telephone interviews.

c. Presentation to selection panel members

In some cases (perhaps most often for professorial or other more senior posts) it may be
appropriate to invite candidates to make a presentation solely to selection panel
members either instead of, or in addition to, the talk given to the department/faculty
members.

In this case the topic of the presentation may be more specifically related to a discrete
managerial or strategic element of the job requirements or person specification, as
opposed to a more general research topic.
d. Specialized interviews

Relevant core or supplementary panel members will form a number of smaller (usually two-person) panels to undertake short, focused discussions with each short-listed candidate on targeted areas of the role/person specification. If specialized interviews are used, all core members will not necessarily need to be involved as it may be more appropriate for some to be engaged in other supplementary selection method(s) instead.

Holding one or more focused discussions with candidates on specific key areas of the person specification enables greater scope for probing than is offered in a traditional interview setting, and therefore provides an opportunity to build an enhanced picture of the candidates’ skills/knowledge/experience in particular area(s). Other benefits include a more personal and relaxed forum for discussion for both parties, and greater flexibility in diarising meetings.

Specialized interviews will normally be shorter than a traditional interview, and will not usually require time for comprehensive introductions or questions from the candidates, as these would be handled at a different point in the process, such as in previous informal discussions or at the Primary Panel Interview. Specialized interviews could cover themes such as interpersonal communication skills, management/administration experience, fit with departmental/faculty/university research themes, team/collaborative working.

A minimum of two interviewers will be selected as appropriate to the subject of the interview.

Outcomes must be recorded. Pro-formas to assist in recording the outcomes of the specialized interview(s) (which can be tailored according to need) can be obtained from the Academic Recruitment Team.

e. External Assessors’ reports (Mandatory for professorial posts)

In some cases reports from External Assessors may provide a useful external assessment/comparison of candidates for academic posts at levels other than professorial.

Further guidance on External Assessors Reports can be found above.

f. Additional assessment tools

These may be used at various stages of the process, as appropriate for the role.

Examples include:
- Assessments of the candidates’ research work
- Informal research discussions
- Evaluation of citations scores
- Observed one-to-ones with post-graduate researchers
- Structured group discussions
- Use of psychometric testing (to be administered by a trained professional, arranged through Personnel Services)

Click here for further information on additional assessment methods or contact a member of the Academic Recruitment Team.

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**Video-conference interview**

Although not recommended as standard, video-conference facilities may be utilised as an alternative to a face-to-face discussion or interview where a candidate is unable to travel to Bristol due, for example, to unavoidable work commitments or personal circumstances.

It is important that this part of the selection process is kept as consistent as possible with the face-to-face meetings that take place with other candidates (i.e. identical panel, format of interview etc). It is also helpful in these circumstances if a follow-up visit can be arranged at a suitable time to ensure consistency with other candidates. In any case, a face-to-face interview is likely to be required as a follow-up if the candidate is considered suitable for appointment.

The need for this option will be reduced where the process is spread over a longer period and not dependent on candidates being available on one particular day.

Click here for further information on interviewing via video-conference facilities.
SUPPORTING NEW STAFF

Principles

The University acknowledges the importance of positively engaging with candidates at an early stage, and thus cementing a lasting impression of the department, faculty and University. This provision of information, guidance and support is then continued before, during and after the selected candidate joins the University. Developing this relationship is important in order to ensure a smooth transition for the individual into their new employment - and most likely a new city and/or a new country - and ultimately to guarantee a long-lasting and successful appointment.

(See Appendix 1 - Information to Candidates)

What the University provides

1. Early stage planning for incoming staff

The necessary content and format of the induction for the new post holder will be discussed prior to advertising with a focus on the strategic need for the post. Early consideration will also be given to available start-up funds and the marrying of these arrangements with general induction provision.

More specific personal development needs and other requirements in relation to the selected candidate will be discussed at the conclusion of the selection process and incorporated into plans for their arrival.

2. Information and support for appointed candidates

A partnership approach between Personnel Services, the International Office and the recruiting department prior to, during, and after the offer stage provides a co-ordinated ‘one stop shop’ support service. This helps to ensure that selected candidates are provided with a positive first impression of the University and all of the information they need to be able to make an informed decision on whether to accept; and, having accepted, to make plans to move to Bristol, and to the UK if they are currently based overseas. The underlying principle is to provide a tailored approach to support, based on the individual’s specific needs.

A wealth of information, advice and training is available for new academic and international staff. This is accessed via a microsite offering tailored information from the outset of the recruitment process.

Guidance is available to appointed candidates on practical matters including:

- Moving to a new city/country i.e. information about Bristol, UK culture, opening bank accounts, using the tax and benefits system etc
- Key contacts and their roles and responsibilities (e.g. admin functions etc)
- Relocation expenses policy and lists of preferred suppliers for accommodation/housing and support for families of new staff e.g. Crèche etc
- Other relevant policies such as promotion/progression
- Obtaining visas and permission to work in the UK
- Housekeeping and basic logistics e.g. obtaining IT access
- Generic University information on structure, organisational culture etc.
- FEC and other working practices specific to the University/UK
- Contact details of fellow new arrivals
- Recommended training and development and how to access it
- Promotion and progression processes
- Local departmental and University wide benefits, including PWE provision
- Networking events
- English language skills support
- Subject specific information e.g. NHS, licence to practice, professional registration

3. Support for new staff in post

The nominated peer support colleague (see below) will provide informal support on the day to day practicalities of the first few months and working in the department generally, for example: identifying key contacts, networking events and opportunities; how to access research funding etc.

At an early stage and on an ongoing basis the Head of Department or a delegated senior colleague will discuss items such as:
- Fit between personal and departmental/faculty/university research agenda
- Responsibilities and opportunities of the role in terms of teaching and administration
- Development and training needs and how these can be addressed
- Practical needs and how these are being/have been dealt with
- Suggesting networking opportunities within and outside the University
- Initial staff review

The HoD will also be responsible for ensuring that any agreed start-up provision is effectively implemented.

The half day ‘Welcome to the University’ session run by Personnel Services and Staff Development provides a general introduction to the University.

The tailored departmental induction, including items such as a tour, meetings with key people, and a meeting with the Dean if appropriate will be put in place by the Departmental Induction Co-ordinator. This should take place over a number of weeks to enable the new post holder to absorb information, settle in and ask questions.

Who is involved?

1. Basic logistical support

Personnel Services/Payroll and Pensions: Act as a key contact to assist in providing information and support to the department, the candidates and the appointee during and after the appointment. These areas are co-ordinated by a member of the Academic Recruitment Team.

International Office: Involved in a core advisory capacity for overseas staff.
Departmental Induction Co-ordinator: Organises and supports the main parts of the departmental induction, including IT access, and acts as a key contact for general advice. The Lead Recruiter should liaise closely with their local Department Induction Co-ordinator.

2. Peer support

Nominated peer support: Ideally a department member who will be able to relate to the personal circumstances of the incoming staff member or is relatively new to the University themselves and therefore has a heightened appreciation of the relevant issues. This person provides informal support on the day to day practicalities of the first few months and working in the department generally.

Other department members: As appropriate, the role of other departmental members is to provide as comprehensive a picture of the life and work of the department as possible.

3. Strategic and developmental support

HoD or delegated senior colleague: To brief on the strategic direction of the department, how the new member of staff fits in to this and to start to support on development and progression.

Faculty Dean: To brief on the strategic direction of the Faculty.

4. External support

Key contacts in collaborating departments, external bodies such as the NHS etc. will be identified.
Appendix 1

Information for Candidates

One of the core principles of the recruitment and selection process for academic staff is that of a two-way process. In acknowledging this we aim to provide all candidates with the information they need in order to make the right decision for them, at any given point in the process.

The University needs to ensure it is assertive and innovative in publicising vacancies. The University image combines with strong departmental identity as a principle driver to attract candidates, accompanied by a strong presence from the Recruitment Team and Personnel Services and Staff Development.

Promotion of vacancies will be supported by detailed, relevant, high quality information in written, visual and multi-media formats, a key component of which is up to date and engaging profiles of relevant academic staff and research activity. This is ultimately brought together through microsites (which may be vacancy, department or faculty specific), which specifically address the needs of those seeking, and new to, academic roles at the University and provide the information in a transparent, easy to access, clearly explained and streamlined way. The microsite will link to and from the UoB vacancies website and departmental and faculty websites.

The microsite/further particulars/application pack will include tailored information about:
- Identified key selling points for the role
- Identified contacts on key areas e.g. academic environment, support for overseas candidates etc
- The department environment e.g. staff profiles, facilities, quality and range of research, research funding opportunities, information on awards and prizes
- The research strategy, environment and facilities at Faculty/University/national level, and support provided by RED
- The UK research environment and UK culture (including staff biographies, feedback)
- Opportunities for collaboration: within the University and links with industry/NHS/other institutions and organisations
- The teaching strategy/student environment /teaching and learning programme
- An outline of how the selection process will operate (particularly focussed on overseas candidates but equally relevant for UK candidates)
- Explanation of UoB academic grade structure (including pop-ups on website mapping job titles to the US model)
- How new staff will be supported
- Opportunities for promotion and progression
- Benefits of working at the University, including the PWE agenda
- Living in Bristol and the region
- ‘One stop shop’ practical advice on moving to the UK for overseas candidates, including information on eligibility to work in the UK and relocation support